

David Meade Randolph's "Anecdote of Patrick Henry," Post-1791

The birth of party spirit has been variously conjectured: the result of the Richmond Convention for the adoption of the Federal Constitution, was one of its imputed parents. In the evening of the day of the final vote, General Meade and Mr. Cabell assembled the *discontents* in the old Senate Chamber; and after a partial organization of the party, a deputation was sent to Patrick Henry inviting him to take the chair. The venerated patriot accepted. Understanding that it was their purpose to concert a plan of resistance to the operations of the Federal Government, he addressed the meeting with his accustomed animation upon important occasions; observing, "he had done his duty strenuously, in opposing the Constitution, in the *proper place*,—and with all the powers he possessed. The question had been fully discussed and settled, and, that as true and faithful republicans, they had all better go home! They should cherish it, and give it fair play—support it too, in order that the federal administration might be left to the untrammelled and free exercise of its functions:" reproving, moreover, the half suppressed factious spirit which he perceived had well nigh broken out. The impressive arguments of Mr. Henry produced the gratifying effect he had hoped for.

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