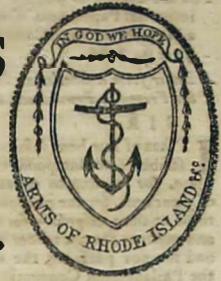


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UNITED STATES CHRONICLE:

Political, Commercial, and Historical.



Published by BENNETT WHEELER, in Westminster-Street, PROVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, June 12, 1788.

Mr. WHEELER,
A Number of your Readers request you to publish the following in your next Paper. Yours, &c. A.
To the Honorable the MEMBERS of the CONVENTION of VIRGINIA.

BY the special delegation of the people of your respectable commonwealth, you are shortly to determine on the fate of the proposed Constitution of Federal Government. First invited to that important measure by the resolutions of your legislature, from the wisest considerations, America, confiding in the steadiness of your patriotism, and feeling that new weight is daily given to your original inducements, doubts not it is now to receive your sanction. But before the awful determination which is to call the American Union once more into political existence shall be finally taken, permit one of the most respectful of your countrymen to trespass a few minutes on your time and patience.

The qualities of the proposed government have been so fully explained, and it will receive such further exposition in your honorable body, that it is needless to attempt a regular discussion of the subject. This paper shall therefore be confined to a few particular considerations that have been already mentioned by others, or which may now be suggested for the first time.

It has been urged by some sensible and respectable men, that your populous State will not be properly represented in the federal Senate. Permit me to remind you, that while you have but one vote of thirteen in the present union, you will have twelve in ninety-one in the new confederacy. Suffer me to observe too, that as the United States are free governments, it might not have been very unreasonable if the people of Virginia could have given only the same number of votes at an election for federal purposes, as they can give at a State election. If the citizens of Virginia find it wise and prudent, that free persons only shall be taken into consideration in electing their State legislature, would it appear extraordinary that citizens of the United States should think the same rule proper in electing the federal representatives. By the present arrangement, you may enjoy the weight and power of free votes and a half for 168,000 slaves, being three fifths of your whole number of blacks. Were these to be deducted from the votes of Virginia in the federal House of Representatives, it would leave little more than one vote in thirteen in that house. In the present Congress, as before observed, and in the proposed Senate, a thirteenth vote is allotted to Virginia. Taking the number of free citizens, which is the proper rule of representation in free governments, Virginia, in the federal representation, would have about as many votes as New-York, and fewer than Massachusetts or Pennsylvania. It will be proper to consider too the effect of the erection of Kentucke into a separate State, and of her becoming another member of the new confederacy. When that certain event shall take place, Virginia will fall considerably short of the proportion of one in fourteen of the free white inhabitants of the United States. Impartially considering this true state of things, the opinion that Virginia will hold a share of the powers of the new government, less than she is entitled to, will appear to be erroneous. If, on examination, these facts shall be found to be stated with accuracy and candour, and the observations and reasonings upon them shall appear just and fair, we confidently trust your honorable house will not consider the proposed Constitution as exceptionable in that particular.

Objections have been made by some very respectable gentlemen of your State to the power of Congress, under the new Federal Constitution, to regulate trade "by a bare majority." In a free government, the voice of the people, expressed by the votes of a majority, must be the rule, or we shall be left without any certain mode to determine what is politically right. To depart from it, is establishing tyranny by law. It would be a solemn renunciation of the forms and substance of liberty; and our affairs, on this dangerous principle, must rapidly hasten to an oligarchy—the most dreadful of all governments. It would be in vain to say we might be restrained by one-third in commercial cases, and free in all others. The precedent once established, it requires no prophetic gift to foretell where it would end. But, independent of the violation of

the great principle of free governments, the objection, and apprehensions arising from it, are founded on a misconception of the true nature of affairs in all the States. The landed interest must ever possess a commanding majority in the State and federal legislatures. It was supposed the objection ought to have great weight in the five southern States: But we do not find it has been even mentioned in the Maryland or Georgia Conventions, the only two of them which have yet determined on the Constitution, nor was it noticed in New-Jersey or Delaware, which are the least commercial members of the confederacy. Four of the seven agricultural States have considered this objection and these fears as unfounded, for they have adopted the Constitution with only eleven dissentient votes.

The rejection of the government by the State of Virginia, should the first eight States have previously adopted it, is a matter (permit me respectfully to observe) the possible consequences of which should be most seriously considered. Should a ninth State ratify the Constitution after you have declined to do so, it will become a binding compact—an operative system. The American States would deeply regret a circumstance, that should place a most respectable member of the present union, and a natural born elder sister, in the character of an alien; and a late and reluctant adoption, not arising altogether from free choice and national affection, would exceedingly abate that cordiality, which will flow throughout the land at the early adoption of the proposed Constitution by your sister States, whence the first call to independence was boldly given, and whence first arose this great attempt to cement and invigorate our union.

The United States, whatever has been the cause of past events, may certainly become a nation of great respectability and power. But such is the effect of our distracted politics, and of the feebleness of our general government, that foreign powers openly declare their unwillingness to treat with us, while our affairs remain on the present footing. However favourable or friendly they may think our intentions towards them, they know we have not constitutional powers to execute our own desires, even within our own jurisdiction. Senators of no inconsiderable reputation in the British Parliament have told the world, they can make no fixed arrangements with us under the present Confederation. The Ministers of France, which nation has lately evinced the continuance of her friendship by new privileges to our trade, declare they cannot proceed to the extent of their desires, since no power exists to treat upon national ground. The Court of Spain too, however they might be influenced by a firm and respectable union, will never listen to our demands for the navigation of the Mississippi, while we remain in our present unconnected situation. We are no object even of respect to them, much less of apprehension; and should the present Constitution be rejected, they will laugh at all future attempts to continue or invigorate the union. Our Minister at that Court expects to effect no arrangements there, without an efficient government being first adopted here.

It has been objected to the proposed federal Constitution that it tends to render our country more vulnerable, by admitting the further importation of slaves. To persons not accurately acquainted with the whole of the American Constitutions, this objection may appear of weight. But when it is canvassed before so enlightened an assembly as the Convention of Virginia, the mistake will be instantly discovered. It will be remembered that ten of the States, and Virginia among the number, have already prohibited the further importation of slaves, and that the power of the legislature of each State even after the adoption of the Constitution, will not only remain competent to a prohibition of the slave-trade, but (if they find the measure wise and safe) to the emancipation of the slaves already among us. It may be added further, that the exercise of this power of the State governments can in no wise be controuled or restrained by the federal legislature.

Should the present attention to infuse new vigor into the general government fail of success, partial confederacies must at once follow. The States on the Delaware, central in their situation, and (though not superabundantly rich) perfectly independent in their resources, will find themselves bound together by their position on the globe, by a perfect similarity of manners and interests, by the preservation of their common peace and safety, and by the

innumerable ties of blood and marriage subsisting between them. A frank and liberal concession of the impolitic on the part of Pennsylvania will render the inducements complete. The sentiments of the State of Maryland on the proposed government, their existing connections with Pennsylvania and Delaware, from each of whom they are divided only by an imaginary line, will turn their inclinations that way. Rather than connect themselves with a southern country, between which and them a great natural boundary is interposed, and which is rendered vulnerable by 280,000 slaves, they will find it prudent, as well as agreeable, to join their northern neighbours. Should Pennsylvania offer to aggrandize the ports of Maryland, by opening to her the extensive navigation of Susquehanna, whose various branches water many millions of acres of fertile lands, prudence and interest will powerfully persuade Maryland to join the middle confederacy. Should the views and propositions of this central and consolidated connection be liberal and just, accessions of very considerable importance may be hoped for from the northern and southern States. What particular benefits then can Virginia reasonably expect from that dissolution of the confederacy, which must follow the rejection of the proposed plan.

The various parts of the North-American continent are formed by nature for the most intimate union. The facilities of our navigation render the communication between the ports of Georgia and New-Hampshire infinitely more expeditious and practicable, than between those of Provence and Picardy, in France; Cornwall and Caithness in Great-Britain; or Galicia and Catalonia, in Spain. The canals proposed at South-key, Susquehanna and Delaware, will open a communication from the Carolinas to the western countries of Pennsylvania and New-York. The improvements of Potowmack will give a passage from those southern States to the western parts of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and even to the lakes. The canals of Delaware and Chesapeake will open the communication from South-Carolina to New-Jersey, Delaware, the most populous parts of Pennsylvania, and the midland counties of New-York. These important works might be effected for two hundred thousand guineas, and America would thereby be converted into a cluster of large and fertile islands, easily communicating with each other, without expence, and in many instances without the uncertainty or dangers of the sea. The voice of nature therefore directs us to be affectionate associates in peace, and firm supporters in war. As we cannot mistake her injunctions, to disobey them would be criminal.

The distracted state of our affairs has exceedingly retarded population and manufactures, and interrupted the influx of knowledge and riches. At the return of peace, the European world viewed America with the tender and respectful admiration of a lover to his mistress. Their peasantry and manufacturers, their merchants and philosophers, were seized with an irrefragable desire to visit our shores, and many of them looked towards this country as another land of promise, to spend the remainder of their days. What has prevented their realizing these fond ideas? The insecurity of property, the breach or delay of public and private obligations, paper tenders, infurrections against State governments of our own choice, contentions among the States, and a total disregard of the most reasonable and just demands of the general government. They know us to be a people capable of great exertions. They saw we possessed a country replete with the means of private happiness and national importance, but they saw too that these inestimable properties of the Americans and their dominions were not brought into any use, from the defects of our political arrangements, and the enormous abuses in our administration. Their beloved mistresses having fallen from the heights of virtue, and become a wanton, they turned from her with disgust and bitterness. Ye friends of religion and morality! ye lovers of liberty and mankind! will ye not seize this opportunity proffered you by the bounty of Heaven, and save your country from contempt and wretchedness?

The voice of the people, say the most noble champions of freedom, is the voice of God. Before the ratification of the new government by the State of

[For Remainder, see last Page.]



POET'S CORNER.

OF GENERAL WASHINGTON.

SEE Freedom's ensign's glittering waves unfurl'd,
There stamp'd in gold appears the hero's name,
Whose deeds are echoed round the admiring world,
And distant ages shall record his fame.

'Twas his to stem the dreadful tide of war;
'Twas his to teach the battle where to rage,
With founding pinions, vict'ry shades his car,
His legions eye him eager to engage.

Calmly he views each army's dread array,
And seems himself the bulwark of the field;
His skill superior turns the doubtful day,
His foes were Britons, long unused to yield;

Death circling flew around the ensanguin'd plain,
There fate with fury drove her madding car;
With human gore the clotted wheels distain'd,
And view'd exulting all the waste of war.

The tide of blood which late o'erflow'd the field,
Fann'd by the breezes, stiffens in the glade,
A brother's with a brother's is congeal'd,
And sons of Britons are with Britons laid.

The battle finish'd and the carnage o'er,
The vanquish'd see him and confess his worth;
His eye averted, shuns the flood of gore,—
The noblest Hero and best SON of earth,

As great in Battle—great is he in peace,—
He comes again to point our way to fame—
The FEDERAL PLAN—shall bid our troubles cease,
And stamp Columbia with a lasting name.

The MONITOR, No. 13.

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.

EVERY man seeks for truth, but God only knows who has found it. It is unjust to persecute, and absurd to ridicule people for their several opinions, which they cannot help entertaining upon the conviction of their reason. It is he who adds or tells a lie that is guilty, not he who honestly believes the lie. The object of all public worship in the world is the same, it is that great Eternal Being who created every thing.—The different manners of worship are by no means subjects of ridicule—each thinks his own best, and I know no infallible judge in this world to decide which is the best.

[Concluded from the first Page.]

Maryland, the constituents of the Conventions which had then adopted it were a majority of the free people of the United States. Viewing us as one nation, the constitution had then received the solemn authoritative sanction of the people. But as Maryland has since added her number, and as it is next to certain that the adoption of South-Carolina will take place before the rising of your Honorable House, you will view the constitution as raised by nearly two-thirds of the union. After that event you will find too, that of eight conventions, which have determined on it, all have given it their approbation, and among them two, containing larger numbers of free citizens than any three, that are yet to decide. Rhode-Island, we know, has rejected the government in an informal way; but we cannot injure you even for a moment, by supposing that their principles and conduct could ever have insinuated themselves into your minds. We trust you will concur with us in thinking, that as the considerate approbation of the wise and good is a fair argument in favor of a public measure, so is its deliberate rejection by the weak and wicked.

The capacities of some parts of America are admirably adapted to supply the wants of others. New-England, destitute of iron and deficient in grain, can be plentifully supplied with both by the middle States. Possessed of the fisheries, and strongly inclined to ship-building and navigation, they can be furnished with the choicest timber from the Carolinas and Georgia. The southern States, so intersected by great waters as to lie exposed to the depredations of the most contemptible fleets, and crowded with a dangerous species of population, when proper arrangements shall be made and occasion shall require, can rely on the most useful and friendly aid from the north. The future wars among the naval powers of Europe will probably be general. When the House of Bourbon shall contend with Great-Britain for the dominion of the ocean, Holland, Sweden, Denmark and Portugal, will seldom be unconcerned spectators. The prosperity of agriculture in the southern States, in the event of a general war in Europe, will depend on the shipping of the middle and eastern States—for the belligerent powers will navigate under a very high insurance, and their ships will moreover be a precarious dependence, from the innumerable accidents of war. It may be said, the southern States will have shipping of their own, of which there can be no doubt so far as the state of commerce may render them profitable in time of peace, but the sudden and vigorous exertions of the States inhabited by free whites can alone furnish an immediate supply for the retiring vessels of belligerent foreigners.

We are to suppose for a moment that Virginia had rejected the proposed Constitution, and that Georgia, South-Carolina and Maryland were mem-

bers of the new confederacy, the agricultural interests of Virginia would be exceedingly injured. The supplies of tobacco, furs, flour, cotton, corn, naval stores and timber, required for the consumption, manufactures, and ships of the new union, would doubtless be taken from the States that belonged to it, while the interfering produce of Virginia probably would not be admitted, or if admitted would be liable to the foreign impost of five per cent. Every hundred of her tobacco would pay one-fourth of a dollar in Bolton, New-York or Philadelphia, every barrel of her flour one-fifth of a dollar, every hundred weight of her cotton a dollar and two-thirds, every bushel of her corn above a penny sterling; a tax greatly superior in value to the revenue imposed, under her present laws, on the exportation of her own produce. Besides this, the expense of maintaining a separate establishment in government at home and abroad would come heavily on Virginia, and those States that might join a partial confederacy. This expense, we may almost venture to affirm, would be insupportable, especially when we consider the present state of money matters in every part of America. Should Virginia entertain the idea of a lesser confederacy, would it not be wise to consider who would probably unite in it, and upon what terms? From the debates in the Connecticut and Massachusetts Conventions, as well as the dispositions and habits of those genuine republicans, it is probable that they would consent to give you a share of power greater than your number of free white inhabitants—or is it probable that your nearest neighbour, North-Carolina, would consent to it, without your paying into the common treasury the neat proceeds of all duties on imports and exports, a great part of which is raised on their consumption of foreign articles, and the produce of their farms? It would now be in vain, should New-York refuse a share of her impost to Connecticut and New-Jersey, or Pennsylvania a share of hers to New-Jersey and Delaware, or Virginia a share of hers to North-Carolina. It is an idea as just as it is generous and liberal, that the imposts of the United States should go into a common treasury, belonging to all who pay them, or being the consumers. If North-Carolina has a clear conception of her most evident interests, she must make this article a sine qua non in any compact that may be proposed to her by your State.

It will be urged, perhaps, that property should be represented, and though Virginia has only 252,000 free inhabitants, your representation should still be greater than that of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, because you are richer. But surely this argument will not be urged by the friends of equal liberty among the people. It will not be objected openly against the proposed Constitution, that it secures the equal liberties of the poor. But suppose for a moment a claim for a representation of property were admissible before an assembly of the free and equal citizens of America, will not Virginia enjoy the advantage of two votes more in the federal government than either Massachusetts or Pennsylvania, though each of those States has 108,000 free citizens more than yours. If we were represented by that only rule of republics, for your ten representatives, Massachusetts would have more than fourteen, and Pennsylvania the same number, while both of them are limited to eight. Here then we see the balance of property said to be in favor of Virginia has procured her three-fourths as much extra power, as the lives, liberties and property of all the people of Massachusetts or Pennsylvania. Power has been given to your State with no sparing hand. You (suffer me respectfully to say so) of all the members of the union, appear to have the least cause of complaint. Permit me to remind you of the objections made on this ground by Mr. Martin, of Maryland. The opposition there asserted that the great States had too large a share of power, and you have the most of all. The same sentiments were urged in the Connecticut Convention. Is it probable then that an allotment of power more favourable to you would be made by a new Convention? I submit to your candor whether you ought to ask a greater share. A comparison, in point of wealth and resources, between your State and any other, is a matter I wish to touch with delicacy. I mean not to offend, but you would despise a free-man that would decline the decent expression of his thoughts on so momentous an occasion. I would submit to you, whether the energy of 250,000 whites in a southern climate, surrounded by more than as many slaves, can be, or rather whether it is, equal to that of the same number in a northern climate? Whether two or three negroes in Virginia will be found equal to one yeoman or manufacturer of Pennsylvania or Massachusetts? Whether the ships, mercantile capitals, houses, and monied corporations of Philadelphia, with her growing manufactures and connections in foreign commerce, may not be placed in the scale against the balance of wealth you may be thought to possess, when Kentucky shall become an independent member of the American union.

But, gentlemen, it will be improper to trespass longer on your valuable time, devoted as it is to the most important concerns of VIRGINIA,—AMERICA and MANKIND. Let me entreat you only to bear in mind the wide difference that exists in the opinions and views of those who oppose the new Constitution. You will find they differ as much from each other, as they dissent from the friends of the plan. Were there no other people in America but the opposers of the proposed government, it will appear, on a fair statement of their various views and objections, that any Constitution which could be formed, on the principles of those in some States, would

meet with as much disapprobation by those in others, as they have deemed it necessary to shew to the propositions of the Federal Convention. Consider then, in the event of your rejection, in what a condition we shall be left—into what a situation we may be thrown! Thirteen jarring sovereignties—two or three contending confederacies—or a feeble union, will be the miserable and hopeless alternatives. The measure of foreign contempt will be filled up. Insult will naturally follow, and then injuries abroad—while the certain dangers to liberty, property and peace, at home, will visit every American, however firm, into dependency, or drive him to despair. But this will be too much.—The Convention of Virginia will never be instrumental in bringing such evils on the United States. No.—We will confidently hope that those among you, who do not altogether approve the proposed government, will yet concur in the measure, to save their country from anarchy and ruin. They will remember the provision to obtain amendments, and will recollect that the power will continue with the people at large in all time to come.

AN AMERICAN.

Philadelphia, May 21st, 1788.

GERSHOM JONES,

Pewterer, Coppersmith and Brazier,
In Westminster-Street, Providence, next Door to Mrs. Jacob Whitman's,

MAKES and sells all Kinds of Pewter Ware, Wholesale and Retail, warranted to be equal, if not superior, to any imported from Europe, and as cheap as can be purchased in America; also, all Sorts of BRAZILERY, viz. Brass Kettles, Coffee-Pans, Sauce-Pans, Skillets, Skimmers, Ladles, &c. &c.—He makes STILLS and WORMS, of all Sizes, on a new Construction, proved by Experience to consume less Fuel, and produce at least One per Cent. more Spirit, than the common Stills, some of which, in this Town, containing 1500 Gallons, will run off in Ten Hours from the Kindling the Fire under them.—He returns his best Thanks to his Customers for their past Favours, and begs Leave to inform them, and all others, who wish to encourage those useful Manufactures, and will please to honour him with their Commands, that they may depend on the utmost Punctuality and Dispatch.

N. B. Cash, or any of the above Articles, will be given for Old Pewter, Brass, or Copper.

A Journeyman PEWTERER, well recommended, may have constant Employ, and good Wages, by applying as above. 22—

JOHN PEARSE.

RESPECTFULLY informs the Public, That he carries on the PAINTING BUSINESS in all its Branches, at the Store at the Southwest Corner of the Market-House, in Providence.—Those who please to favour him with their Custom may depend on the utmost Fidelity, and as much Dispatch as the Work will admit.—He keeps for Sale—Paints of all Kinds, both ground in Oil and dry; also, Putty, Oil, &c. &c.—He takes this Method to return his hearty Thanks to his former Customers, and requests a Continuance of their Favours.

Providence, April 2, 1788.

23—

ALL Persons indebted to the Estate of Mr. EPHRAIM PEABODIE, late of Providence, Housewright, deceased, are requested to make immediate Payment; and all who have Demands against said Estate are desired to bring them in for Settlement to

JANE PEABODIE, Administ.

State of Rhode-Island, &c.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

KNOW YE, That STEPHEN BROWN, of North-Providence, Yeoman, on the 12th Day of April, A. D. 1788, at my Dwelling-House at Smithfield, lodged with me the Sum of £ 15 12s. lawful Money; being in full of the Principal and Interest of a Sum of Money, due from the said Stephen Brown to Richard Harris, of Smithfield, Yeoman, on a Note of Hand: That the said Stephen Brown hath in all Respects complied with the Law respecting the Paper Currency; and that the said Richard Harris hath been legally and duly notified thereof.

Witness,

A. MATHEWSON, J. C. Pleas.

State of Rhode-Island, &c.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

KNOW YE, That STEPHEN ABBOT, of North-Providence, Tanner, for himself, and in Behalf of his Brother Nathan Abbot, did, on the 28th Day of April, A. D. 1788, at my Dwelling-House, at Smithfield, lodge with me the Sum of £ 456. lawful Money, due to Samuel Nightingale, jun. of Providence, Merchant; being the Principal and Interest of one certain Mortgage-Deed, executed by the said Stephen and Nathan: That the said Stephen Abbot hath in all Respects complied with the Law respecting the Paper Currency; and that the said Samuel Nightingale, jun. hath been legally and duly notified thereof.

Witness,

A. MATHEWSON, J. C. Pleas.