

Wilmington Centinel,

AND GENERAL ADVERTISER.

W E D N E S D A Y, DECEMBER 10, 1788.

For the CENTINEL.

[Continued from our last.]

To the Members who composed the Majority in the late Convention.

Gentlemen,

HAVING fully come up to my undertaking under the first point, I shall now enter upon the second, which you know, was to examine into the reasons, and evidences, upon which you have complimented yourselves in so extraordinary a manner.

The only moral certainty we can have for the faithful and judicious discharge of delegated trusts, is by fixing our choice upon men of understanding and experience, and whose moral characters generally comport with the first and acknowledged principles of government. This description will necessarily take in the most dignified characters, and those who hold the most conspicuous and weighty charges in the several departments of government. It also still further supposes them to be generally past that period of life in which the unruly passions but too frequently interfere, and to have arrived more immediately under the guidance of reason. If I am right thus far, I think I may clearly assert, that the Philadelphia Convention comes fully under the description in every particular; at least, there is every moral evidence which things of such a nature can possibly admit to induce the belief. A majority held the first places of trust in the late war, which effected a revolution that attracted the notice and admiration of the earth; and not a few have acquired characters both in the cabinet and field, equal to any of the most exalted nations of Europe can produce. Their importance was not the work of a day—was not the fortuitous production of tumultuous war; a goodly number were conspicuous characters for a series of years prior to the revolution—they were the virtual choice of the freemen of America, through the mediation of their several state representatives, in whom there always exists a presumption of judgment superior to the people at large.

If the above premises are true, I may fairly conclude it must have been a truly august and important assembly—august, from the respectability of its members—important, from the weighty object of its deliberations, and consequently the result of their united councils, claimed without exception, the highest esteem—the profoundest veneration.

Now, gentlemen, after having taken a summary view of the grand convention, I shall turn to you, and see whether you will rise in the scale of comparison (as you ought) after having made a virtual annunciation of your superiority.

Have you, gentlemen, or a majority of you, shewn in the elevated traits of society? Have you given equal proofs of your abilities? And have your opportunities been equal to those with whom you are contrasted? Have you approached to them with respect to military fame during the war? And where is your name? Has your patriotism, as members of the republic abstractedly considered, been a matter of acknowledged notoriety? Or ever has any of your professional abilities been extensively confessed? No! no! is the reply of general knowledge to each of those solemn interrogatories. I acknowledge a number have filled, and continue to fill, respectable stations enough, but entirely of a secondary nature with respect to those with whom you are compared. A number also have acquitted yourselves worthy of your respective trusts, and a number of you indifferently enough God knows. And a circumstance well worthy of observation, and which is strikingly against you, is, that by far the most respectable characters of the convention were of the minority.

Upon the whole, it sufficiently appears, that you stand entirely destitute of any grounds or colour of reason, for complimenting your abilities in the manner before specified; but on the other hand, there appears to have been an infinite propriety of evidences for passing a compliment in its nature the very reverse, without you mean to say, that knowledge and integrity are not always found in the conspicuous characters, but rather in the more

humble and private walk of life.—Such a mode of reasoning will then lead from one descent to another, till ultimately those endowments are only to be procured in the very scum of God's creation.

[To be continued.]

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Isaac Sessions.

Fayette-Ville, N. v. 15, 1788.

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