

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
By His Excellency
JAMES BOWDOIN, Esquire,
Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

A Proclamation.

WHEREAS the General Court of the said Commonwealth, begun and held at Boston, upon Wednesday the thirty first day of May last, stands adjourned to Wednesday the thirty first day of January next, to meet at Boston; and whereas dispatches have been received from Congress, relative to matters of great importance, which require an earlier attendance of the General Court, than the time to which it stands adjourned.

I HAVE THEREFORE thought fit, by and with the advice of the Council, to convene the General Court upon Wednesday the eighteenth day of October next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, to meet at the State-House in Boston: And all the Members of the said Court are required to take notice thereof, and govern themselves accordingly.

And the Sheriffs of the several Counties, their Under-Sheriffs, or Deputies, and the Constables of the several towns within the same, are directed to cause this Proclamation to be forthwith published and posted within their respective precincts.

Given at the Council-Chamber in Boston, this twenty fourth day of August, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty six, and in the eleventh year of the Independence of the United States of America.

JAMES BOWDOIN

By his Excellency's Command,
JOHN AVERY, Jun. Secy.

CONVENTION.

meeting of Delegates from fifty towns in the County of Hampshire, held at Hatfield, on Friday the twenty second day of August, and continued by adjournment to the twenty fifth &c. Col. James Gasson, of Rye, in the Chair, voted that the assembly be constitutional. He prohibited division from a thorough consideration of the choice of town meetings, as they are obligatory only as they carry light and action with them, and are of the same nature, as ought to have the same effect and influence, as the opinions of any other body of men may be upon our measures. The Convention which dunes a greater power than to inform others, as evidently usurp the rights of the people; they betray their ambition and lust of dominion, and should be watched as rivals and upholders of the despotic authority of the State, as those who have a design upon the majesty of the people entering in the Legislature. Such an assumption, if managed by men who intend to the people to an undue submission to them, for a constitutional authority in a republic is never attacked but by those who are appointed to govern, and are not opinion enough to think them, and are qualified for rulers, and have their breasts to ambition, to push them on to indirect, and violent measures, to gain the consent of the annually elected by the Representatives of the people in General Court.

5th. The existence of the Courts of common pleas and general sessions of the Peace.

6th. The fee table as it now stands.

7th. The present mode of appropriating the impost and excise.

8th. The unreasonable grants made to some of the officers of Government.

9th. The supplementary aid.

10th. The present mode of paying the several securities.

11th. The present mode adopted for the payment and speedy collection of the last tax.

12th. The present mode of taxation as it operates unequally between the polls and estates, and between the landed and mercantile interests.

13th. The present method of practices of the Attorneys at law.

14th. The want of a sufficient medium of trade, to remedy the mischiefs arising from the scarcity of money.

15th. The General Court sitting in the town of Boston.

16th. The present embarrassments on the press.

17th. The neglect of the settlement of important matters depending between the Commonwealth and Congress, relating to monies and averages.

18th. Voted that this convention recommend to the several towns in this county, that they instruct their representatives, to use their influence in the next General Court, to have emitted a bank of paper money, subject to depreciation, making it a tender in all payments, equal to gold and silver, to be issued in order to call in the commonwealth's securities.

19th. Voted, that whereas several of the above articles of grievances, arise from defects in the constitution; therefore a revision of the same ought to take place.

20th. Voted, that it be recommended by this convention to the several towns in this county, that they petition the Governor to call the General Court immediately together, in order that the other grievances complained of, may by the Legislature be redressed.

21st. Voted, that this convention recommend it to the inhabitants of this county, that they abstain from all mobs and unlawful assemblies, until a constitutional method of redress can be obtained.

22d. Voted, that Mr. Caleb West be desired to transmit a copy of the proceedings of this convention, to the convention of the county of Worcester.

23d. Voted, that the chairman of this convention be desired, to transmit a copy of the proceedings of this convention to the county of Berkshire.

24th. Voted, that the chairman of this convention be directed to notify a county convention, upon any motion made to him for that purpose, to judge the reasons offered sufficient, giving such notice together with the reasons therefor in the public papers of this county.

25th. Voted, that a copy of the proceedings of this convention, be sent to the press in Springfield for publication.

Signed per Order,
BENJ. BONNEY, Chairman,
Hatfield, Aug. 25th, 1786.

LONDON, May 26.

If the following relation had not been attested by the respectable persons whose names are subjoined, we should not have given it a place, as it bears no small portion of the marvellous:

A well attested and Circumstantial account of MARGERY GASSON, of Rye, in Suffex; whose singular and very extraordinary case hath for some time excited the curiosity and attention of all degrees of people in the vicinity of that place, and the neighbouring counties.

MARGERY GASSON, the 11th child of poor but industrious parents, (who are now living) was born the 18th of Nov. 1763, at Rye, in Suffex. Her parents brought them up to industry, and Marge-

ry was early out at service. In 1782, she lived at the Queen's-Head Inn, in Rye, where she became acquainted with George Huntley, a young sea-faring man; and the connection becoming closer, she was supposed to be with child. The parish officers making enquiry into the matter she was in March, 1783, taken by Mr. James Elliot, (then Overseer of the poor before Chiswell, Slade, Esq. Mayor of the town, and sworn to at which time she proposed herself more than four months gone. In July following every symptom of approaching labour appeared, and every necessary was provided by her mother; thro' pains came on and lasted some time, when they ceased. However, as she expected to be delivered the continued close at home, and had slight pains at different times, until April 1784, (the second term of 9 months when strong labour again came on, and continued for some time, but went away. After this time she was attacked with fits which from time to time came on most violently, so much, that it often required four, and sometimes six people to keep her in bed. These fits continued until January, 1785, when labour pains again came on (for the third time) and went away. The fits, however, continued coming on stronger and stronger. The beginning of July, 1785, the child lay quiet for near a fortnight, and was supposed to be dead (by Mr. J. Mackrill, the surgeon who attended her nearly the whole time) but Margery declared it was not dead, as she could feel it, though there was no outward appearance of motion. At the end of the fortnight it began again, and continued as usual, with violent fits at different times. At the end of October last, and beginning of November she had labouring pains again (for the fourth time) which continued at different times violent; but went off as before. The fits continued to come on nearly every fortnight, and were if possible, more violent each succeeding time. Margery Gasson was, before the year 1783, a slight young woman; since her pregnancy, she has continued to increase in size, so that at present she is a most wonderful object to behold. The motion of the subject within her is astonishing, for, on laying the hand of any person on her belly, it begins to start and jump about, bounding from one side to the other; and frequently getting upwards to high, as admit to occasion suffocation. It throws the body of Margery from one side of the bed to the other, and oftentimes brings on the fits beforementioned. The circumstances attending this young woman are many and too wonderful almost to be credited. But, as she is now living, any person may, by enquiry, be satisfied that all here related is taken from her own mouth. She expects, in July next, that pains of labour will again come on (for the fifth time) she sincerely hopes and prays that a deliverance from her trouble may arrive, and the astonished neighbours be satisfied with a certainty of what has continued for three years past and upwards, to occasion so much uneasiness to herself and doubts to many, of what it may be; and though all agree, that something most uncommon and extraordinary must be the occasion of her having continued in this state for so long a time.

Rye, 18th May, 1786.

"We have made strict enquiry after the truth of the above facts, and have no cause to doubt of the truth of them."

THOMAS LAMB, Mayor.

C. SLADE, Magistrate.

JAMES LAMB, Church-warden.

W. ROBERTS, Surgeon.

SEPTEMBER 1786.

THE

NUMB. 3.

HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1786.

NORTHAMPTON, PRINTED BY WILLIAM BUTLER, A FEW RODS EAST OF THE COURT-HOUSE.

NORTHAMPTON, Sept. 6, 1786.

To the Public.

BY the advice and encouragement of a number of Gentlemen in this County, the Subscriber has established a Printing-Office in Northampton, where printing of all kinds usual in America will be performed with care and dispatch.

In a country like this, where our national character and happiness so entirely depend upon a general diffusion of knowledge among the people, the extensive advantages of such periodical publications cannot be too often explained or too highly estimated.—The United States of America owe their existence as an empire to that superior degree of knowledge which the people at large have enjoyed and maintained through every period of their progress, from the first settlement of the country to the late revolution. In no country have the rights of mankind been more generally understood, and more rationally and systematically maintained. It is well known that the establishment of schools in every part of the country and the circulation of News-Papers, are among the principal causes which have led us to our present situation: the danger is, that the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity will produce inattention to these subjects; that when the feelings excited by our troubles have subsided, our minds will sink into that indolence which is natural to such a state, our children will grow up in ignorance, and ignorance is the parent of slavery and all the national vices which mark the decline of empire.

Whatever may be the fate of the Subscriber in his attempt, the establishment of a press in this town certainly promises many advantages to this part of the country. The greater part of the extensive and flourishing counties of Hampshire and Berkshire, are much more commodiously situated to receive their communications from this office than from any other, while increasing the number of presses in the country, will probably increase the number of readers and writers, an object to be desired by every friend of liberty and literature.

WILLIAM BUTLER.

From the HERALD.

Strictures upon County Conventions in general, and upon the late meeting holden at Hatfield in particular: addressed to the Freeholders of the County of Hampshire.

NUMBER II.

MY COUNTRYMEN, ASSEMBLIES acting upon the concerns of government, should have their powers and business clearly defined: unless this be the case, they are immediately dangerous if not fatal to the liberties of the people. Under our excellent constitution, all branches of government and civil corporations, have their powers nicely defined; the bill of rights and frame of government are our charter and sacred compact, and they serve as a limitation to our rulers in all their administrations. As it is necessary for national security and the protection of individuals, to limit with caution every department in government? And can there be any safety to the property of the people, if the power of the county conventions interfering in mat-

ters of government, while they are destitute of limitations of liberty from all restrictions, and for like the wild stag range at large where none is able to follow or find them? Besides there are essential objections to the usual manner of their appointment. As they often possess influence those who feel with other people's eyes, it is justly to be reproached, that they should be liable to a summons from any master or town who may take it upon them to issue the precept for convening them.—Besides conventions in this county have been composed of members very unsafe and partially chosen.

Upon issuing the paper money in Rhode-Island, a cry was set up in the county of Bristol, one town more than had met in convention, called for paper money to cheer their public and private creditors, attacked the constitution, set up the cry of danger, issued their precept for county meetings, and then for a commonwealth convention; from thence the fire, which is by this time nearly extinguished where it began, spread into the eastern parts of this county; a number of men from several towns met at Pelham, they issued their precept for calling the county. How is it probable the members for the towns were chosen? Were the judicious and sedate collected together, or did they, conscious of their faculties and privileges under the government, let the restless and apprehensive take the lead in the appointment of members? The fact, as it truly was in many of the towns, may be conjectured from the consequent proceedings of the members. It is natural tho' not always prudent to let the zealous and enterprising take their own measures; however, they might have been easily controuled; and it is not without grounds that these observations are applied to the affairs of the late convention. When a number of men in a town are warm, and some are hot-spirited, what kind of man may be expected to choose to act for them? Will he be the coolest and most liberal man amongst them? I fear not; his wishes are not all. The members as far as I can learn were chosen by nomination; a word need not be said to shew that a representation thus chosen, will in all cases be partial, in important ones be very unfair and dangerous: very different men would certainly have been chosen by ballot. In many of the towns the meetings were very thin, not a third of the voters being present, how many towns admitted such as were not voters I will not conjecture. I wish to have it remembered, that the business attended by the convention, as stated in the convening letter, though very extensive, yet limited the town to act upon constitutional principles, or in support of the constitution; and however some members were directed to conform themselves to the British resolves, and others to take measures for subverting the government; yet the greater part were uninstructed, and therefore limited by the Pelham letter. That they abused their powers and violated the trust of their constituents, will appear before we have done: they would resent the presumption of their members. The conduct of the convention in exceeding the business of their appointment is a glaring example of the danger of convening bodies who are absolute, with no bounds set to their motions; they have nothing to do, or anything to do, or every thing to do, as they feel. Freeman, I wish to be specially excepted from such unlimited government; let those who are pleased with it, vindicate it. It is worthy observation, that the towns were disproportionately represented, and that a small precinct of 30 polls, was held in as much consequence as a town of five hundred; this is an excessive manner of proceeding, especially in framing a new constitution, the outline of which we shall find struck out by that wife body but by the way it was done without the direction or participation of their constituents. I hint these matters principally to inform the public, and to vindicate the reputation of the county, which might otherwise labour, and to give a proper clue for understanding the transactions of the body.

Now, gentlemen of the convention, having collected you together from your different towns, I shall with your liberty inform you of the

and the freeholders at large, how you managed your matters as you gentlemen, who do not mind matters when you speak of your constitutional rulers, will be so liberal as to allow me to speak freely of your proceedings, and make such observations as I shall judge charitable and necessary for the common good: as this is no more than fair, I take it for granted that I have your liberty to go on with my subject.

The first resolve mentioned in a constitutional assembly, which if they would have us to believe, that they are a body known by the constitution, or that they have any power or right to act for others in matters of government, I shall beg leave to resent as an assumption of authority not very friendly either to the natural or constitutional rights of the freeholders of this county. Perhaps I mistake, and some of the gentlemen will point out their charter of incorporation, and their constitutional origin. Many of the members, I dare say, did not mean to alight upon us, but the principle is dangerous and ought to be reprobated. Were the convention suspicious of their power, or were some of them conscious of faulty intentions which rendered such a resolve permanent, I am persuaded that they ought to have had some constitutional power for that very purpose; they ought to have had a legal appointment as public censors, before they presumed to make such a hardy attack upon our constitution, ratified by the people of this county, and by more than two-thirds of the freemen through the commonwealth. As they are in their premier, yet I give them the motto of wisdom, who understand to guide the chariot of the sun. "Magnis excidit ausis." They fell in a hardy enterprise. It may not be a misnomer to watch them before they set the world on fire, as was the misfortune of that ambitious young fellow. Another event took place at the beginning of the session, which may account for some after determinations. A messenger (not originated as I am told) from the county of Worcester favoured the convention with the Worcester resolves, and with some out of door information of the enormous disquietudes in that county; but though his intelligence contradicts current report and wants confirmation, yet it was a word in season to produce zealous measures in this county. The convention being thus created, collected, organized and enlightened by the Worcester gentlemen, and made a constitutional body by their own vote, their business opened: it was to collect grievances, put them up in one heap, and then contrive a way to have them removed; to execute this benevolent work of finding out things at which the people might be disquieted and perplexed; they raised a large committee, to invent and lay before the body a list of grievances, and to point out means of redress. The committee did their work faithfully, they brought in a notable parcel of grievances, which with no small difficulty some of the members prevented from being voted in gross.—I do not remember to have heard of any committee raised to quiet the minds of the people, by pointing out to them arguments for confidence and satisfaction in their rulers, and to encourage them with spirit and perseverance to encounter their necessary burdens; until they should be in God's providence removed. I do not know that this would have answered the design in the Pelham letter, in calling the convention. If the convention was not called to quiet and content the minds of the misinformed people, to detect the gross and misrepresentations circulating in the county, and to help them under their burdens and animate their virtuous endeavours to answer the demands of the public upon them; if the convention was not called to aid the people in political, moral and Christian honesty, fortitude and charity, I would be far from blaming them in omitting a business not included in their appointment. I am an advocate for all men and all bodies of men doing their own business and leaving other people's business alone. My business is with the proceedings of the convention, and to them I return.

My preamble states, that they have found a number of grievances, which they specify under distinct heads. It may be well for us to know what a grievance is: I beg leave to enquire, to define it: A grievance, in matters of civil government, is a wrongful, oppressive and unconstitutional

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