

**THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE UNITED
STATES, ITS SOURCES
AND ITS APPLICATION**

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The Constitution of the United States, Its Sources and Its Application by Thomas James Norton

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THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
UNITED STATES

ITS SOURCES AND ITS APPLICATION

"This government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and support."

GEORGE WASHINGTON, "Farewell Address."

"For I think it an undeniable position that a competent knowledge of the laws of that society in which we live is the proper accomplishment of every gentleman and scholar, an highly useful, I had almost said essential, part of liberal and polite education."

WILLIAM BLACKSTONE.

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER CATHERINE
AND
MY SISTER MARY

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PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS OF GOVERNMENT

“Civil governments, in their first institution, are voluntary associations for mutual defense. To obtain the desired end it is absolutely necessary that each individual should conceive himself obliged to submit his private opinion and actions to the judgment of the greater number of his associates.”

GIBBON'S "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", Vol. I, ch. ix.

PREFACE

"In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion," wrote Washington in his Farewell Address, "it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened."

The purpose of this book is to make accessible to the citizen and his son, to his newly enfranchised wife and daughter, and especially to his children in school, such a knowledge of the Constitution of the United States as will serve in emergency as a "first line of defense."

"Almost every provision in that instrument," said a great jurist, writing on our Constitution, "has a history that must be understood before the brief and sententious language employed can be comprehended in the relations its authors intended."

But the means of acquiring that information essential to full and strong citizenship never has been available in practical and simple form to the mass of the people or to teachers. There are many great works on the Constitution of the United States, but most of them were written for the legal profession and are in two or more large volumes.

The simple plan here is to explain the Constitution by a note to every line or clause that has a historical story or drama back of it, or that has contributed during the one hundred thirty-three years of our life under this instrument to the National or the international welfare of mankind. This method leaves the text of the Constitu-