Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States, published during its discussion by the people, 1787-1788

Ford Paul Leicester
Title: Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States, published during its discussion by the people, 1787-1788

Author: Ford Paul Leicester

This is an exact replica of a book. The book reprint was manually improved by a team of professionals, as opposed to automatic/OCR processes used by some companies. However, the book may still have imperfections such as missing pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were a part of the original text. We appreciate your understanding of the imperfections which can not be improved, and hope you will enjoy reading this book.
500 Copies Printed.

No. 324
Pamphlets

On the

Constitution of the United States,

Published during Its Discussion by the People
1787–1788.

Edited
With Notes and a Bibliography
by
Paul Leicester Ford.

Brooklyn, N. Y.:
1888.
4787 C15

A. 82486
PREFACE.

The English speaking people have been a race of pamphleteers. Whenever a question—religious, political, military or personal—has interested the general public, it has occasioned a war of pamphlets, which, however partisan and transitory, were in a manner photographs of the public opinion, and as such have been used and valued by students and publicists.

The rarity and consequent difficulty of reaching this class of literature has been, however, a great obstacle to its use as sources of history. The name of pamphlet tells the purpose of these little publications. Written hurriedly, to effect a purpose for which there is not enough time or matter for a more elaborate volume, they are thrown by after a brief circulation and before a decade has passed, the edition has disappeared, and if any are still in existence, they are only to be found in the few public and private libraries which have taken the trouble to secure these fugitive leaflets.

The recognized value of these tractates in England has led to very extensive republications; and the Harleian Miscellany, the Somers Tracts, the issues of the Roxburghe, Bannatyne, Maitland, Chetham, Camden and Percy societies and the reprints of Halliwell, Collier, and M'Culloch, not to mention many minor collections, have placed several thousand of them within the reach of every one. But in America few attempts have been made to collect this kind of literature—Peter Force reprinted a series of pamphlets on the early settlement of the United States and a work of similar scope on Canada; containing reprints of the so called "Jesuit Relations" was printed under the patronage of the Canadian gov-
ernment. John Wingate Thornton and Frank Moore have collected a number of the patriotic sermons preached before and during the Revolutionary war. Franklin B. Hough republished a series of the funeral sermons and eulogies on the death of Washington, and James Spear Loring did the same for the orations delivered in Boston from 1770 to 1852. Samuel G. Drake reprinted a collection of tracts relating to King Philip’s war, Joseph Sabin issued a series relating to the propagation of the gospel among the New England Indians, and William H. Whitmore edited, for the Prince Society, a number relating to the governorship of Sir Edmund Andros—but these are the only attempts worth mentioning to systematically gather these leaflets of our history, and which have singularly neglected those bearing on politics and government, in which we have so largely originated the true theories and methods.

When the student or historian comes to examine the earlier pamphlet literature of our country he encounters the greatest difficulty in their use. The lack of communication between the colonies or states, with its consequent localization of the pamphlet; the small edition caused by the high price of paper, which at that time was the costly element in the production of books; the little value attached by each generation to the pamphlets of its own time; the subsequent wars, with the destruction and high price of old paper that came with them, and the general disregard of historical material that existed for many years after the stirring times that occasioned these arguments, have all tended to make these tracts almost impossible to consult; and any one desiring to examine the original editions of the thirteen pamphlets contained in this volume would be compelled to visit the public libraries in the cities of Washington, Philadelphia, New York, Albany and Boston, while it would take a lifetime of patient searching and waiting to collect them from the second-hand booksellers and auction-rooms, at prices that few would care to pay.

As the rarity of these pamphlets has caused their neglect, so also has their anonymous publication. It was a time of
literary masks, and we often find, like the knights of old, that when their masks were removed, they had concealed our ablest statesmen, one of whom wrote of his anonymous pamphlet, "If the reasoning in the pamphlet you allude to is just, it will have its effect on candid and discerning minds;—if weak and inconclusive, my name cannot render it otherwise," but it is certain, whatever the effect at the moment, that more attention and care would have been given these works by succeeding generations had they borne the name of one of the makers of our nation, rather than the pseudonymous mask which gave no clue to its authorship.

In America, we are too apt to forget the losing side of a question. Few to-day know of the intense struggle that took place over the ratification of our constitution, or realize that the adoption of a government which has worked so successfully, met with the strongest opposition from such men as Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, George Clinton, Samuel Chase, Elbridge Gerry, Albert Gallatin, James Monroe and others, while many equally famous were either neutral or gave it but lukewarm support. If the great fear and prediction of these men—that the general government would entirely subvert the state governments, with a consequent loss of personal freedom—has not been realized, it will nevertheless be seen in the following pages that many of their objections were embodied in the future amendments, and the disregard of others has occasioned some of our most serious national questions. If this collection presents a greater number of federal than anti-federal arguments, it is only in the proportion in which the latter was overborne by the former, both in men and writings.

Of all these partisan writings The Federalist has hitherto been almost the only known argument of those which for nine months kept the printers busy and the people in a turmoil, though the twenty-nine editions of that work attest the value and interest of that class of writings. That these essays equal that great series is not claimed, but I believe, nevertheless, that they, by their simpler and more popular treatment of the question, exerted quite as much influence as that
“judicious and ingenious writer,” who was “not well calculated for the common people,” and therefore deserve in this centennial year a place on the shelf of the publicist or student, with that “political classic” of Hamilton, Madison and Jay.

PAUL LEICESTER FORD.

97 Clark Street,
Brooklyn, New York.
ERRATA.

Page 274, line 1, for mine read mind.
" 275, " 14, " cause read clause.
" 277, " 8, " Richard Harry Lee read Richard Henry Lee.
" 396, " 28, " la substitute /
" 407, " 38, " , substitute /
" 409, " 31, " propounded read proposed.
" 409, " 36, " Pilsner read Pelsue.
" 412, " 21, " J. Lloyd read T. Lloyd.
" 434, " 27, for McClung read McClurg.