

FORMING A MORE PERFECT UNION

We can give up everything but our Constitution, which is the sun of our system. As the natural sun dispels fogs, heats the air, and vivifies and illumines the world, even so does the Constitution, in days of adversity and gloom, come out for our rescue and enlightening.—*Daniel Webster.*

111. The State Constitutions.—You have learned (p. 107) that before the Revolution the colonies had very little to do with one another. Every colony was bound to Great Britain by the tie of dependence, but there were no ties to bind one colony to another; there was no force to hold the colonies together. When the tie of dependence upon England was snapped by the Declaration of Independence each colony became what was called a “free and independent State,” and changed its colonial government into a State government. To bring about this change representatives of the people met in a convention, called a “constitutional convention,” and agreed on a plan as to how the State should be governed. This plan was written out in black and white and was called the constitution of the State. The colonies of Connecticut and Rhode Island, however, did not form new constitutions, but took their old charters (pp. 58, 60) for constitutions.

In drawing up its constitution each State followed its own wishes and its own needs. The constitution of Georgia differed from that of New Hampshire, because the needs of Georgia were different from those of New Hampshire. Yet while the governments of the States differed from one another, they at the same time bore a strong resemblance to one another. While many people of foreign blood had come into the colonies, they had all become Americans and had been brought up under British traditions and customs and had the same notions of government and law. Every State had a government in which the people had a voice, and the power of government in every State