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Book Note

THE CONSTITUTION AND WHAT IT MEANS TODAY, by Edward S. Corwin. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1938. Pp. xxviii, 215. \$2.00.

Though the Federal Constitution may be read in a few minutes, a lifetime of diligent study would scarcely suffice for a complete understanding of this historic document. Professor Corwin, without permitting loss of value because of brevity, has achieved the brilliant accomplishment of condensing this tremendous work into the short space of 193 pages.

After each specific quotation of the Constitution there is an explanatory paragraph, written in simple understandable language, showing the interpretation and effect of judicial construction upon that particular passage.

Throughout the book, Professor Corwin reveals by reference to judicial decision the recent considerable revolution in our constitutional law. The earlier tendency of the courts to regard the interests of the state and federal governments as mutually incompatible, and to look upon government as the natural enemy of the individual is being changed. Professor Corwin summarizes the new trend as follows: "first, that the National Government and the state constitute a single governmental system, and hence were intended to cooperate with, rather than to frustrate, one another; second, that 'liberty' in the sense of the Constitution is not something of which government is the sole and invariable enemy, but that, on the contrary, it often has other enemies against whom government may and should protect it."¹ He goes on further to say that "A still uncompleted phase of the revolution is the overthrow of the doctrine of constitutional tax exemption."²

Because of the fact that the sixth revised edition brings the work up to 1938 with the aid of excellent annotations and supplementary material, this little text will prove particularly useful to students and laymen interested in constitutional law.

S. W. J.

1. Preface, p. ix.
2. Ibid.