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Our Federal Republic, by Harry Pratt Judson

Oliver P. Field

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Our Federal Republic. By Harry Pratt Judson. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1925. Pp. 277.

Mr. Judson pleads for a return to the times that are gone forever, it seems. He asks for a larger recognition of the place of the states in the American scheme of government. The book contains a very forceful statement of the argument which is often advanced against the extension of the powers of the national government. The illustrations are often apt, and sometimes striking. Such a book is not to be judged so much by its fact content as by the cogency of the argument it presents. The book is an attempt at interpretation to support a thesis, namely that the governments of the states should be given a larger share in the problem of government in this country than they are now given. One may not agree with Mr. Judson's thesis or with the illustrations which he uses here and there, but the book is stimulating and thought provoking. On pages forty eight and forty nine will be found the statement which is now rather current, to the effect that thirteen states can defeat an amendment to the constitution and that a minority of the people of the United States can procure an amendment to the constitution if they are properly scattered in these various states. Mr. Judson and many others feel that this presents a serious potential danger, but it is inconceivable that these particular states, with different interests, in different sections of the country, should ever be the particular thirteen of the particular eighteen, as the case may be, to combine for these purposes. The danger is fancied, not likely to ever happen. Furthermore, after stating that the constitution is too easy to amend he says that it is impossible to change the amendment which is objectionable because the constitution is too hard to amend. Perhaps we are likely to view the amending process as too difficult or too easy depending upon whether we want the constitution amended in this particular instance or not. That is apparently the case with Mr. Judson, for in one of his concluding statements in the book is "There should be a twentieth amendment to the Federal Constitution. It should repeal all amendments following the Fourteenth" (P. 267). Why not the Fourteenth, the most objectionable of them all to many people?

The book is well worth reading. The person who agrees with Mr. Judson will find comfort in it. The person who disagrees with him will find comfort in it also.

OLIVER P. FIELD.