

OUR INDEPENDENCE and the CONSTITUTION

by DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

Every day, tired express riders came dashing into Philadelphia from South Carolina, Vermont, New York—all the thirteen colonies—with messages for the delegates to the Second Continental Congress. Although the Congress had been in session at the State House for over a year, no one seemed to know what was going on.

What did those messages say? What had the delegates been doing all that time?

No one dared to ask; that is, no one but Debby. She had often seen two of the delegates, old Doctor Benjamin Franklin and young Mr. Thomas Jefferson, pass her house. So one day she asked them, "What do you do, all day long, every day? What do you *do*?"

To everyone's surprise, the two great men wrote "A Report to Debby." In it, they told her about their hopes and plans. But they didn't tell her what was going to happen on July 4th, 1776—just one month away.

In *Our Independence and the Constitution*, Dorothy Canfield Fisher gives us an exciting picture of that first Independence Day when every bell in Philadelphia clanged and people shouted and roared until they had no voices left. Even more stirring—and more important to us today—is Mrs. Fisher's account of what happened in 1787.

Every American will read this story with a wish that he could have lived in those passion-filled days when our country was coming into being. It will be read, too, with a pleasant chill of fear. For suppose those men of 1776 and 1787 hadn't been so great and good and patient and wise. Just suppose!

Illustrated by ROBERT DOREMUS