

The revised edition of Mr. Sidney Low's treatise on "The Governance of England" (Putnam) is not, on the whole, greatly changed from the original work, published nine years ago. The new edition deals chiefly with the "working constitution," which, as every one knows, is quite different from the formal and conventional aspects of the English system. Dry legal discussions are accordingly unnecessary, and the book is correspondingly interesting to the layman—a quality greatly enhanced by an admirably simple style. The author realizes that he is at a disadvantage in describing the actual government of England just at a time when the Parliament Act has limited the power of the Lords, and when the Home Rule Bill promises a fundamental change in the relations of Parliament to the parts of the United Kingdom. These and related topics find a place in the Introduction and in the final chapter, "Aspects of Change"; and the reflections of so eminent a publicist as Mr. Low on these matters are vastly more interesting and important than the description of the English system, which is already fairly well understood. The Parliament Act, thinks Mr. Low, adds to the strength of the Cabinet, by restricting the power of the Lords over legislation. The Quinquennial Act etc. tributes to the same result, as it tends to establish regular elections, like those of the United States. Within the Cabinet the Prime Minister's influence and power are growing, as is shown by the royal proclamation of 1905 which gave precedence to the Premier, next after the two highest ecclesiastical dignitaries of the realm. There is a danger in this growing power of the chief minister, in the authority it gives him—the leader of the dominant party in the United Kingdom—over the British dominions. It is pointed out that the colonial constitutionalists fear the Prime Minister more than the King,—indeed, that they regard the latter as their protector against "Downing Street." The control of the dominions by an elective Minister, who secures this control by effective mastery of a political party in one part—though the central part—of the British Empire, seems to Mr. Low quite as hazardous as direct personal control by the King. To be sure, the King cannot in these days re-establish unlimited monarchy, but must always be influenced by the representatives of the people. But what would result if the advice given the King by the elective English Premier should differ from that given by the elective Premier of one of the Dominions,—

Canada, for example? This seems to point to the need of some other system of coördinating the Empire than that in vogue. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet should also be limited to some degree in their control of foreign affairs through the establishment of a Committee of Parliament, like the American Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, entitled to know the foreign problems and policies of the Cabinet. Finally, Mr. Low again declares his conviction that some machinery of subordinate legislatures, some devolution on a large scale, is required to relieve the central Parliament of what are local questions, in order that all matters may be dealt with more carefully and effectually.