

They are jointly as well as severally responsible for their acts. The executive head of the United States Government, on the other hand, as a recent American writer tells us, "is completely independent of the legislature as to his political policy. His Council or Cabinet of advisers are his own agents, responsible politically to himself only. The defeat of a proposition made by him, or by any one or all of them to the legislature, or a vote of censure passed by the legislature upon him or them do not call for his resignation or their resignations. Nothing of the sort is provided or intimated in the remotest degree in the Constitution. The political independence of the Executive over against the Legislature is complete."

The fundamental defect of the American system, to quote an American critic, in the *North American Review*, seems to lie in the separation and diffusion of power and responsibility,\* and on both points it is obviously less favourable than our system to the speedy and safe carrying into effect of the popular will. There is, writes Mr. Bryce, in his work on the American Commonwealth,† in the American Government considered as a whole a want of unity. Its branches are unconnected; their efforts are not directed to one aim, do not produce one harmonious result. The sailors, the helmsman, the engineer, do not seem to have one purpose or obey one will, so that instead of making steady way the vessel may pursue a devious or zig-zag course, and sometimes merely turn round and round in the water; while as to the matter of responsibility, he says:‡ "Not uncommonly there is presented the sight of an exasperated American public going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom it may devour, and finding no one."§ "If corruption ever eats its way silently into the vitals of the Republic," says the great American jurist, Story, "it will be because the people are unable to bring responsibility home to the Executive through his chosen Ministers."§

And before passing to other matters we may notice that as a minor consequence of the American system of the separation of the executive from the legislature in which the contrast with our own system is important, Ministers are not present in Congress to be questioned as to matters of administration which may arise, although Mr. Woodrow Wilson, himself an American writer, admits that the only really self-governing people is that people which discusses and interrogates its administration.¶ And the late historian Freeman, in his "Impressions of America," published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1882, tells us that the one incident which specially struck him while present at a sit-

\* Vol. III., p. 331.

† (2 Vol. ed.) Vol. I.

‡ Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 320.

§ Commentaries on the American Constitution, 4th ed., Vol. I., p. 614.

¶ "Congressional Government," p. 303.

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