

## THE CROWN AND ITS OFFICIALS

It is usual to look for the beginnings of this principle in the various attempts of Parliament to influence the Crown in the choice of its officials or 'Ministers,' and to procure the rejection or dismissal of Ministers who, in the judgment of Parliament, were corrupt, inefficient, or mischievous. In fact, the story goes further back; for it would not have been much use for Parliament to influence the conduct of Ministers, unless Ministers could influence the conduct of the Crown. But this latter influence was very early established; for, with the great increase in the activities of the Crown which resulted from the Norman Conquest, we learn that the Kings soon found it necessary to collect around them, as a permanent institution, a body of advisers, known first as the *Curia Regis* or 'King's Court,' and, later, as the King's 'Ordinary' or 'Privy' Council.

## THE PRIVY COUNCIL

This body, as distinguished from the larger Council of Peers or Magnates, which only met at intervals for the discussion of important business, probably had quarters in the King's palace, and met frequently for the transaction of ordinary every-day business.

## THE EXCHEQUER

One of its earliest forms was that of the Exchequer, or Finance Office, which managed the receipt and expenditure of the royal revenue. We have a vivid account of this body's procedure in the twelfth century, by a contemporary writer who evidently wrote from first-hand knowledge; and one of the things that strikes us most about it is the mass of minute regula-