

band's house, and the amount furnished her. Being married, she cannot bind *herself* (she may bind her husband) for necessaries. She is not named in the record; she cannot be said to be "a person" in whose immediate or individual behalf the action is brought. It is brought in behalf of her brother, to whom she is in no way legally liable. I am, &c.,

QUESTIONER.

[We touched upon this subject in the last number of the *Local Courts Gazette*; but as the views of the learned gentleman who writes are not, we understand, entirely in accordance with views we have expressed, we shall endeavour to return to the subject next month.—
Eds. L. J.

REVIEWS.

ON PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND; ITS ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT, AND PRACTICAL OPERATION. By Alpheus Todd, Librarian of the Legislative Assembly of Canada. In two volumes. Vol. I. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1867. \$4 50.

The Dominion of Canada is, we all hope and most of us think, "equal to the occasion." She possesses eminent statesmen, at whose head, it may not be going out of our way to boast, is one of our cloth. Judges we have had and still have, whose industry, talents and unblemished integrity, are an omen of good for the future. Others we have, who in various ways have, and yet will leave a worthy name on the page of history. But in a country whose existence as a nation can scarcely even yet be said to have commenced, and where life is so active, with so few opportunities for men, even with a taste for letters, to follow the bent of their talent or inclinations, it might naturally be thought that it would be difficult to find a person who could attain to eminence in the study of such a profound subject as that treated of in the volume before us.

Many men might in the position of Mr. Todd as Librarian of the Legislative Assembly of Canada, be as courteous and as attentive to his duties as he is (though even this may be questioned), but few, we venture to say, would improve the occasion with his diligence and devotion, and fewer still could with equal talent give to the world the result of such research and thought as he has displayed.

In the preface, the author gives an explanation of the "attempt by a resident in a distant colony to expound the system of parliamentary government as administered in the mother country." An explanation only useful, we should imagine, for the purpose of disarming that very liberal portion of the British public who think that nothing is good that is not English.

More than twenty-five years ago, prior to the appearance of May's "Usages of Parliament," Mr. Todd published a manual of parliamentary practice for the use of the Legislature, which was received with much favour by the Canadian Parliament, and was formally adopted for the use of members, and the cost of its production defrayed out of the public funds. In the same year, the principle of responsible government was first applied to our colonial constitution.

Being frequently applied to by those engaged in carrying out this new and then untried scheme, as well as by his own addiction to parliamentary studies, he acquired a mass of information which proved of much utility in the settlement of many points arising out of responsible government; this moreover was not of a merely local or temporary character, but capable of general application. This led him eventually to write a treatise on the parliamentary government of Great Britain—which, as he says, whilst trenching as little as possible on ground occupied by former writers, might supply information upon branches of constitutional knowledge hitherto overlooked, and give some account of the growth, development and present functions of the Cabinet Council, and the practical treatment of the questions involved in the relations of the Crown and Parliament.

Our author is eminently conservative (using the word, of course, in its original and not in its political acceptation) in his views on these subjects, claiming that "the great and increasing defect in all parliamentary governments, whether provincial or imperial, is the weakness of executive authority," and that "any political system which is based upon the monarchical principle, must concede to the chief ruler something more than mere ceremonial functions." An attentive perusal of that part of the work devoted to the royal prerogative, will go far to convince the most skeptical that the sovereign is really more than an ornamental appendage to the state, and that the functions of the Crown have their appropriate sphere. These functions "are the more apt to be unappreciated because their most beneficial operations are those which, whilst strictly constitutional, are hidden from the public eye."

The first volume, which alone has yet been published, is complete in itself, and is divided into five chapters:

Chap. I.—A general introduction.

Chap. II.—Historical introduction, giving a review of the origin and progress of Parliamentary Government.

Chap. III.—The constitutional annals of the administrations of England from 1782 to 1866, with a tabular statement of the Ministries during the same period, their appointment, retirement, &c.

Chap. IV. is devoted to the discussion of the constitutional position, powers, privileges and duties of the sovereign, with a sketch of the character and public conduct of the four