

29. With respect to a bill, moving that it be "read this day six months" is a mode of throwing it out without coming to an express declaration against the principle of the measure.

30. An acceptance of "the Chiltern hundreds" is a form which has now no other meaning than that the member accepting resigns his seat. By an express act of parliament, no office having emolument attached, can be conferred by the crown on a member of the house of commons without his thereby vacating his seat, and it is only thus that a member can rid himself of the duties which any body of constituents may impose even without his consent. The crown therefore, as an accommodation to the house at large, is always ready to confer on any member "the stewardship of his majesty's Chiltern hundreds," which office, when it has served his purpose, he immediately resigns.

31. The king, we have already said, is the fountain of executive justice. Law, whether criminal or civil, however, is administered by the judges, who, with the exception of the lord chancellor, hold their places during good behaviour. No man can be tried for any offence until the grand jurors of his country have decided that there is reasonable ground for the accusation. He is then given in charge to a jury of his equals, and their verdict is final. No man can be tried twice for the same offence; and when a person is convicted by a jury, there is no appeal but to the mercy of the king.

32. The administration of civil law could not be described within our narrow limits. It must suffice therefore to state, that the civil and common law courts are open to every suitor; and that justice is freely administered to all, whatever may be their rank or station.

Questions for Examination.

1. What is the use of a constitution?
2. Whence arises the peculiar excellence of the British constitution?
3. By whom was the first charter granted to the English people?
4. What circumstances led to the concession of Magna Charta?
5. Why were corporations established?
6. What was the origin of the house of commons?
7. Did the kings favour the house of commons?
8. When did the authority of the king come into collision with the authority of parliament?
9. What led to the revolution of 1688?
10. What change was made by the Reform Bill?
11. Into what branches is the British legislature divided?
12. How is the inheritance of the crown regulated?
13. Where are the king's duties prescribed?