

larly impressive to the eye. But the most casual acquaintance with the history of the Privy Council fills the mind with memories dating back to the dawn of our national story, whilst the records of its routine business comprise minute discussions on the religions and the superstitions, the laws, institutions, domestic habits, manners, customs, and antiquities of scores of different races and tribes, with civilizations ranging from primitive savagery to complicated systems elaborated by generations of saints and sages, and sanctioned by immemorial time. The evolution which has resulted in making this particular development of the council of Plantagenet kings the supreme arbiter of questions of canon law such as popes and synods would have disputed about in the days of Becket; of questions of the old French laws transplanted across the Atlantic under the proudest of the Bourbons; of the Roman law which the Dutch took with them to the Cape; of the most venerable and sacred of the holy books of the Hindus; and of the teachings of the Prophet to scores of millions of the devout adherents of Brahmanism and of Islam—is, indeed, a process to wonder at. The Judicial Committee is the legal heart and head of the British Empire. The Queen in Council is the Cæsar to whom all the subjects of that empire, from the hill tribes of the Himalayas to the Red Indians beyond the Rocky Mountains, from mighty potentates contending for the succession to a principality to poor fishermen claiming the right to gather bait, may appeal. Men come to her from the uttermost ends of the earth for justice, and tell the innermost history of their private lives before her appointed tribunal. The case which the court had to determine on Saturday came from Cyprus, and turned upon the question whether the *status* of the natural children of a Roman Catholic father who had married an orthodox Greek, and purported to legitimate his children by such marriage, was to be regulated by canon law or by Mahomedan law. The questions incidentally discussed go back to the days of the lower empire, and the early middle ages, while the actual decision largely rests upon the view taken by the committee of the past history of the island, and of the ordinary position of Christians living under Mahomedan domination."