

## “Who the Dickens is Lord Esher?”

The story of a unique career of public service in Great Britain.—A glimpse behind the scenes of British Governmental methods.

One of the absolutely new and unexpected products of modern politics is the “boss.” The “boss” is peculiarly “American.” Yet he can scarcely be prognosticated from the constitution of the United States. It is safe to say no one would rub his eyes at him more than George Washington or Thomas Jefferson.

The English constitution is, of course, unwritten and might be expected therefore to be more prolific of the unexpected than that of the United States. Yet Great Britain (and we hope Canada) has never seen or known a “boss”. So at least it is commonly said.

But is it true? Is the “boss” impossible under the English constitution? An enterprising American newspaper correspondent now answers “no.” He has, in fact, discovered a “boss” in England, and a boss of high degree. Moreover, the “boss” in question has made his way solely on the strength of achievements as a public servant. The following is the letter as published recently in the Springfield Republican in which this startling and very interesting discovery is announced:

### The “Boss” of England.

“They are used in this country (the letter is dated from London) to talking about uncrowned kings. Lloyd George is popularly referred to as the uncrowned king of Wales, and John Redmond is known to thousands of Englishmen as the uncrowned king of Ireland. There are a score of Scottish lairds who really are uncrowned kings in their own country, but we never have had an uncrowned king of England. The average Englishman somehow feels that it would not be quite respectful to the regular royal king, to confer his title, even in jest, on any of his subjects, and so, no matter how popular a politician has become, he never has been breveted to royal rank.

“Now, however, we have something more than an uncrowned king in England. We have a real old-fashioned American style ‘Boss,’ who has far more power than any king has exercised since the days of Cromwell, and who, like the real article in American boss-ship, has all the power of a ruler without any of the responsibilities of office. The boss of England is Lord Esher, and he has been boss since the present liberal government came into power. “Who the dickens is Lord Esher?” no doubt a good many will ask, and they will be echoing the

question which has been asked by thousands of Englishmen, many of them, too, in high places, which would entitle them to know a good deal about the country’s rulers. And the mysterious thing about it is that no one has been able to answer that question satisfactorily.

### Lord Esher.

“As a matter of fact, Lord Esher is to all intents and purposes a private English gentleman. He holds no office in the government, he seldom appears in the House of Lords, and he never makes any speeches, for the excellent reason that he has no gift of oratory. When he was a young man he tried to make one speech in the House of Commons, and failed miserably. Since then he has realized that silence is golden. Yet there is no man to-day who has more to do with the governing of England than Lord Esher, and particularly does he concern himself with the army and navy, although he is found every now and again with a finger in many another governmental and administrative pie.

### Some of the Things he Can Do.

“Officers in the army know that if they desire promotion it is a good thing to be on the right side of Lord Esher. Officers in the navy who are anxious of attaining flag rank while they are still young enough to enjoy its emoluments are diligent callers at Lord Esher’s town house. Rising young politicians who see visions of themselves on the front treasury bench will break any political engagements to put in an appearance at the little dinners and dances which Lady Esher gives during the London season.

### “Who the Dickens is Lord Esher?”

“Everybody who is on the inside in English politics and society knows all this, but no one seems to be able to answer the question: “Who the dickens is Lord Esher?” A number of people have tried, but I have not found one who is able to give a satisfactory answer. A few days ago I put the question to a personage who is in close touch not only with the court, but with the chiefs of both the great political parties and with everybody who is anybody in London society, and he replied: “Ah! there you are asking me a question that I can’t answer. I can tell you who his father and mother were and what he has done, but why he is the real ruler of England is more than I can explain. He is not a man of great wealth