

tude of communities of diverse tongues and races which constitute the "British Commonwealth of Nations"—our "hereditary kingship"—would, perhaps, carry with it an enhanced force if we bear in mind the limitations of the doctrine of hereditary right enunciated by Blackstone, limitations which bring our hereditary kingship into very close analogy to the Republican system owing to its inherent liability in exceptional cases to variation of the line of succession and even to change, not occasioned by a demise of the Crown, in the *personnel* of the hereditary King. "The doctrine," writes Blackstone, "of hereditary right does by no means imply an indefeasible right to the throne. No man will, we think, assert this who has considered our laws, Constitution, and history without prejudice and with any degree of attention. It is unquestionably in the breast of the supreme legislative authority of this kingdom—the Sovereign and both Houses of Parliament—to defeat this hereditary right, and by particular entails, limitations, and provisions to exclude the immediate heir and vest the inheritance in anyone else. This is strictly consonant to our laws and Constitution, as may be gathered from the expression, so frequently used in our statute book, of 'the King's Majesty, his heirs and successors,' in which we may observe that as the word 'heirs' necessarily implies an inheritance or hereditary right generally subsisting in the Royal person, so the word 'successors,' distinctly taken, must imply that this inheritance must sometimes be broken through, and that there may be a successor without being the heir to the King. And this is so extremely reasonable that without such a power lodged elsewhere our polity would be very defective." Blackstone still further expounds the doctrine of hereditary kingship in these countries. "The Crown," he writes, "however it may be limited or transferred, still retains its descendible quality, and becomes hereditary in the wearer in the same manner as it was before hereditary in his predecessor, unless by the rules of the limitation it is otherwise ordered and determined."

The description of "our so-called Dominions" by General Smuts as "nations almost sovereign, almost independent," was very happy and in strict consonance with constitutional practice