

REVIEWS.

the president of a court of justice." (Vol. I., p. 58.)

The administrative functions of the Privy Council, as a Department of State, are also fully explained in another part of the work.

The author in the 3rd chapter, returning from the general survey of the King's Councils under prerogative government, proceeds to discuss the rise, progress, and present condition of the Cabinet Council, the supreme governing body in the political system of Great Britain. The ground occupied in this chapter is entirely new, and the reader will look in vain in any other work for the information which is to be found in this chapter,—and it has been no idle head or hand that has so exhausted the subject and arranged his material in such a lucid shape.

In speaking of the office of Prime Minister he says:—

"The development of the office of Prime Minister in the hands of men who combine the highest qualities of statesmanship with great administrative and parliamentary experience—such as Sir Robert Walpole, the two Pitts, and Sir Robert Peel—has contributed materially to the growth and perfection of parliamentary government. Before the Revolution, the king himself was the main-spring of the State, and the one who shaped and directed the national policy. If he invoked the assistance of wiser men in this undertaking, it was that they might help him to mature his own plans, not that they might rule under the shadow of his name. With the overthrow of prerogative government all this was changed. When the king was obliged to frame his policy so as to conciliate the approbation of Parliament, it became necessary that his chief advisers should be statesmen in whom Parliament could confide. And no ministers will accept responsibility unless they are free to offer such advice as they think best, and to retire from office, if they are required to do anything which they cannot endorse. In every ministry, moreover, the opinions of the strongest man must ultimately prevail. Thus, by an easy gradation, the personal authority of the sovereign under prerogative government receded into the background, and was replaced by the supremacy of the Prime Minister under parliamentary government. In the transition period which immediately succeeded the Revolution, William III., by virtue of his capacity for rule, as well as of his kingly office, was the actual head and chief controller of his own ministries. But the monarchs who succeeded him upon the throne of England were vastly his inferiors in the art of government. George I. was unable to converse in the English language, and, therefore, disabled from a systematic interference in administrative details.

His son, though less incapable, was conscious of his imperfect knowledge of domestic affairs, and, like his father, directed his attention almost exclusively to foreign politics. This tended to reduce the personal authority of the sovereign to a very low ebb, and in the same proportion to increase the influence and authority of the cabinet. But with the accession of George III. a reaction, begun in the preceding reign, set in for a time. Anxious to prove himself a faithful and efficient ruler, and being well qualified for the discharge of the functions of royalty, George III. lost no opportunity of aggrandising his office. Whereupon the power of the crown, which had been weakened and obscured by the ignorance and indifference of his immediate predecessors, became once more predominant. Not satisfied, however, with the exercise of his undoubted authority, the king repeatedly overstepped the lawful bounds of prerogative and the acknowledged limits of his exalted station. It was reserved for William Pitt, whose pre-eminent abilities as First Minister of the Crown empowered him to control successfully the proceedings of the legislature, while retaining the confidence of his sovereign, to vindicate for the Prime Minister the right to initiate a policy for the conduct of all affairs of State, and to urge the adoption thereof equally upon the Crown and upon Parliament, with the weight and influence appertaining to his responsible office, thereby securing the full and entire acceptance by each of the primary maxims of parliamentary government." (Vol. II., p. 136.)

The above, which prefaces the remarks of the author as to the development and present position of the Premier, gives incidentally a short sketch of the growth of Responsible Government, which is also spoken of in the first volume, with reference to the responsibility of Ministers for acts of the Crown, and in other places throughout the work, and in fact "Responsible" or "Parliamentary" Government are now in a measure synonymous terms, and the history of the former is necessarily included in an enquiry into the latter.

Chapter IV. is devoted to the Ministers of the Crown, concluding with the responsibility of such ministers to Parliament.

Chapter V. speaks of the Departments of State, their constitution and functions. With the next chapter Mr. Todd brings his labours to an end. This chapter is especially interesting to professional readers, and treats of the relation of the judges of the land to the Crown and to Parliament. And here again the author is the first in the field to supply information as to the proper course of procedure in Parliament against delinquent judges.