

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT  
AND MAJORITY RULE: A  
STUDY IN AMERICAN  
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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American Government and Majority Rule: A Study in American Political Development by  
Edward Elliott

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**EDWARD ELLIOTT**

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**A STUDY IN AMERICAN POLITICAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

By

**EDWARD ELLIOTT, Ph.D.**

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## PREFACE

The purpose of this volume is to point out the fact that the people of the United States have been hindered in the attainment of democracy, or the rule of the majority, by the form of government through which they have been compelled to act. The framers of the Constitution of the United States and of the states sought to prevent the immediate and direct rule of the numerical majority upon the theory that all government was by nature evil and that the people might become as tyrannical as any king.

To preserve liberty and protect the individual it was thought necessary both to limit the sphere of governmental action and to prevent hasty action under the influence of passion; accordingly the theory of the separation of the powers of government and the system of checks and balances were elaborated in close connection with the theory of strictly limited and delegated powers.

The popularity of a republican form of government long blinded us to a realization of the true condition and in the meanwhile many attempts

were made to restore the government to the people on the assumption that somehow or other forces hostile to popular control had obtained possession of the government; these reforms have not accomplished the desired end; the people do not govern.

Moreover we have ceased to fear the action of government as dangerous to liberty and are eager to have it undertake a wide field of activity in behalf of the social well being; we find, however, that government is neither equipped with the necessary authority nor fashioned for efficiency in performing these new tasks. The suggestion is here made that the modification of our government must be in the direction of greater simplicity if we would secure efficiency and responsibility to the will of the people.

I wish to express my appreciation of the kindness of my colleague Dean David P. Barrows of the University of California and of Professor Edgar Dawson of Hunter College, New York City, who have read the manuscript in whole or in part.

EDWARD ELLIOTT.

Berkeley, California  
October 1915

TO MY WIFE  
IN AFFECTIONATE ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
OF HER STEADFAST INTEREST  
AND CONSTANT ASSISTANCE





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