

HOW ENGLAND IS GOVERNED

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How England is governed by C. F. G. Masterman

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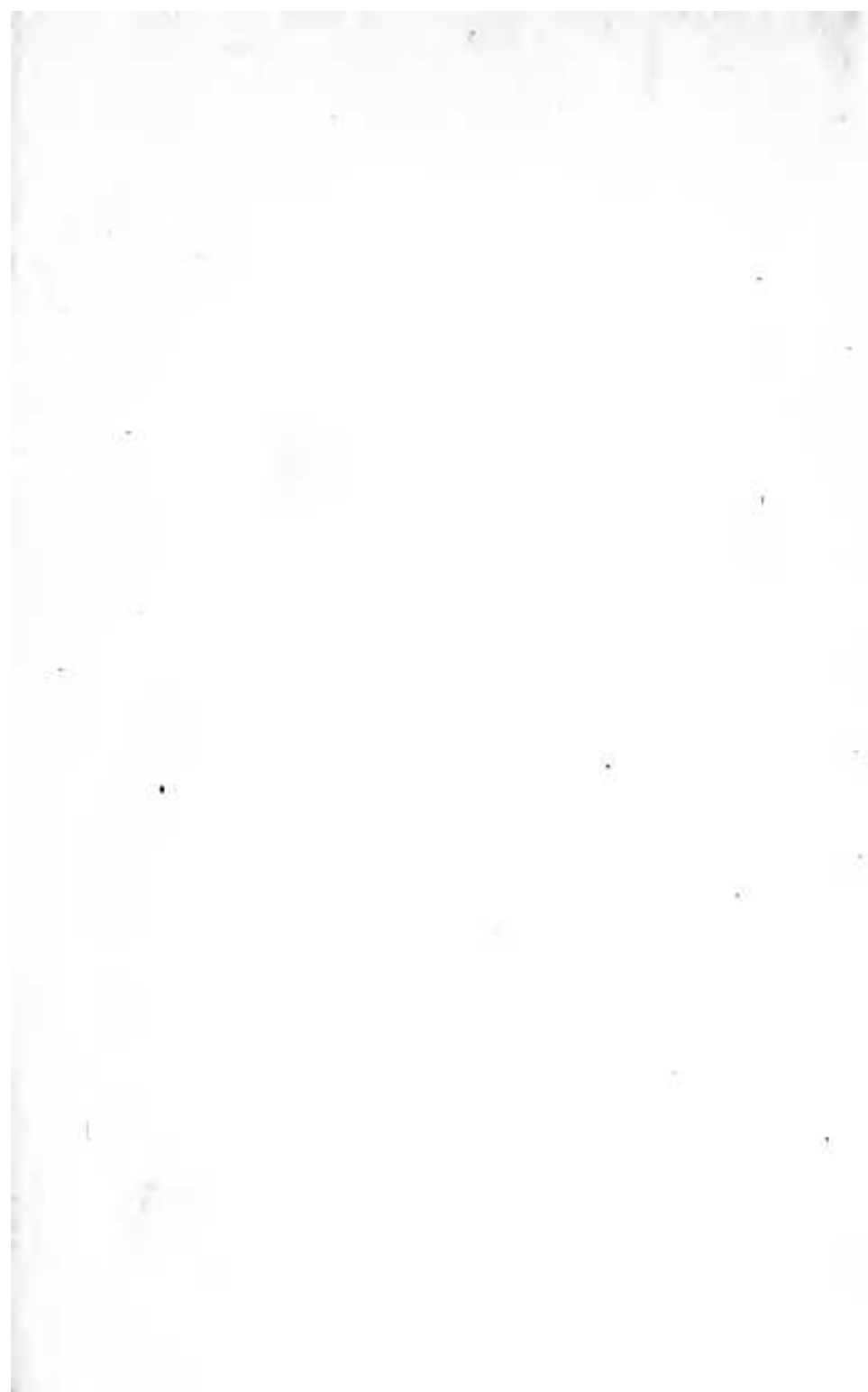
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR
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FROM THE ABYSS.
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F. O. MAURICE: A BIOGRAPHY.
THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND.

IN COLLABORATION WITH
OTHERS

THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE.
TO COLONIZE ENGLAND.
ENGLAND A NATION.

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HOW ENGLAND IS GOVERNED

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PREFACE

I HAVE here endeavoured to give a readable and intelligible account of how England is governed.

There are many elaborate text-books on the subject, bulky in volume, full of interest and of detail. They are written by experts. They provide explanation of all exceptions and anomalies. They are indispensable as works of reference. There are also, I am informed, many little books on 'civics,' usefully provided for middle forms in schools, which furnish those summaries of fact which are needed for the exposition of the teacher. Some of them are accurate and admirable. Others unfortunately reduce the subject to the same level of dreariness as the average text-book of history or mathematics. This is, in the main, due to the character of the subject, rather than to any defects on the part of the writer. It is almost impossible to make any small and summarized survey of history interesting; just as it is difficult to make any large and detailed account of any small section of men's astonishing record dull. So, while the author who can describe how his country is governed with sufficient space for simile and illustration is open to the charge of ineptitude

if he cannot make this palatable to any eager and interested mind, the compression into a school text-book of the bald facts of local and national Government, without exciting a distaste for the subject in the growing mind, must accompany something in the nature of genius in exposition.

I make no such claim for this volume. I have sought the casier course of a middle way. I have allowed myself sufficient space to enable the plain details to be cheered by illustration and personal reminiscence. And at the same time I have swept away all attempt to cover the subject in exhaustive detail. I have endeavoured to avoid the aridness of the presentation of detailed lumps of fact, sound, but a little indigestible. And I have laid myself open to the charge—as I frankly acknowledge—of making sweeping statements which, though as I believe, are true in themselves, yet require an elaboration of notes and exceptions for particular cases, if a complete and exhaustive account is to be given of the chaotic and complicated operation of English municipal and national Government.

I have, that is to say, obtained space for the luxuries of digression, illustration, and the record of personal experience, by frankly throwing over any effort to provide an authoritative detailed book of reference. I could imagine whole pages and chapters receiving criticism because I have not been able to find space for putting in every exception, or variation, or queer individual survival which makes in special cases divergence from the