

**A PRIMER OF THE
ENGLISH CONSTITUTION
AND GOVERNMENT**

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A Primer of the English Constitution and Government by Sheldon Amos

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SHELDON AMOS

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ENGLISH CONSTITUTION
AND GOVERNMENT**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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A PRIMER
OF THE
ENGLISH CONSTITUTION
AND
GOVERNMENT.

BY
SHELDON AMOS, M.A.,

PROFESSOR OF JURISPRUDENCE, INCLUDING CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AND LEGAL HISTORY,
TO THE INNS OF COURT, AND EXAMINER IN CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE true character of this work can only be understood from a consideration of the circumstances under which it was prepared. The writing of it extended over a considerable period of time, and from day to day, as each part of it was composed that part was submitted to the Commissioners of an illustrious Foreign Government, for whose use alone the work was undertaken. The best and most recent authorities were in all cases procured, whether these were in the form of accredited text-books, standard books of reference, Parliamentary papers, Bills before the Houses of Parliament, important political pamphlets, or Acts of Parliament.

The scheme of arrangement arose quite as much out of the circumstances under which the work was composed as out of any special preference on the part of the writer. Prominence was given to some points rather than to others because information was needed upon those points rather than upon others, and the same cause will serve to explain the varying prolixity and minuteness with which the several topics are treated.

One great difficulty experienced by the writer arose out of the historical character of most of the institutions of the English Government. Not to deal in any measure with this historical character must be to leave large masses of the subject wholly unintelligible. To dwell unduly on the historical aspects even of any portion of the subject would distract the attention from the main purpose in view, and, in fact, deluge the mind with what, in the present case, could only be irrelevant matter. Thus a constant exercise of discretion was needed as to when to admit, and when to exclude, references to historical antecedents.

Another difficulty of the same kind as the former one turned on the question as to what were the actual institutions which ought to be presented to the attention of a Foreign Government as characteristically English at the present day. Certainly institutions on the verge of becoming obsolete ought not so to be presented. Nor, on the other hand, ought wholly new and scarcely tried institutions to be so presented. It rested with the writer in every case to use his own discretion, and only to represent those institutions as permanent and eminently characteristic which he himself believed to be so.

It is on this last ground that the writer has from time to time found himself under the necessity of entering upon purely political considerations, and even of taking a side. He felt himself to be, in some measure, the trusted and confidential adviser of those eminent persons who solicited his assistance. Hence, when describing any recent political measure, he felt himself bound to