

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARLIAMENT DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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The Development of Parliament During the Nineteenth Century by G. Lowes Dickinson

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G. LOWES DICKINSON

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**THE
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DEVELOPMENT OF PARLIAMENT
DURING 3-12-1919
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Abstract
BY
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PREFACE

THE OBJECT of the following pages is twofold. First, to recount, as briefly and clearly as may be, the process of the 'democratisation' of Parliament; secondly, to put what appears to me to be one of the most important questions to which that process has given rise—the question of the competence of a democratic House of Commons to direct to a satisfactory issue the socialistic tendencies of the future.

It would have been easy for me to expand my materials into a larger book, to insert in the text much that I have relegated to notes, and to add much which I have omitted altogether. But I have preferred to aim, above all things, at clearness and brevity, in the hope that what I have written may be read, if not by the general public, at any rate by some who are not professional

students, and have not the time to spare for the perusal of bulky and prolix works. At the same time, I have endeavoured to make my statements as accurate as possible, and to give my authorities fully and correctly. That I have avoided errors altogether I cannot venture to anticipate; I can only hope that they may be few, and apologise for them beforehand.

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

	PAGE
Introduction	1
The Franchise before the Reform Bill of 1832 and the Control of Parliament by the Aristocracy	3
The Theory of Representative Government held by the Aristocracy	9
The Whig View of Reform	15
The Criticism of the Aristocracy by the Middle-class Reformers	21
Early Democratic Theories	27
The Middle-class View of Reform	33

CHAPTER II

THE FURTHER TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

The Reform Bill of 1832	40
Its Effect on the Power of the Aristocracy	41
The Responsibility of the Aristocracy for the Disturbance of the Settlement of 1832	47
The Theory of Representative Government held by the Aristocracy after 1832	55
Its Instability	58
The further Extension of the Franchise after 1832	60
Representation of Minorities	69
Redistribution of Seats	72
The Bribery Laws and the Ballot Act	75
The Conversion of the Representative into a Delegate	77
The Revolution in Local Government	86

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

	PAGE
The Change in the Relation of the Lords to the Commons	98
The Conflicts of the Lords with the Commons	100
The Key to the Policy of the Lords	105
The Lords and the Extension of the Suffrage	108
The Lords and the Universities	113
The Lords and Jewish Disabilities	115
The Lords and the Irish Church	115
The Lords and Property	118

CHAPTER IV

THE INTERPRETATION OF DEMOCRACY BY THE
WORKING-CLASS

The General Character of the Political Movement in the Working-class	125
Early Socialism	126
Robert Owen's Agitation	184
Chartism	189
The Period of Individualism	146
The Recrudescence of Socialism	150

CHAPTER V

THE PRESENT SITUATION

The Bearing on the Theory of Democracy of the Political Divi- sion into the Rich and the Poor	160
The House of Commons and the Actual Situation	162
The House of Commons and the Will of the People	169
The Referendum	172
The Question of a Second Chamber	175
The House of Commons and the Empire	178

THE
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CHAPTER I

THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

DURING the course of the last sixty years a revolution has been effected in the government of England. The power has been transferred from the control of a compact and vigorous aristocracy to that of a democracy which in fact, though not in outward form, is more complete and more uncontrolled than any at present existing in any first-class State. So rapid has the transition been, and at the same time so quiet, that we have hardly realised that it has been taking place. There has been no violence, no overt change of principle; all that has been done has been done in the name, and under the forms, of the same constitution that supported a monarchy in the sixteenth and an aristocracy in the eighteenth century. Yet the transformation is fundamental, as we are just