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**The Electorate and  
the Legislature**

**THE ENGLISH CITIZEN :**  
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THE  
ELECTORATE  
AND  
THE LEGISLATURE

BY  
SPENCER WALPOLE  
AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM 1815."

London  
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AND NEW YORK  
1892

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## P R E F A C E

A WRITER who professes to describe "the electorate and legislature" of the United Kingdom is necessarily forced to travel over many chapters of the constitutional history of England. In doing so he has the advantage of clear guidance. The constitutional history of England to the reign of Henry VII. has been written by Dr. Stubbs; from the accession of Henry VII. to the death of George II. by Mr. Hallam; from the death of George II. to the present time by Sir Erskine May. But the English Constitution has also been described by De Lolme and Lord Russell in former generations, and by Professor Freeman and Mr. Bagehot in almost our own time. The precedents of proceedings in the House of Commons were collected more than seventy years ago by Mr. Hatsell; the law and practice of Parliament has been expounded in recent years by Sir Erskine May; Mr. Todd's comprehensive work on the Parliamentary Government of England has contributed to our available knowledge: while, since the first edition of this work was published, the labours of Professor Dicey, Sir W. Anson, and other writers have added largely to the materials available for the student.

In the eleven years, moreover, which have passed since this book was published, striking proof has been afforded of the fact, which the student should never overlook,

that the British Constitution is no rigid instrument, but that it has grown with the nation's growth, and is susceptible of further change. The composition of the House of Lords has been affected by the considerable creation of fresh peerages: the composition of the House of Commons has been still more materially altered by the great measures of Organic Reform, which were carried in the sessions of 1884 and 1885. The regulations of the House of Commons have also been revised; and the new rules, which have been adopted for the conduct of business in recent years, have made much which was written in 1881 on this subject obsolete and useless.

The time had therefore come when it was necessary that this little book should be thoroughly revised. In revising it, the Author has endeavoured to make it as useful in 1892 as he trusts that it may have proved on its first appearance in 1881. It was his object then not to write a technical guide-book on the constitution of the British legislature or the procedure of Parliament: but to trace, in popular language, the origin and the growth of Parliamentary Government, and to give the English citizen an idea of the manner in which Parliament transacted its business, and the rules which it had from time to time made for its conduct. In doing so, he must again acknowledge the debt under which he lies to the authorities whom he has already named—an acknowledgment which is the more necessary because, in a little book of this character, it is impossible to give the references which would be required in a larger work.

*September, 1892.*

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