

*La Présidence des assemblées politiques.* By HENRY RIPERT.  
Paris, Arthur Rousseau, 1908.—xxiii, 511 pp.

Parliamentary procedure is not, as popular opinion would have it, a subject which concerns only those who are called upon to preside over divers assemblies, from debating clubs to legislatures, in which themes are discussed and resolutions or laws adopted. On the contrary, it is one of the most important branches of public law and politics, because it is in the daily operations of legislatures that we find that play of interests whose balance forms the constitution of a state. In President Lowell's paraphrase of Redlich: "The rules of a legislative body are the political manometer which measures the strain of forces in the parliamentary machine and thereby in the whole organism of the state." Until within the last decade this was the "dark continent" of politics, for students of government seemed to think their work was done when they saw the members of legislatures safely installed in their seats. Happily, however, exploration is being actively conducted. Perhaps the chief virtue of President Lowell's excellent volumes on England is the singularly clear and straightforward account of Parliament at work. Redlich's *Recht und Technik des englischen Parlamentarismus* (now done into English) and Hinds' monumental eight volumes on *Parliamentary Precedents of the House of Representatives* have done for this political Africa what Stanley and Livingstone did for the geographic. Of course the last word is not said when the rules are described, for their daily operation and the modes of pressure adopted by the interests in play must be duly observed; nevertheless the beginning is propitious, and we are so far advanced that comparative surveys may now be made with some profit.

To this work M. Ripert has made a contribution in his volume on the presiding office in modern assemblies. As might have been expected, he devotes his attention chiefly to the legislatures of France, England and the United States, dismissing the other countries with a few pages. Concerning the speakers of the House of Commons and of the House of Representatives, he has said little that is new to students already familiar with the easily accessible literature on the matter; but there is a lucidity and brevity in his account that will commend it to one seeking much knowledge at the expenditure of little effort. The pages on the presiding office in the French Senate and in the Chamber of Deputies since the foundation of the Third Republic (page 420-57) are, of course, the freshest and most interesting. Here M. Ripert shows us, with engaging directness, how the office of

president of the Chamber has changed its character according to time and circumstance and personality ; he explains what it was in the hand of Grévy, Gambetta (that master after the fashion of Mr. Cannon), Brisson, Floquet and Bourgeois ; and then he sums up, in an illuminating paragraph, the reasons why Deschanel's conception of the president's office, derived from the English model, is impossible to realize "en France où les passions sont plus vives et où d'ailleurs toutes les institutions tendent à subir l'influence politique" (page 436). After this survey of French experience he takes a comparative view (page 447). The presidents of the French chambers do not, of right, have any other functions than those of representing the assembly and directing debates. They do not have the special powers which belong to the speaker of the American House of Representatives ; their functions resemble rather those of the speaker of the House of Commons. Unlike the latter, however, the French presidents do not abandon their individual rights or their careers as politicians. The tradition that imposes upon them impartiality in presiding does not forbid them to engage in active partisan operations outside of the chambers. By usage they are consulted by the president of the Republic when new ministries are formed, and very often a president of one or the other chamber is called upon to assume the direction of affairs as president of the council of ministers. No very broad generalization can be drawn from the whole survey, unless it be that it would be extremely hazardous to attempt the creation of an ideal presiding office out of the experience of divers nations. Each cobbler works best on his own lasts.

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*Administrative Problems of British India.* By JOSEPH CHAILLEY. Translated by Sir WILLIAM MEYER, K. C. I. E. London, Macmillan and Company, 1910.—viii, 590 pp.

*India: Impressions and Suggestions.* By J. KEIR HARDIE, M. P. New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1909.—126 pp.

It would be difficult to find two books on the same general subject that differ more widely in origin, in purpose and in character than those under review, or that arrive at results more different. The one is written by a Frenchman, a member of the French legislature and of the Colonial School. His work, as he explains, is "the fruit of twenty years of thought and ten of actual labor." He began by reading about India, then visited India and, after a period of four years, repeated his visit, charged on this occasion with a mission to study