

State Government in the United States. By ARTHUR N. HOLCOMBE. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1916.—xiii, 486 pp.

The history of political studies in our American universities is the history of a century of immunity from foreign aggression. The period intervening between English and German assaults upon our right to navigate the seas was an era during which the country was free not indeed from war, but from outside interference—free to solve for itself, whether by peaceable development or by force of arms, the problems of national consolidation and enlightened self-government. No one can say whether during this period of isolation all has been done that might have been done, whether by the community at large or by its organized centers of light and leading. But assuredly our universities have done much to guide us in the temporarily interrupted task. Now that the main current of their energies, like those of the country at large, has been deflected into other channels—now that, to put it bluntly, the American college is all but demoralized, now that the arts of peace are subordinated to armed defense, and the slowly maturing aims of higher education are sacrificed to the imperative demands of a national emergency—it is of interest to measure the progress of a hundred years. Our oldest university is only one of many that has contributed in this way to our national needs. What has occurred here, however, is fairly typical of what has occurred throughout the country.

In June and July of 1816 the chief justice of Massachusetts was paid \$400 to deliver seventeen or eighteen lectures to Harvard college seniors upon government and law combined. This was the first appearance, since the dismissal of Harvard's first president a hundred and sixty years before, of political studies in its curriculum. The design of the course, as stated in the statute establishing the professorship, was to train "useful and distinguished supporters of our free systems of government," as well as "able and honourable advocates of the rights of the citizens." The division of purpose already manifested in this language—the intention to educate both politicians and lawyers—has become greatly accentuated with time. The academic year 1916-17 saw, in place of this single lecturer, two complex and mutually independent organizations in full swing: an entire department of government inside of, and an entire professional law school outside of, the college. This remarkable development of educational machinery has been accompanied, in each case, by a corresponding expansion of educational ideals. Productive scholarship has been

added to teaching as one of the recognized functions of the resident staff; and in accordance with this design notable contributions to knowledge have been made by members both of the government and of the law faculties. The original aim of the college, however—that of training practitioners of these two crafts—has not been lost sight of, and so far as the law school is concerned, is clearly still the dominant one. The training of young men to practise law is the main object of the school; incidental to this, a partial systemization and gradual re-statement of the law that they are called upon to practise. In the field of government the emphasis lies perhaps on the other side. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge—the academic as against the professional ideal—is more clearly evident here. Those, however, who imagine that this tells the whole story, are ignorant of the demand made by college students for instruction that will be of practical assistance to them in public life, and of the extent to which, both at Harvard and elsewhere, attempts have been made to give courses that will accomplish this purpose. If the universities' function as training schools for practitioners is more generally recognized in the field of law than in that of government, the explanation doubtless lies herein: The professional lawyer, though frequently suspect, has managed to maintain his position in this country as a legitimate agency in the administration of the law. The professional legislator or office-holder, on the other hand, has never become thoroughly acclimated in our democratic scheme of government.

It is only by realizing what the Harvard department of government is trying to do, that justice can be rendered to the present publication by a member of its faculty. Professor Holcombe's volume exhibits some — doubtless the most important — attributes of a ripe scholar. These are a high standard of accuracy; a broad treatment of many different phases of his subject; a marked ability to get below superficial phenomena and reveal the essentials underneath; scrupulous fairness in the statement of opposing arguments; definite yet unobtrusive indication of his own conclusions. The weakness of his work lies principally along the lines of literary craftsmanship. Its structure, to begin with, is open to serious criticism. In spite of an effort to reduce the ideals of the Fathers to the twin principles of the "sovereignty of the people" and "the reign of law," and in spite of an effort to explain the more important changes since their day as due to a revolt against legislative supremacy, there is no logical development of a few central themes. Instead, scattered points of departure are taken; much valuable information is given about and

around these points; then these batches of material are brought into some sort of logical relation with one another; connecting links finally create an artificial coherence. Let one illustration suffice. The author has much to say that is worth saying in regard to the bicameral system, legislative apportionment and legislative procedure. But the method by which he combines these three topics into something that looks like a coherent whole—making his argument against the bicameral system a scaffolding to carry the other two—is ingenious rather than convincing. For the purposes of the college classroom this loose structure would do very well. It does not measure up to the highest standards of scholarship, however, as exemplified by other products of this same department.

Furthermore, apart from the arrangement of the material that he puts in, the author has had to face the even more difficult problem of what he shall leave out. His basic principle here seems to have been to omit everything that has to do with local government. He has not been able to apply this principle consistently, however. In order adequately to discuss the development of the state-wide referendum, he is obliged to devote a couple of pages to municipal home rule. Similarly, discussion of the proposed commission form of government for the states necessarily requires reference to the commission and city-manager forms of government in municipalities; discussion of the mid-century movement for the direct election of judges and high state officials necessitates reference to the activity of county electorates. The truth is that the principle itself is unsound, and ought not to have been adopted at the start. State and local governments are parts of a common whole, and cannot be separated from each other even in thought. Legislators are elected by and represent their localities at the same time that legislative jurisdiction covers the state as a whole. A sheriff or district attorney, equally with a governor or attorney general, is an agent of the state. The circumstance that in spite of his being a state official he is locally elected, ought not to be dismissed with scant reference, as occurs under the general plan of this work. Quite the contrary, the tendency of officials whose jurisdiction is not state-wide to be chosen by the electors of their localities, rather than appointed from above, ought to be emphasized as one of the most significant peculiarities of the American state. Much that is otherwise inexplicable in the development of state government becomes clear when it is recognized that cities and counties are not extraneous phenomena, operating in some subordinate sphere, but are integral parts of an interlocking organization.

And finally, there stands out as a third general defect of this volume—a defect arising, that is to say, out of what the author has tried to do rather than out of the way he has done it—that his attempt to describe forty-eight systems of state government at the same time has wrought havoc with his literary style. His principal reliance, as a means of covering his extensive field, is to make general statements, carefully qualified by such words as “most” or “usually.” Thus on page 243 we read: “At present, therefore, in *most* states the *principal* differences in the character of the two houses result *chiefly* from differences in their size and in the manner of apportioning their members.” This is doubtless a correct statement, but hardly a snappy one. Similar, if less extreme, instances of cautious expression may be found on almost every page. Credit must be given to the author for not sacrificing scholarly accuracy to rhetorical force. The cumulative effect of many such expressions, however, is not merely to impair the vigor of the author’s style, but to make one wonder whether these pseudo-generalities really lead to much. Among the most interesting pages of the book, to one reader, were those which dealt with something comparatively anomalous rather than commonplace—the concrete description of the Massachusetts committee system.

These features of Professor Holcombe’s work take it out of the rank of scholarly classics. He has not chosen a definite field, and covered it in such a way as to make a lasting contribution to knowledge. Unfortunately, he adopted a too-ambitious title, and then tried to live up to its demands. If he had entitled his volume “Contemporary Problems of State Government,” and let it consist of loosely connected essays upon vital topics of the day, he would not have undergone the danger of disappointing his readers. For the real value of the book consists herein: It is part of the mechanism that Harvard has developed to train “useful and distinguished supporters of our free systems of government.” It indicates how “the college man in politics” may be helped to wrestle intelligently with current propositions of political reform. It provides an arsenal of information that will greatly assist the realization of this aim. Whether as collateral reading for students or as a guide to the young instructor in organizing his course, it serves a patriotic purpose in a worthy way, and points to the day when the value of special training will be as generally recognized in practical politics as it already is in the legal profession. The circumstance that this volume suggests, without fulfilling, a different aim, should not be allowed to obscure its essential merits.

Undeniably, even when considered from this point of view, errors or omissions can be found. Maryland's introduction of manhood suffrage as early as 1802 does not receive the notice it deserves. In connection with the theory of the suffrage, the formal admission of Connecticut and Rhode Island "freemen," by vote of those already enrolled as such, should have been considered. It is somewhat remarkable to find the grant of suffrage to aliens who have declared intention of becoming citizens treated as a restriction rather than as an extension of the electoral franchise. In his discussion of our early systems of government the author has gone somewhat astray. He seems not to have grasped the extent to which judicial, legislative and executive powers were blended in the colonial governor and council. Had he started his historical development with the institutions inherited by the Fathers, rather than with their theories as to abstract rights, he would have found it easy to explain why the doctrinaire symmetry of a tripartite division of powers has been impaired by such apparent anomalies as the power of the upper house to try impeachments, the power of the governor to pardon criminals and to veto legislation. He would not have stumbled into misleading statements, or worse, in describing the early judicial organization of Connecticut and Rhode Island, of New York and New Jersey. His otherwise excellent description of the mid-century movement for the direct election of state executives and judges is not entirely accurate as to dates and area affected. Although Mississippi started the idea in 1832, it was not until 1846 that a second state — New York — took it up. Thereafter the movement was by no means characteristically western nor did it affect all western states. It ran in parallel east and west streaks across the entire country. One could have wished also that the author had noted the development of irresponsible boards as administrative organs of the state. Reflection upon this curious attempt to take particular governmental functions "out of politics" might perhaps lead him to expand his illuminating formula of "revolt against legislative supremacy" into the broader generalization of "distrust of professional politicians."

All these are relatively minor flaws, however, such as anybody can pick in any piece of synthetic work. Against these must be set—merely to cite those portions of the volume which happen to have particularly appealed to one reader—the author's temperate discussion of the proper manner of selecting judges, his analysis of the growth of the executive veto, his helpful summary of the three waves of constitutional reform and of the causes that produced them; and,

in particular, his careful treatment of the political party and of direct legislation. It is not easy to hew a path through the mass of formalism with which years of reforming zeal have encumbered the American state. To the task of bringing order out of chaos Professor Holcombe has brought an original and constructive mind, enthusiastic in the pursuit of truth. It is to be hoped that he will go farther.

One final reflection is suggested by this volume. If a democratic community must resign itself to the leadership of trained experts, its first impulse, at present, is to follow the empirically trained ward politician or rural wire-puller, rather than the theoretically better grounded college man. For regret it though we may, the college man suffers by being relatively out of touch with the mass of the population. The fact that he accomplishes as much in politics as he does is not due to any respect paid to him either as a social superior or as an educated man. Quite the contrary, he succeeds, when he does succeed, by overcoming initial suspicion and distrust. He succeeds by utilizing, not by capitalizing, his college training. The graduate of the university law school similarly competes with the product of other methods of training, but at least the presumption of superior merit is on his side. The presumption is distinctly against the college man who elects practical politics as his career. The reason for this distinction is perhaps that politics has not been considered a reputable profession like the law. The position which even a professional boss occupies is that of a necessary evil, a tolerated abuse. As for his competitor, the college man, as a rule he dares not admit that he is a professional, however clearly he may be one. He prefers to consider himself as dedicated to public service, which is well, and to parade the fact, which is not. We are prone to think the worse of him when we discover that political reform constitutes, after all, his means of livelihood. In short, our people, who have departed completely—perhaps too completely—from the theory of amateurism in the practice of the law—who have frankly abandoned the English pretense that a barrister may not demand a fee—who have seen their bar lose, along with such transparent shams, also some genuine idealism—are still profoundly under the influence of the theory of amateurism in politics. And because this is the case, it is only recently that our colleges have attempted to impart a practical tinge to their instruction in government. They have not been long enough at this task to receive, nor always to merit, public recognition and support. Their aloofness from the common herd is known and exaggerated. Their practical usefulness and broad sympathies are underestimated.

One of the benefits that entrance into the Great War will bring to our country may possibly be in proving that the theory of amateurism in politics, in the extreme form in which that theory is held by our population today, does not work. Our healthy democratic distrust of professional experts, however trained, may have to yield something to the exigencies of efficient administration. Should this be the case, institutions which give systematic training in politics will have a more definite objective at which to aim. Our university departments of government will then have a better chance to duplicate the achievement of our university law schools—to secure, namely, a recognized position in training for a recognized career. Our law schools also had their early struggles to persuade the public that any considerable education was needed before practice might begin; or that, if preliminary training were desirable, institutional work was worth as much as personal contact with a practitioner. Their success in finally establishing themselves against competing law offices, was due to the fact that from the beginning they looked upon the law as primarily a professional occupation, and organized their instruction from this point of view. What the law office was to the early American law school, the district club is to the college department of government today. It is encouraging to find that these departments are beginning to see where the solution of their problem lies, and that—as the present volume shows—they have started to vitalize their instruction.

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CARNEGIE FOUNDATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING

The Primates of the Four Georges. By ALFRED W. ROWDEN.
New York, E. P. Dutton and Company, 1916.—x, 430 pp.

There were eight Archbishops of Canterbury in the one hundred and twelve years from 1716 to 1828, the period covered in Mr. Rowden's book. The shortest of the primacies was that of Matthew Hutton, who was translated to the see of Canterbury in 1757, and died in the following year. The longest were those of John Moore and Charles Manners Sutton, who held the archiepiscopate for twenty-two and twenty-three years respectively—from 1783 to 1805, and from 1805 to 1828. William Wake, the first of the Georgian primates, was Archbishop of Canterbury for eleven years; John Potter, Thomas Herring, and Thomas Secker each held the highest office in the church for ten years, and Frederick Cornwallis, who preceded Moore, was primate for fifteen years.