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HENRY VII

BY

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PREFACE

Some years ago I began to write a one-volume Constitutional History from 1485. The opening chapters grew longer and longer, partly from a desire to make the starting-point as firm as possible, partly from the necessity of working rather short spells at rather long intervals, and the consequent tendency to elaborate the comparatively detailed. The original intention was soon abandoned, and an attempt undertaken to describe the condition of government and its development under the first two Tudors. Beginning in the middle of the history of English government, I felt bound to try first to indicate the circumstances of a particular generation, and this could hardly be done otherwise than analytically; but I tried to be fairly chronological from the first, and on reaching Henry VIII to make the order mainly that of time rather than that of the topics into which governmental history might be analysed.

I hope that the footnotes indicate all direct obligations to books, and that with the help of the list on pages 183–6 the books may be easily found in catalogues and bibliographies. My personal debts are so many that an enumeration of some of them may look like pretention, but it is possible to owe much without having much to show.

Anything more than the slightest schoolboy interest in constitutional history I owe to the immense good fortune of having been as an undergraduate taught by Mr D. A. Winstanley and Mr G. T. Lapsley, Fellows of Trinity College. Without the late Sir Geoffrey Butler, Fellow and Librarian of Corpus Christi College and Burgess for the University, courage to embark upon a long book would have been lacking. Nor would it have held out but for the kindness of the Regius Professor, of the late Dr J. R. Tanner, Fellow of St John's College, of Professor C. H. Williams of Sidney Sussex College and King's College, London, each of whom read some early portions of the book in the first draft and saved it some errors, as did also Sir William Holdsworth, Vinerian Professor of English Law in the University of Oxford.

Professor A. F. Pollard and Professor A. P. Newton, both of London University, and Professor P. H. Winfield of the University of Cambridge, very kindly and helpfully answered questions which I put to them.

I am very grateful also to the authorities and officials of the British Museum and of the Cambridge University Library, especially to Mr Arthur Ellis, superintendent of the Reading Room, and to Mr Pink of Room Theta, each of whom did much for me which I had no right to expect.

KENNETH PICKTHORN

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July 1934

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