



1 Text A to work on

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3 The English Constitution—that indescribable entity—is a living
4 thing, growing with the growth of men, and assuming ever-varying
5 forms in accordance with the subtle and complex laws of human
6 character. It is the child of wisdom and chance. The wise men of 1688
7 moulded it into the shape we know, but the chance that George I
8 could not speak English gave it one of its essential peculiarities—the
9 system of a Cabinet independent of the Crown and subordinate to the
10 Prime Minister. The wisdom of Lord Grey saved it from petrification
11 and destruction, and set it upon the path of Democracy. Then chance
12 intervened once more; a female sovereign happened to marry an able
13 and pertinacious man; and it seemed likely that an element which had
14 been quiescent within it for years—the element of irresponsible
15 administrative power—was about to become its predominant
16 characteristic and to change completely the direction of its growth.
17 But what chance gave chance took away. The Consort perished in his
18 prime; and the English Constitution, dropping the dead limb with
19 hardly a tremor, continued its mysterious life as if he had never
20 been.