

the reproach of inconsistency, or, what is a more flagrant offence in some men's eyes, treason to party. Moral courage, as it is called, is not so ordinary an endowment of every-day human nature as many people suppose. Time and again we have met with Reformers and Conservatives who have expressed the strongest dislike for the candidate put forth in the interests of their party. At first, they protest that nothing shall induce them to cast a vote against their deliberate judgment: they will support the candidate on the other side. Then the party organ thunders: they begin to waver, and will not vote at all. Finally comes the whipper-in, who has correctly gauged their capacity for independence, and the end is that the party must be supported at all hazards; so they deliberately vote for the man they have declared to be unworthy of election. Every one can recall scores of similar instances of instability and faint-heartedness. These weak brethren will, of course, have protection under the ballot, if they choose to avail themselves of it. But is this an unmixed good? It would seem not: the men who have thus freed themselves from an oppressive yoke are not likely to stand with credit the questions that are sure to be put by the zealots of their party. It is, of course, easier to avow an act after it is done and cannot be undone than before, and if they could escape the ordeal of a previous canvas and avoid making promises, all might be well with those who possess *ex post facto* courage. Party agents, however, are not easily gulled, and the result, we fear, would be that, in nine cases out of ten, the feeble-kneed would take refuge in prevarication, if not in downright falsehood. Moreover, secret voting opens the door to the indulgence of personal pique, and of whimsical fancies, prejudices, and antipathies of all sorts. It also gives an advantage to that non-committal class "who never pledge themselves to any one." With open voting this herd of political Gallios

may usually be worked into line; but under the ballot they may, if they choose, fly off at a tangent. There are those, too, who are always ready for change of any sort, and yet can give no reason for their desire. With secret voting they can indulge their idiosyncrasy with "no questions asked." We are not arguing against the system of voting by ballot, because the time for argument on that subject has gone by, but merely pointing out some of the elements of uncertainty it is sure, sooner or later, to introduce.

The Conservative reaction in England, because it found expression through the ballot on its first general application, seems to have raised a hope in the Opposition here. It would not be difficult to show a want of analogy between the cases. It is not necessary to do so, however, because the results of the bye or casual elections for the Dominion Parliament must have convinced every one that no sweeping change in the position of parties can be hoped for, if reliance is to be placed on the ballot alone. In England the reaction would unquestionably have taken place, ballot or no ballot; here there is no sign of a general revulsion of feeling.

We take it, then, that the relative position of the two parties in the new House will be much the same as in the old. The Opposition may, and probably will, gain a few accessions to its members; for governments, as a rule, seldom maintain all the ground they conquered at the outset. Mr. Mowat's ministry may be an exception to the general rule, for there is, nothing less certain than the *aura popularis*; but we are inclined, on the whole, to predict a slight gain to the Opposition. For the sake of both parties, and still more for the sake of the country, we earnestly hope that it may not prove to be merely a numerical one. There can be little doubt that the Government will be sustained, and we see no reason why any one should wish it to be otherwise. Its *personnel* might be improved, it is true, and some