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AN ELECTORAL ABUSE.

One of the worst features of our very imperfect electoral system is the way with which we deal with the vacancies constantly occurring in the representation of constituencies in the House of Commons. No sooner does a seat become vacant than the agents of both parties go to work to find suitable candidates, and the process is often one of difficulty. The party in power having control of the elective machinery, can, by the simple process of not appointing a returning officer, delay the election till their friends are ready for the contest, and till that time arrives, be it long or short, the constituency remains unrepresented, even though in the middle of a session when great issues are at stake. Thus, we have seen an important constituency unrepresented for nearly twelve months because the supporters of the party in power could not reconcile conflicting local or sectional differences. Both parties having been equally guilty in this respect, the *tu quoque* argument is mutually applied with great effect, but a worse use of it can hardly be imagined.

How different is the process in the Old Country, from which we have yet much to learn in the conduct of political affairs in spite of our conceit and self-confidence. No sooner does a seat in the British House of Commons become vacant than within a very short period, which never varies, an election is automatically held and the representation of the constituency restored. No time is given for the settlement of political cabals, or personal quarrels. The right of the electors to be represented in the great council of the nation is the first consideration, and to that everything else must give way.

In our own House of Commons there are now a number of vacancies. In a similar case in Great Britain they would all be filled in a fortnight or so; here they must remain vacant till