

confronted with the perils of government, close responsibility might improve them and make them tolerable. But they would not be left to themselves. A voluntary constituency will nearly always be a depotic constituency. Even in the best case, where a set of earnest men choose a member to expound their earnestness, they will look after him to see that he does expound it. The members will be like the ministers of a dissenting congregation. The congregation is collected by unity of sentiment in doctrine A, and the preacher is to preach doctrine A; if he does not he is dismissed. At present the member is free because the constituency is not in earnest; no constituency has an acute, accurate, doctrinal creed in politics. The law made the constituencies by geographical divisions; and they are not bound together by close unity of belief. They have vague preferences for particular doctrines and that is all. But a voluntary constituency would be a church with tenets; it would make its representative the messenger of its mandates and the delegate of its determinations. As in the case of a dissenting congregation one great minister sometimes rules it, while ninety-nine ministers in the hundred are ruled by it; so here one noted man would rule his electors, but the electors would rule all the others.'

In examining Mr. Bagehot's criticisms, it must be borne in mind that they were written prior to the passage of the second Reform Bill; and consequently that he was comparing personal representation with a political system very different from that existing on this continent. In England at that time, the franchise was confined to an intelligent minority of the whole people; the House, owing to this fact and the social circumstances of the country, consisted almost entirely of well-educated and refined men, and partyism was almost always kept subordinate to patriotism. Had he been comparing it with an American polity where the franchise is practically almost universal in all cases, and where party violence controls almost all political action, both in the House and outside of it, he would, I think, have arrived at very different conclusions. But, however this may be, it is easy to show that most of his conclusions are inconsistent and untenable; and that even supposing all of them to be

correct, the evils which he dreads could easily be avoided by a slight modification of the system which, for various reasons, I think would be advantageous. Before explaining the modification, I shall strive to indicate what I believe to have been Mr. Bagehot's errors.

1. Mr. Bagehot alleges that the system would necessitate party organisation, and that the result of it would be the return of party men mainly, bound to a certain card or 'platform'; and he then goes on to allege that certain voters and certain members would be quite independent of it, as other organisations would soon make a set of constituencies for themselves. Are not these inconsistent positions? How can it be true that the same system would simultaneously increase party ascendancy, and yet enable 'other organisations'—including, of course, any who might be dissatisfied with the platform—to 'make a set of constituencies for themselves?' Does not the very life of party ascendancy lie in the fact, that the system of elections by majorities forces dissatisfied electors either to follow their own party, or one whose views they dislike still more; and would not a system which, it is admitted, would relieve them from the necessity, tend to weaken such ascendancy instead of strengthening it? Mr. Bagehot's mistake arises from a failure to bear in mind the essence of Mr. Hare's system. He says that this wide party organisation would be necessary in order to prevent votes being 'thrown away,' whereas Mr. Hare's central idea is to prevent any vote being wasted. The elector would name the candidates whom he would wish to have returned in the order of his preference; and as he might make the list as long as he chose, it is next door to impossible that *all* those named would either fail to obtain a quota, or be elected before his vote came to be counted—in which cases only could any vote be wasted.

2. Mr. Bagehot alleges that, with personal representation, 'instead of a deliberate assembly of moderate and judicious men we should have a various compound of all sorts of violence.' Granting it to be true that in the United Kingdom the present system does result in the return of a House consisting of 'moderate and judicious men,' the election of such men can be due only to the fact of such men being