

In Parliament the Ministers are bound to act as one man on all questions relating to the Executive Government. If one of them dissents from the rest on a question too important to admit of compromise, it is his duty to retire. While the Ministers retain the confidence of the Parliamentary majority, that majority supports them against opposition, and rejects every motion that reflects on them or is likely to embarrass them. If they forfeit that confidence, if the Parliamentary majority is dissatisfied with the way in which the prerogative of mercy is used, with the conduct of foreign affairs, with the conduct of a war, the remedy is simple. It is not necessary that the Commons should take on themselves the business of administration, that they should request the Crown to make this man a bishop and that man a judge, to pardon one criminal and execute another, to negotiate a treaty on a particular basis, or to send an expedition to a particular place. They have merely to declare that they have ceased to trust the Ministry and to ask for a ministry that they can trust."

It was not till after the year 1836 that it became the fashion to style the Whigs "Liberals" and the Tories "Conservatives." Like the terms "Whig" and "Tory," the terms "Liberal" and "Conservative" are at the present day meaningless. They describe no policy, represent no set of political opinions. They are mere party names. The terms A's and B's would be as descriptive and less pernicious, for between the best men of each party there is no perceptible difference. Whether Liberals or Conservatives, the best of each are staunch supporters of the Constitution. There is, however, this distinction between the two parties—all Conservatives are Royalists; whereas the Liberal party, embracing as it does all who are not Conservatives, necessarily includes

those whose tendencies are Democratic. Hence the initial difficulty of every Liberal premier.

But, be that as it may, the point before us is this:—The position of A, B, and C, relatively to the nation at large has by the institution of party government been somewhat, but not unfortunately, complicated. Though relatively to each other and to the nation A, B, and C are units, as already stated, by the system of party government, B and C each consists of two elements, viz., Conservative B's and Liberal B's, and Conservative C's and Liberal C's. When the question in the Commons, *e. g.*, is whether it is or is not good for the nation that a certain suggested change should be made, or be made in a particular manner at a particular time,—of course it is assumed by the maker of the suggestion that the nation really desire it;—and it happens that the Liberal C's outvote the Conservative C's—the vote of the Commons is in favour of the suggested change. The same proposition then goes up to the Lords, who must come to the same vote before the assent of the Crown can be asked. Should it happen that the Conservative peers should outvote the Liberal peers, the vote of the Upper House will not accord with that of the Lower. But, though reference to the Crown under such circumstances is impossible, reference to the nation is not. It is possible that the wish of the nation has been misconceived by B or C. The premier may request the Crown to dissolve Parliament, or the Crown may of its own motion do so, but neither is in duty bound to do so. There may be valid reasons apart from the particular question why that course should not be adopted. There is yet another course open by which compliance with the will of the nation may be secured. The Crown, should it be satisfied that the majority in the