

subject. The unfortunate illness of Mr. Devlin at the beginning of the session, will probably prevent a thorough inquiry at this late date; still the subject is not inexhaustible, and, in any case, documentary evidence may be laid before the House and printed for public information. That such information is sorely needed is abundantly evident. The motion was very properly extended at the suggestion of Mr. Blake; yet, after all, the only system likely to be the subject of investigation is that known as Hare's.

It seems advisable, just now, to show rather what this system is not, rather than what it is; yet it may be well to state that the objects aimed at by Mr. Thomas Hare are not only just and rational but eminently practicable ones. What the present system effects may be illustrated by a sentence or two from Mr. Blake's admirable speech: 'His investigation as to the elections of 1867 convinced him that the Liberal party had a slight popular majority as to the Province of Ontario, and under a system of minority representation would have had a slight majority in the House. Of the eighty-two members who were returned a popular vote would have returned forty-two against forty. As a matter of fact, the return was forty-nine for the gentlemen opposite and thirty-three for the Liberal party.' In short, as the Minister of Justice forcibly urged, 'there was no guarantee that the ruling party in the House was not an absolute popular minority in the country.' Now then, let us briefly examine the claims of this 'best possible' system of popular representation. In the first place, there is no certainty even that the desire of those who cling to majority representation will be fulfilled. If it be answered that in each contested election there is usually a majority for the elected member, we reply in the words of Mr. Dymond:—'They (the House) were all there, not as representatives of the mere constituencies from which they came, but as representatives from the whole country.' If so, why does not the whole country elect or reject them; and how comes it to pass that the majority of the country may be 'represented,' in Mr. Dymond's *bizarre* sense of the term, by members chosen by the minority? Now Mr. Hare's system, the proper name of which is the system of 'personal representation,'

makes it certain that the House of Commons will be the exact reflex of the nation, and that every elector in it will be represented by some one for whom he voted, not misrepresented by some one else whom he opposed. The *Globe* claims that the right of the minority to representation has not been proved. Does it stand in need of proof? Is it not tacitly admitted when it is urged that they are virtually represented by somebody sitting for another constituency? If that be true, why should not a member of that minority vote directly for the man who is supposed to represent him at present by the most transparent of fictions? In this connection the *Globe* brings forth one of its 'rusty weapons.' It alleges that at the bottom of the proposed system there lurks a 'fundamental fallacy'—a favorite expression with other people besides our contemporary when they are unable to dislodge an opponent. In this case the fallacy consists in assuming that the minorities have 'an inherent and indefeasible right to direct representation.' This 'fallacy' seems so atrocious to the *Globe* as almost to merit the term 'fundamental falsehood.' Perhaps it is; but then that is exactly one of the things which Mr. Hare does not assert. He claims no inherent, indefeasible right even to the franchise, much less to representation; but he does contend on indisputable grounds, that it is a mockery to enfranchise any one and then virtually to disenfranchise him again, because he happens to be in the minority—and that as clearly and effectually as if it had been done by act of Parliament. Why should a Conservative living in a strongly reform constituency, vote, election after election, for his party candidate there, knowing well, perhaps during the whole of his adult life, that, for all practical purposes he might as well be without a vote at all? Who represents him, pray? The Reform member? Certainly not, for so far as his vote and influence went they were exerted against that member. A Conservative somewhere else? Then why should he be prevented from placing his vote where, instead of being lost, it would be available for the purpose every one has in view when he records a vote?

Even this does not exhaust the fallacies, and we have not far to go before receiving the grand *coup* from 'hobby,' the great sword Excalibur of our contemporary.