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A PLEA
for
Pure Democracy-

by

C. H. Spence

A PLEA

FOR

PURE DEMOCRACY.

MR. HARE'S REFORM BILL

APPLIED TO

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

"THE PURE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY IS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE BY THE WHOLE PEOPLE EQUALLY REPRESENTED."

JOHN STUART MILL.

BY C. H. S.

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1861.

This pamphlet was written when South Australia had 36 members of Assembly and 18 of the Legislative Council, and I thought that Hare's great scheme might be carried out here in its entirety. I have since modified my views and what is called the Hare-Spence system. I propose to divide the province into districts returning from six to ten members which will give sufficient local interest but which will almost entirely stop log-rolling - that is the buying the support of the two members of the district by concessions to local demands (See page 14). Effective voting and elected Ministries will both check this mischief.

I wrote the pamphlet in conservative interests - but I thought proved the democratic arguments. It was better to confer the democracy itself the saving salt of its conservatism and superfecundation than to give additional franchises for property and education (See page 19 last two clauses)

G. H. Spence
Sept 1854

PREFACE.

Many of the ideas and even some of the language used in this pamphlet, have already appeared in the columns of the *Register;* but as newspaper correspondence is often overlooked, and cannot easily be referred back to, and as it is impossible to give a comprehensive view of an important subject in such brief and detached communications, I feel that it is necessary to do something more for its elucidation. I am merely the interpreter between the great thinkers of England and the people of South Australia; and, however imperfect my treatment of the subject may be, I trust to the intelligence and candour of my fellow colonists for a patient and thoughtful hearing.

A looker-on sometimes sees more of the game than the players, and as I have never been mixed up with the turmoil of elections, I can, perhaps, see more dispassionately than those who have, the defects of our present system and the cure for them. It appears to me that in a new colony like this, we may fight the battle of the world to gain a fair field for truth and justice, that we may remove the greatest bar to the spread of freedom, by shewing the example of the first pure democracy of modern times—where equality is not a fiction, but a fact—where Government is really in the hands of the wisest and best; and where the people have provided for the education and elevation of their whole body, by allowing every opinion a fair hearing, by calling out everything that is original and special; by such machinery of representation as is self-adjusting and reparatory, farsighted, and progressive; by putting a premium upon truth and honour, instead of lavishing all its favours upon flattery and simulation.

We want no paternal Government to tell us what we ought to hear, do, or say; we want no paternal press to decide for us what we would not like to hear, and what consequently we had better not hear. Where the people is the governing power, it must, like all other governing powers, occasionally hear what it does not like. We are not children to be coaxed and managed, but men and women fit to think and judge for ourselves.

The prophets who say smooth things and who prophesy deceits; the candidates or representatives who will not presume to have an opinion of their own, but who stand hat in hand soliciting the sweet voices of the

populace—the stump orator who declares that the voice of the people is always the voice of God—are as great enemies to progress and freedom in this nineteenth century, as the veriest despot who has sat on the throne of Naples or Russia.

The opponents of the extension of the suffrage in England can point triumphantly to the United States, and to Victoria, and ask if it is well to allow such floods of unwisdom to darken knowledge and to corrupt political virtue. I want the friends of the working man to show one example of his being worthy of power; and I feel that such a colony as this, peopled by the picked men of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Germany, abounding in all the elements of wealth and material prosperity, with an amount of natural shrewdness and intelligence, far above the average; with a respectable Parliament, and a respectable Press; with no vested interests, and few ignorant prejudices to overcome; is a fit place for initiating that radical reform of enfranchising minorities which, sooner or later, must be brought about, if we mean to make any progress at all in the civilised world.

C. H. S.

September, 1861.

A PLEA FOR PURE DEMOCRACY.

I propose in this pamphlet to explain the principles and working of Mr. Hare's new Reform Bill at greater length than can be permitted to the occasional correspondent of a newspaper. I believe that I made a mistake in introducing this subject in the *Register*, under the title of "Representation of Minorities," instead of "Equality of Representation," for it has led to the idea that somehow or other by this system, minorities are to rule; and this has raised the antagonism of the majorities who have the power at present, and who mean to keep it. But majorities always will continue to rule; we only plead for a more accurate system of recording votes, so that we may ascertain how great the majority ought to be. We have already provided that every man shall have a vote, and now only wish to secure that his vote shall be used. I do not complain that the colony is too democratic, but that we are not democratic enough, and if the reader will follow me patiently through my arguments, I hope to prove that a more perfect realisation of the democratic principle in our institutions would be the most conservative movement South Australia could make.

I shall not begin by entering learnedly into the theory of Government, and explaining minutely the principles and practice of absolute monarchy, of limited monarchy, of oligarchy, of mixed government, and of democracy. I will premise that the government of the people by the people is the best form of government; that no despotism, however benevolent and intelligent; no oligarchy, however vigorous and highminded—no bureaucracy—however vigilant and efficient; can do for us what we are fit to do for ourselves, and if there ever was a community capable of self-government, it is such a one as ours. I do not wish to limit the suffrage; I want every man to have a vote and to use it, for it is the most valuable element of education and progress that every man should feel his weight in the state.

There never has been an elevation of the average citizen in modern times equal to that which prevailed in the old Greek republics, and there every citizen was equal in the state. The people in a body attended the national meetings, and spoke and voted in person; the community being too small to demand the representative system (which is the only form democracy has assumed in modern times), by which the members of the deliberative body has been lessened and made manageable. In all representative institutions now in use in the civilised world, however, the old

simple idea of democracy has been lost, namely, that every man shall have as much weight and power in the state as any other man. Politicians have divided the country into boroughs and districts more or less equal, have allowed more or less extension of the suffrage, and more or less freedom of choice in the candidature, but they have all gone on the principle that however the constituency was formed, the majority should have a right to their representative, and the minority have none. The minorities have felt this a hardship when they were defeated, but they always lived in hope that they might turn the tables on their opponents, and be the majority by and by. In a country like Great Britain where the franchise is limited, and where there are so many different large interests, there is a chance that the majority in the agricultural may be a minority in the commercial or manufacturing districts; so that an opinion which is pretty widely diffused will be sure to command majorities in one part of the kingdom, and thus have a chance of being heard in Parliament. But in such a community as this, where the suffrage is universal, and where the numerical majority everywhere are labouring men and small farmers, where they have the same interests, much the same education, and read the same newspapers, it is quite possible that an opinion held by two-fifths of the people might not command a majority in any particular constituency. If it were not for the deadening power of habit, we would see that this way of coming at the state of public opinion was a most inadequate and mischievous one. But because our forefathers accepted the division into boroughs and counties, in an age when they seldom stirred from home, and took little interest in the affairs of other boroughs or counties, the idea of the co-operation of minorities in different localities has never occured to us.

The American declaration of independence opened with a statement which, if it had been believed in and acted upon, would have materially changed the destinies of the Republic—"that all men were free, and equal." From the freedom, the slave was excepted, and from the equality, the minorities; and from those two radical defects, have resulted ninety nine hundredths of the blunders and mischiefs of that great nation? If such a scheme as this of Mr. Hare's had presented itself to the founders of the American republic, the United States would have been saved many evils, and the democratic principle much obloquy. Reformers have applied themselves to endeavour to arrive at a true system of representation by cunning slits in ballot boxes, by equal electoral districts, and by extension of the suffrage, but all without success; for the principle itself being unjust, the fuller carrying out of it only leads to greater injustice. The more equally the electoral districts are divided, the more the suffrage is extended, the more people exercise their right of voting, the greater is the power of the numerical majority, and the less chance minorities have of obtaining a hearing. The genius, the originality, the independence of the country find no majority anywhere to appreciate them, and political life is thronged with second and third rate men; who either have no opinions of their own, or have the art of concealing them.

Political equality I understand to be something very different from the common views of it. It does not mean that if one man holds an opinion that is popular it shall be of use to him in obtaining a repre-

× My recent visit to America has given me the most complete demonstration of this as certain.

sentative; while another man's, which is unpopular, shall be of no use to him whatever. It means this—that every man's vote shall have its weight, wherever he may live, and whatever majority or minority he may belong to. It is by the enfranchisement of minorities alone that we can arrive at the true state of public opinion. Let us suppose that one-third of the voters in South Australia think that Government immigration ought to be resumed, and two-thirds are opposed to it; then there ought to be twelve members returned for the former and twenty-four for the latter. But, according to our present system, the minority might send only four, or six, or fourteen, according to the majority being unequally divided in the eighteen electoral districts. The number returned is no correct criterion of the prevalence of an opinion, for there may be a majority of 146 in one district, and a minority of one single vote in another, which is presumed to balance the first. There has been lately a great excitement on the question of Mr. Justice Boothby's decisions and conduct, and no doubt there is a very large majority who go against the House of Assembly. The feeling was so strong and so general that if there had been a dissolution a week ago and a fresh election, it is probable that in every electoral district all the members who voted for Mr. Duffield's amendment would have lost their seats, and other men put in their places. But the unanimity of the members returned would be no proof of the unanimity of public opinion, for the minority had been defeated in detail in every constituency; while, if they had their fair share of political power, they might have returned eight of the old members expressly on account of the very vote which had so irritated the majority.

To what purpose, it may be said, to return eight members to a House composed of thirty-six? To be outvoted, of course. Certainly to be outvoted, but not to be silenced—and there is an immense difference there. They would be ready to take advantage of any change in public opinion, to investigate the proceedings of the majority, to point out their blunders, and modify their extreme measures—this is all we claim for minorities. The majority out of doors will always be the majority in doors. Majorities will actually rule under the equal representation system till the end of time, but that they will rule more wisely and more justly is indisputable.

The inequality and injustice of our present system cannot be denied by those who will look it in the face. Under the present electoral law 2,000 voters in Adelaide, by uniting all their votes for their six candidates, can prevent 1,999 from returning a single member. If it had not been for informal votes, the Political Association would have returned their six representatives; and Mr. Hanson, the ablest man in the House of Assembly, only got in through these mistakes. We know that it was by thus uniting their strength that the same Association returned all the three members for Burra and Clare. Does it not appear clear as day that if each man in Adelaide had only had one vote to give to one man, the constituency would have been more fairly represented than it is now.

This principle, which would secure an equal representation in a town returning six members, Mr. Hare's scheme would extend to a whole community. That every voter shall have one vote which he shall give

In a minority representation for the whole Province. Proportional representation of the City by means of keeping united by the real majority

At the (representational elections in 1874: 47 per cent of the voters were pro Republican candidates - and there returned a majority of 131 in a House of 356 - thus 53 per cent. who did not vote at all - Without effective Voice would not exist

to one man, and that he shall be at liberty to choose his man out of the whole range of candidates in the country or colony, and that the number of votes necessary to secure a candidate's return shall be determined by the number of votes polled, which, divided by the number of representatives required, shall constitute the quota. For the House of Assembly of thirty-six persons we shall suppose there are 18,000 recorded votes, and this requires that each man should have 500 votes. These are first principles; all others are questions of detail. The most important of these is, that as leaders of parties and popular men are not to have more than their quota of votes, there will not be enough of votes to make up the thirty-six quotas, therefore each man is allowed a second choice in case his first man does not get 500 votes, or in case he has 500 without him, and if the second choice is under or over the quota he may have a third, a fourth, a fifth, or as many as he pleases. He writes in his voting-paper, or marks in the printed list, the candidates' names according to the order of his preference, and the first man in his list who needs his vote gets it. When a voting-paper has contributed to the return of a representative, it is put away as done with, and the name of the returned candidate is cancelled from the remaining voting-papers. Local votes are preferred to those from other districts, and when it is necessary to choose between votes in the same locality, the list which contains fewest names is preferred. We will suppose that there will be twenty-four candidates who can make up the quota, or more than the quota, of first votes. This disposes of 12,000 voting-papers, leaving 6,000 from which to select the remaining twelve. First, he must take those voting-papers which contain 500 first and second votes; then 500, first, second, and third; then 500 first, second, third, and fourth, and lower still if necessary.

This is the system which ensures to every man his fair share in the Legislature; this is the whole machinery which provides that every vote shall be used to aid in the return of one member; this is what is called too elaborate and Utopian to be practised; this is what Mr. Grundy declared passes all understanding, quoting the sapient remark of the Scottish Solomon with reference to Bacon's Novum Organum—as great a discovery in science and philosophy as this is in politics. This is what people may criticise in detail, but which no true democrat can censure in principle; for it is pure representative Democracy—not the spurious Democracy that has usurped its name.

Everything that is new must expect opposition, and no one could suppose Mr. Glyde's suggestions could escape it; but I think that the tone of the remarks in the House of Assembly and in the newspaper comments have not been wise or candid. I protest against the same man objecting first that the scheme is too perfect to be practical, and then that it is not perfect enough; or against it being too great a change in the apportioning of power, and in the same breath asserting that it will result in no change at all.

I will notice, and endeavour to answer, all the objections which have been raised as to the details of the scheme—and first, as to how it will affect the ballot.

We cannot absolutely secure the voter who can neither read nor write

from making blunders, and at the same time give him the protection of the ballot; if the advantage is considered to counterbalance the drawback, let the ballot be continued. He is as secure against making blunders as he is at present, and that is all I think that can be claimed for him.

The voting-papers given out at every polling-place should have the names of the local candidates alphabetically arranged, separately printed at the head of the list, and then all the candidates for every district in the colony alphabetically arranged. Let the voter, if he can make figures, mark his first choice 1, his second 2, his third 3, and so on. If he cannot make figures he may mark with one, two, three, or more crosses. It might be allowable to give out model voting-papers, which might be filled up at home, and copied accurately at the polling-place. Only the voting-papers with the Poll Clerk's initials could be counted. But suppose the voter were to drop in the wrong paper; how can we remedy that mistake? We really must trust something to the common sense of the people. Or if a man were so stupid as to put only one name in his list who could not make up his quota, he would lose his vote. Yes, even if he put down two or three who were unable to do it. "How very hard and unjust that is!" say the advocates of the present system. Cannot we provide some remedy for the blunders of the hopelessly stupid, as we have given the ballot for the protection of the hopelessly cowardly? Political Associations will take care that their men will not lose their votes through too short a list, and other people must exercise their own understandings.

Personally, I object to the ballot.† As a member of a large unrepresented class, I look upon manhood suffrage as a trust, and not as a right; and none of the reasons which would seem to require it in England apply to South Australia. I have never seen a man who was bold enough to confess that he wanted the ballot for himself—he only wanted to protect timid people who were easily influenced. At the last election at the Burra the state of the poll was known to a single vote before the ballot-boxes were opened, which showed how the electors prized secrecy. The natural sincerity and honesty of the people were too strong for their institutions. Courage is one of the first elements of healthy political action, and that machinery is best which best calls it forth. But it is not at all necessary to disturb the ballot in order to adopt Mr. Hare's system, though in filling up a vacancy there would be an advantage in having every man's name and residence on his voting-paper, so as to call out the particular constituency that he represents. If it were not for the ballot every man's quota of votes could be tied up by itself in a parcel with his name attached to it, and, in case of death or retirement, every member of the constituency could get a circular mentioning the rank which the late member held on his voting-paper, and calling on him to make another choice—all the other electors of the province being represented by the remaining thirty-five members. The majority of this single constituency to fill up the vacancy. Under the ballot we should be of course obliged to appeal to the electoral district for which the retiring member stood, or to take the man who was next to obtaining a quota at the last general election. This is simply a question of detail,

† I have long since changed my mind as to the ballot. It is a protection to the poor voter, and the weak minded voter

† Women are no longer an unrepresented class in South Australia

and not the great difficulty which Mr. Glyde's opponents consider he cannot overcome. Because we cannot under the ballot secure perfect equality in an occasional and exceptional case, are we to sit down with manifest injustice at every general election? Truly, no.

Let us now consider the plan in its working, and first, in the canvass. I may quote, with very slight alteration, Mr Hare's observations in the article entitled, "Representation of every locality and intelligence," contributed to *Frazer's Magazine*, for April, 1860, page 533. "It will be observed that every facility for action and discussion which the present system affords, either to candidates or to electors, will still exist. The new system adds to all the means of discretion and effort, and takes nothing from them but the temptations to which they expose the weak, and the power of the many to extinguish the few. None of the present modes of popular appeal in which there is a shadow of advantage, would cease. Candidates would still address the particular constituencies in which they were best known, or wherein they expected sympathy. There would still be the same opportunity and occasion for personal contact, There would, in the cases of the candidates who present themselves to each constituency, be the same nomination, the same public address, the same power of questioning the candidate; but that address, and those answers, would be of a far higher and more instructive character. It would no longer be mere verbiage, containing more or less of plausibilities, designed to conceal, rather than to express most of the thoughts of the speaker, and to lead to inferences which it shall be open for him afterwards to contradict or repudiate. In such free action the representation of one man is not dependent upon the misrepresentation of another; every one may be represented without extinguishing the judgment and discretion of any of his brethren. The address of the candidate then becomes a different thing from a fine spun web of mere negations. If there be any earnestness of thought or purpose in him, he does not suppress, but seeks to bring it into strong relief. It expresses the work or the labour which he is designed to do; and for which he is perhaps especially gifted. It is his work in the world. Upon the sympathy of his countrymen or of enough of them to form his constituency, he relies for his support, or his success. He is not absolutely dependent upon the votes of the majority in the particular place for which he offers himself; he looks indeed for a measure of support there; but if necessary, he falls back on the judgment of the electors at large. Instead of concealing his true opinions, and feelings, he is provoked by the strongest motives to proclaim them. His thoughts come from the depths of his nature, through a sincere soul, which is a voice of nature. His very peculiarity, or originality, if he possess any, and if there be any worth in it, will be that which recommends him.

"Not only will the speakers be earnest and truthful in seeking to impart to their hearers the belief which they themselves entertain; but even a greater change than this will come over the constituent bodies—the hearers When the success or triumph of one man is no longer to be obtained by the extinction or defeat of his neighbour, he will seek to participate in his neighbour's instruction and knowledge. Instead of expelling from the district one candidate, in order to promote the election

of another, he will have the highest inducement to listen to what every candidate has to tell him; and to learn from all whatever is to be learned. No object can be gained by preventing his fellow-electors from hearing the arguments of those who may appeal to them for support; and still less is he likely to profit by shutting his own ears. The election becomes a free interchange of opinion, and a true intellectual combat. There may be in the district many electors, whose endowments of mind, or special training, or kinds of culture, have awakened sentiments or opinions, different from those of any of the local candidates. For this class of minds, there is ample field of choice in the electoral *Gazette*;" or list of candidates for all districts of the colony.

I cannot say whether the adoption of this system would be of greatest advantage to majorities, or to minorities. It is well when there is no dissatisfied, unrepresented class, in a community; and it is not well to place so great an obstacle between the sympathies of the propertied, and the non-propertied classes; by giving all political power to the latter, and denying it to the former. It is not well that political life should have no charms to our wealthy and prosperous citizens, and that the young men of the colony who are receiving such an education as should fit them to serve their country, should have no scope for ambition except through using their talents and education for the purposes of timeserving and popularity hunting. X But great as are the advantages to minorities of having their votes freed, and their individual powers of action made available, I think, the advantage to majorities is no less.

In the first place, *they can make sure of getting bona-fide representatives.* Those who hold different opinions can appeal to different constituencies, and go in free; they are not exposed to the strong temptation of colouring or concealing their real thoughts, as the only means of getting into Parliament at all. We hear that there is no need of a change in our electoral law, for that there are men in the House of Asssmbly now, of every shade of opinion. But every man whose opinions were different from those of the populace, has had to submit to a lowering style of canvass, and a cross-questioning—perhaps legitimate enough if minorities were represented—but which under the exclusive representation of majorities, weakens the moral sense of the candidate; and which at every fresh election becomes more searching and exacting, more unreasoning and unreasonable. I do not blame the majority for this; it is the natural result of their being intrusted with supreme and irresponsible power; but any change in our electoral law, which would raise the tone of canvass, would be of the greatest benefit to the colony. Under the system of equal representation, the candidate can appeal from those who differ from him in his particular district, to those who agree with him all over the colony, and the more bold and candid he shows himself, the better chance he would have of a general constituency.

The second advantage to the majority would be that *they would hear both sides of every question*, that objections would have to be met fully and fairly; and that questions would be discussed in Parliament, in newspapers, at election meetings, and public meetings generally, in a very different way from what takes place now. A minority unrepresented is a sulky and useless thing; going about continually with a grievance

X Professor Bryce in his great work on the American Commonwealth asserts that the very greatest evil there is, the seclusion of the best men from political life.

for which it has no redress, unable to make its voice heard in Parliament, or at public meetings, or its views fairly advocated by the press. A minority represented, is the true sharpener of the wits of the ruling powers, the educator of the people, the animator of the press. It is the only strong and well organized opposition to government, possible, under democratic institutions; without it, there may be struggles as to who shall be out, and who shall be in; for so long as there are such things as place and power, those who have not got them will want to gain them, and those who have them will try to keep them. But such opposition is factious and obstructive—not constitutional and progressive.

It is not merely when the minority are in the right that they can give such life and vigour to the body politic; right or wrong, the genuine representatives of existing opinion are always the friends of truth. We never believe anything so firmly as when we have weighed the arguments against truth, and found them fallacious; we never know the strength of our own convictions so well as when an opponent whom we can neither silence or ridicule, brings all the batteries of reason against them. And if the minority should perchance be in the right, will it be well to silence them, and lose the truth? There are many ways of losing truth; one, is by persecuting it; another, is by not listening to it; another, is by being too stupid to understand it. Persecution has gone out of fashion; but inattention, and stupidity, are not yet quite obsolete.

In the third and the commonest alternative, both majority and minority may have a mixture of truth and error in their opinions. Error is never so dangerous as when it is mixed with truth, if it is not exposed to searching and free investigation. In all discussions on the immigration question, for instance, there are many sides to the argument. One man opposes Government immigration because he wants to keep up the rate of wages, and does not wish to be swamped by new comers; another, because he thinks it pauperizes the people—who fancy that if Government brings them out, it is bound to find work for them and take care of them; a third, because it is impossible to keep them after we have got them; a fourth, because it is a sort of protection to capital, to bring out men with public money, to lower wages; a fifth, approves of it in principle, but thinks it unnecessary now, and hopes to get back some of our runaways from Victoria, by the law of supply, and demand; another, because he believes that everything done by Government is worse done and more expensively done than by private enterprise—he would prefer that those who want labour should import it for themselves, and be protected in their bargains by legislative enactment.

The reasons for advocating the resumption of immigration are equally various. The farmer wants to reduce wages before harvest, and to raise prices afterwards by an influx of people who are willing to work, and who must be fed; the builder wishes to raise houses more cheaply, and to let them more readily; the merchant hopes for increased traffic, both in imports and exports, from increased population; the improver wants to try some experiments in the more elaborate kinds of cultivation, and in some branches of manufacture, which he thinks would pay if labour was a little cheaper, and which he believes would prove a source of great wealth to the colony; the corporations, and district councils want facili-

ties for local improvements; the philanthropist looks on the beautiful country he lives in, and wishes it to afford a home and a comfortable subsistence to some of the crowded millions of Great Britain and Ireland, and to relieve the labour market there; while the true-born Englishman thinks it unjust that we should have got the full possession of our Land Fund from the Home Government, and should determine to keep it all for ourselves, and not benefit the mother country in the least.

Each of these arguments and objections contains a portion of truth, but not the whole truth, and if one or two of the opposing arguments are the only ones which are brought before the public they lose the opportunity of weighing, comparing, and judging, which the full and free discussion of the whole question would give to them. We only arrive at truth by comparison, and the wider the field that is given for comparison the greater are our chances of making a wise decision.

Some may say that we will lose public spirit if we give up the close individual contest in every locality; that it is as much our duty to keep out men whom we do not like, as to bring in men that we do. But every man does as much as he has a right to do, if he himself chooses to the very best of his judgment—leaving all his fellow-citizens to do the same. Party spirit may diminish, but public spirit will be strengthened and purified. What is the real public interest of an election between A and B—conducted with noise or vehemence, which may be decided by a bare majority of one, which all electioneering tactics on both sides are directed to secure—compared with the interest we should feel in knowing the real strength of the opinions declared by A and B all over the colony accurately ascertained.

We have been so long accustomed to exclude reason from election meetings, and to hold that all is fair in electioneering—so long in the habit of ignoring the national love of fair play from the very subject which most calls for its influence—that we have grown into the belief that such drawbacks are inseparable from representative institutions themselves, and that they are a part of the price we must pay for freedom. It would be absurd, indeed, if people in their ordinary life could thus blind themselves to the relations between cause and effect. It is not the ascertaining of peoples' opinions, but the method we take to ascertain them, whereby one man's individual gain is another man's individual loss, that creates the bitterness and the injustice.

Just fancy a mother, who wanted a quantity of peas shelled, setting all her children, young and old, to do it, promising to give to the child who shelled the largest quantity the reward of an apple. Suppose her disregarding all the cries for fair play when Tom, the eldest boy, pulls the basket towards him, and throws every obstacle in his power against his younger brothers or sisters obtaining the pods from which to extract them. Fancy her believing that by giving each child a measure containing an imperial pint, stamped by authority, she has done all in her power to equalize their chances of success; and then bestowing the apple at last on the virtuous Tom, whose stronger nails had more easily opened the pods, and whose vigorous arm had kept possession of the basket; and fancy her saying when the disappointed competitors made faces at Tom as he munched his apple, and called him *bully*, *cheat*, and *sneak*, that she did

not understand how it was, but they always quarrelled about the peas; that she did as her mother did before her, in trying to stir up a little wholesome emulation, and took more pains to give them dishes of the same size to fill, but yet they grumbled as much as she recollected her brothers and sisters did when she was a girl. She supposed that *it must be something in the peas.*

By dividing the colony into electoral districts to return two or more members, which is the rule at present with only two exceptions, we secure to each locality at least one member, for the majority in every district will be sure to prefer the local candidate who best reflects the popular opinion. Whether or not the district will return more than one will depend upon the kind of men who come forward for it; but it would be a spur to induce every district to look out for the best man obtainable, if it was felt that by this means local influence might be increased. Local interests are great; but general and national interests are still greater. It is in the very nature of things that equality of representation should weaken in some degree the exclusive and mischievous power of the majorities in each locality, but at the same time extravagant views of the importance of one locality are as much against the rights of another locality as the most cosmopolitan views whatever. For instance, the constituents of the Burra and Clare want repairs on the North Road, and the three members for that district offer a factious opposition to the proposal to build a jetty in the South, because they apprehend that if money is spent there it may not be forthcoming for northern improvements. The advantage of a strong and interested advocacy is counterbalanced by the drawback of a strong and interested opposition. "But," says the opponents of Mr. Hare's system, "the Burra and Clare ought to return three members. How unjust it would be if only two of the candidates who have stood for that district are returned." Yet every individual elector of the Burra and Clare has a representative sitting in Parliament, whom his individual vote aided in placing there. If he had preferred a third-rate man in the local list to a first-rate man out of it, he was free to do so. There is no injustice done to the houses and land, if there has been perfect justice done to the electors' opinions and feelings. It is the old English idea of borough representation that has given this false notion of the paramount claims of local interests; people have forgotten that the aim of representation is to represent citizens—not cities.

Every candidate ought to be prepared to advocate, as far as is consistent with his general principles, the interests of the district for which he has been put in nomination. If it should happen that a district should not have a member, it will be in no worse position than that of Victoria in our present House of Assembly, whose solitary member occupies the post of Speaker. He finds no difficulty in getting another gentleman to take charge of petitions, and to look after the local interests of Victoria; and if there are any members too few for one district there will be as many to spare in another, who will, I have no doubt, volunteer to do all in their power for the district which preferred general interests to local. It is quite possible to pay too high a price for a representation exclusively local; the country loses more when two stupid or two dishonest men are

brought into Parliament than the district does by having no local representative at all.

In the United States so great a value is attached to local interests that no man can be a candidate for any constituency in a particular State unless he is a resident in that State. Thus the States generally are often deprived altogether of the services of a man of talent and experience, and an additional element of bitterness and rancour is infused into elections, when the candidate knows that if he is disappointed there he has no recourse elsewhere.

The objection which we hear most frequently raised to Mr. Hare's system of Equal Representation is that it is troublesome and complicated. No doubt it is somewhat more troublesome than the present system of counting votes at each polling place in each constituency, and declaring who has the majority, and how large it is. But it is by no means so troublesome as people imagine. Let us look at what is done at the Post Office every month on the arrival of the English mail, in sorting thousands of letters, newspapers, and parcels; deciphering the most illegible names and addresses; sending each letter, paper, and parcel, to its respective address to every different local office in the province; delivering at the window, and attending to the general business of the Post Office at the same time. There is not a Post Office Clerk in Adelaide, who would not laugh at the idea that sorting 15,000 or 18,000 voting-papers, first counting them, dividing the number by thirty-six, and then separating them into their respective quotas of first votes; first and second; first, second, and third; and so on till they were all exhausted, was a task too elaborate to be undertaken once in three years, to ascertain the real state of public opinion, and to secure the blessing of good Government.

Each Poll Clerk should send a digest of his votes with the voting papers, to the Registrar's office, in Adelaide. They need scrutineers at any rate, and the central office can act as scrutineers for the whole colony at once. It is the unfamiliarity of the scheme that makes it appear elaborate. I have no doubt that when it was first proposed to take a census, it appeared to everybody to be a very troublesome and expensive process. It certainly would be easier to count the houses, to suppose that there would be about five inhabitants to every house; that the number of the sexes would be about equal; and that there would be about four or five children to every marriage, than to go from house to house taking down the name, sex, age, and occupation, of every individual inhabitant. The census is a very much more troublesome and expensive affair than an election on Mr Hare's principle, but no one now thinks that the time and trouble expended on it are too great.

I need not dwell here at any great length on the strong arguments brought forward by Mr. Hare, and John Stuart Mill, in favour of the adoption of this scheme in England; that they would lessen the expenses of elections, and effectually check bribery and intimidation, for the latter mischiefs can only be brought into play in particular localities where the struggle is a close one, and where the possession of a few votes would turn the scale. I think that at present in South Australia our elections are neither expensive nor corrupt. Yet we hear sad tales of

† The "Manifold" objection has been met by the use of the ballot paper in South Australia by which votes can be counted after every election on the subject. What appears difficult when described is quite simple when it is done.

conspiracy to personate voters in the recent Victorian election; and we know well that no ballot-box in the United States has been so cunningly devised as to shut out corruption; no equalizing of electoral districts has given anything like equality of rights to the citizen, and we see the mournful spectacle of a great nation, which during the last half century has improved in many other respects, yet has degenerated in its political position. There is more power in the nation, there may be more wisdom in the people; but there is more corruption in the Legislature, and more oppression in the Government. The numerical majority everywhere carry the day, minorities are completely extinguished, and cannot exercise that wholesome power as a check to tyranny and an educator of the people which I have insisted on in these pages. Class interests reign predominant, and the interest of one class alone is considered. The payment of members is a temptation to third and fourth-rate men to make political capital by trading in popular cries, and the abuse, clamour, and unfairness of elections, combined with the personalities of newspaper attack, prevent the wise, the noble, and the worthy from offering themselves at all as candidates. Thus the lowering influences act and react upon one another—the people corrupt the press, the press misleads the people. The tendency of a popular press under so-called Democratic institutions is to follow rather than to lead public opinion—to watch the tide and take advantage of it.

Our newspaper press here has, fortunately for us, taken its model from the English, and not from the American, and it at present holds a respectable position. Our two daily papers, with their largely circulated weeklies, are well conducted, written in good English, distinguished by freedom from libel or personality, and by giving very full and fair reports of all public affairs. We do not expect the talent of the *Times* in a small colony like this, but if we would compare the *Register* or *Advertiser* with any American newspapers published in the provinces of the United States, or even with any of the New York journals, we could see at once the superiority of our local press to the American. Yet it is to save the press of South Australia from the deterioration which it must suffer if *all* political power continues to be placed in the hands of the uneducated and the slightly educated, that I would plead for the safeguard of equal representation in the Legislature.

In England free trade was opposed by the governing classes—the aristocracy, who believed that their interests were preserved by keeping out foreign produce. In America free trade is opposed by the governing classes—the people—who think that native industry wants protection; and thus a great deal of capital and labour in the United States is diverted from pursuits that would pay to those which cannot pay without protection. Protection to the manufacturers of the North was the price for which she made so many humiliating concessions to the slaveholders of the South; and it has become so fixed an opinion in the Northern States that protection is necessary and beneficial that it is as dangerous to advocate free trade in the one half of the Union as it is to preach abolition in the other. That intelligent traveller, James Stirling, tells us that in a long and extensive tour through the States in 1856 he did not meet with more than three persons who understood the principles of free

I have changed my mind about payment of members. It is necessary where the numerical suffrage prevails. But I do not think the Upper House should have a property qualification for voters should be paid.

trade, and they were Southerners. The Southern interests favour free trade, and they have occasionally grumbled at having to buy dear from New York what could be got so much cheaper from Birmingham or Manchester—but those who live in glass houses must not throw stones, and the two great questions of personal freedom and commercial freedom have never been discussed in a manner worthy of their importance in the free and enlightened United States of America.

In the young days of American independence the greatest and the wisest of the land took the lead in public affairs. We know that such is not the case now, and those who cling to the idea that universal suffrage and vote by ballot will insure political freedom, are puzzled to account for the political degeneracy of the United States. But universal suffrage and vote by ballot may check freedom of discussion as effectually as a despotic government. In no country is political discussion so free as in England. It is, according to Tennyson—

> "The Land where, girt with friends or foes,
> A man may speak the thing he will."

The true born Briton may grumble at his institutions, or his constitution, both by word and pen, House of Lords—House of Commons—Monarchy itself. The Government is not sharp to look out for or punish treason; public opinion is healthy enough to be in no danger from the wildest theories, or the most extravagant abuse of the powers that be.

But in France universal suffrage and vote by ballot gave to the country the strong rule of Louis Napoleon, and free political discussion is at an end; and the pseudo democratic institutions of the United States have established the tyranny of the majority, which has checked free political discussion. For all the blunders, for all the injustice of the Government, no American citizen ever dares publicly to blame the institutions—the press is dumb, and dares not censure the sovereign people.

When people bring forward the reactionary power in the British House of Commons to prove that the minority at one time may shortly be the majority in turn, and tell us in South Australia that we want no new theory of representation—an ounce of practice being worth a ton of theory—they forget that we are placed in a different position, and work up from a radically different principle. It is because the British representation is so anomalous that it has this power of reaction. The suffrage is limited, the working classes exert a pressure out of doors, which protects their interests, and the laws are made by a privileged class of educated men. Our representation is uniform—not anomalous; and it has been the observation of all men who look at this subject seriously that the fatal drawback to so-called democratic institutions is the difficulty of their reformation. It is the governing body which need the reform, who are the only means of initiating or carrying it out, and, as they will not believe they are in fault, they have never set about it. In a pure democracy, such as Mr. Hare's system would lead us to, there would always be an independent minority in the Legislature, and from them we may expect watchfulness as to the beginnings of evil, and boldness in opposing them, which would prevent the exclusive sway of class feelings and class interests.

The true interests of one class are the true interests of all; whatever

The United States is not democratic enough it excludes the women and it excludes the minorities. Not majority rule but the rule of a wealthy and educated minority

presses hard on savings, or realized capital, tends to the withdrawal of that capital from the working stock of the community, and will give less money to be paid as wages for labour that will develope the resources of the colony. If we were to give a fair representation to minorities we should give the best guarantee in our power against the danger of unequal taxation of capital, and against the risk of dishonesty in our Government; and capital, enterprise, talent, and worth will naturally flow to a colony which gives this security, in preference to one where a dominant class interest swallows up all others. The tendency of the recent Victorian elections will be to lower the value of Victorian securities in the English market, and to raise the rate of interest demanded for loans for Victorian public works. The English capitalist has not forgotten the American repudiation system, and high interest is the price that must be paid for indifferent security.

Some of the *laissez faire* school of politicians may shift the responsibility of judging of this question from themselves by saying that this new scheme may be a very good thing, but it will not answer here. I wonder what community it would suit better. This is the most promising field for trying the worth of first principles: we have no localities which have grown old in the possession of what they consider vested rights in the power of nominating representatives; we have no powerful wealthy class who have an interest in keeping up the expense and the bitterness of elections in order to limit the range of candidates; we have no privileged class in possession of the suffrage who would oppose this measure because it would certainly lead to its extension; and we have not the force of ancient prejudices to overcome. Every man in leaving the old country has left some of his ignorance and prejudices behind him, and the people of South Australia are being daily educated, by the mixture of races, by their material prosperity, by the field given for honest ambition, by a free press, and free discussion.

When Ridley invented the reaping-machine, no attachment to the sickle of their forefathers prevented the farmers from availing themselves of his discovery. When the League opposed the Grant in Aid of Religion, no love of tithes and Church rates bound the people to continue the connection between Church and State, even on the most modified principles. When the Parliament dispensed with Grand Juries, the people parted with them without a sigh of regret. When we departed from the English rule that every member of Parliament who accepted office in the Ministry should stand a re-election before he could take his seat in the Cabinet, we could see that the improvement was convenient, and we congratulate ourselves in every change of Ministry in Victoria that we have been saved the expense, worry, and loss of time that she must submit to from conforming to the English custom. And when Torrens brought forward the Real Property Act, we did not cling affectionately to the long and expensive parchments of our ancestors, but welcomed a change most beneficial in a community where transfers of land are so frequent.

It may be said that these were economic changes, and that therefore they appealed to the tenderest part of a man's frame—his pocket; but that a reform in our electoral law, such as I propose, will save the

Since that time we have taken the Children of the State out of institutions and placed them in foster homes. We passed the Municipal Vote and Assembly the Political Vote to Women. We have done away

colonists no money immediately, and therefore cannot enlist their sympathy. Yet, even on these low grounds, I think it may. Ridley's machine cost a large sum of money at first, yet the farmer was far-sighted enough to make the investment for the saving of yearly outlay; and that we will have better government and cheaper government under equal representation than under partial representation, a people so shrewd as ours are quite capable of perceiving. Besides, I appeal to the strongest sentiment of the Anglo-Saxon race—the love of justice and fair play—and I appeal with confidence, not to the minority who may differ from me in principle, but to the majority who agree with me.

The man who believes that men are *not equal*, who wants to have a property qualification, or an educational qualification, may object to the absolute numerical fairness of this plan; but from the people themselves, from the Political Association, I expect and I claim sympathy and support. He who honestly believes in political equality should do all in his power to carry it into effect, and this is the only means of doing it. If I ask the Political Association upon what principle of equality they justify the arrangement by which if 1,999 citizens of Adelaide hold one opinion and 2,000 hold another, the one man who turns the scale virtually returns the six members for the City, they will answer that it is to keep up the balance of power; that they expect to be defeated in several constituencies, and therefore they must use all the power that the law allows them in those in which they have the predominance. But if it is proved by arithmetical demonstration that if they have three-fourths of the constituencies, they will have three-fourths of the members—that if they have two-thirds of them, they will have two-thirds—if five-sixths, they are sure of five-sixths—under this new system, we will no longer hear that injustice in one place is necessary to counteract injustice in another, but that justice to all deprives them of no legitimate power—only of the power of doing mischief to others. In fact, I believe that elections conducted on the new principle would make the majority in the House of Assembly stronger than it at present is. But then the majority would be fairly ascertained, and the minority perfectly independent.

It may appear to many well-meaning and theoretical people that it would be advisable for educated, propertied, talented, and virtuous men, to have more weight in the State than the ignorant, the poor, the stupid, and the vicious. Property, they imagine, wants protection; talent, education, and virtue, should be encouraged; the world would be better governed if they had the larger share in its representation.

But the State in a pure democracy, draws no nice and invidous distinctions between man and man. She disclaims the right of favouring either property, education, talent, or virtue. She conceives that all alike have an interest in the protection of good government, and that all who form the community, of full age and untainted by crime, shall have a right to their share in the representation. She allows education to exert its legitimate power through the press; talent in every department of business; property in its social and material advantages; virtue and religion to influence the public conscience and public opinion—but she views every man as politically equal—and rightly so, if the equality be as real in operation as it is in theory.

If the equality is actual in the representation of the citizens, truth and virtue being stronger than error and vice, and wisdom being greater than folly when fair field is offered, the higher qualities subdue the lower, and make themselves felt in every department of the State, and especially in the political. But if the representation from defective machinery or other cause is not really equal, the whole balance is overthrown, and neither education, talent, nor virtue, can work through public opinion to have their beneficial influence on political matters.

We know that in despotisms and oligarchies, where the majority are unrepresented, and the few extinguish the many, independence of thought is crushed down—talent is bribed to do service to the tyranny—education is confined to a privileged class and denied to the people—property is sometimes pillaged and sometimes flattered; even virtue is degraded by lowering its field and making subservience appear to be patience and loyalty, while religion is not unfrequently made the handmaid of oppression—taxes fall heavily on the poor for the benefit of the rich—and the only check proceeds from the fear of rebellion.

When, on the contrary, the majority extinguishes the minority, the evil effects are not so apparent. The body oppressed is smaller—generally wealthier—with many social advantages to draw off attention from the political injustice which they suffer; but there is the same want of sympathy between class and class—moral courage is rare, talent is perverted, genius is overlooked, education is general but superficial, the press and the pulpit are timid in exposing or denouncing popular errors. An average standard of virtue is all that is aimed at, and when no higher mark is set up there is great fear of falling below the average; property is overtaxed, and the minority exerts no physical force out of doors to induce the lawmakers to care about their claims. Therefore it is incumbent on all democracies to look well that their representative systems really secure the political equality that they all profess to give, for until that is done democracy has had no fair trial. X

I speak of South Australia as a democracy, because, though dependent on England—and all loyal subjects of Her Majesty Queen Victoria—for all practical and social purposes, our weal and woe are in our own hands. We got leave from the Home Government to frame our own Constitution, and we framed it on democratic principles, intending to give equality to every citizen. But as no one had then heard of the system of representing minorities in equal proportions with majorities, we did not embody that improvement in our institutions. †

As unfamiliarity is the greatest difficulty I have to contend with, I will, at the risk of repeating myself, recapitulate the provisions necessary to secure equality of representation:—

1. That the power shall be given to minorities to escape from the bounds of electoral districts, where they are always defeated in detail, for without that they cannot have their fair share of the representation; therefore, as the State can draw no nice distinctions, every elector shall be at liberty to vote for any candidate who may be nominated for any district in the colony, thus exercising the judgment of each man by widening his choice.

2. That every candidate who can obtain the thirty-sixth part of all the votes given for all the constituencies of South Australia shall be con-

† When I wrote this pamphlet, I, like my teachers J. S. Mill and Thomas Hare, thought it was sufficient to provide machinery whereby majority representation in Australia and in Tasmania could be secured. But the course of events in America have rendered it necessary to go further. J. S.

sidered duly elected as a member of a House of Assembly consisting of thirty-six members.

3. That as, if the state of the poll were known as it goes along, no elector would vote for a man who already had obtained sufficient votes to secure his return, it shall be open to him to express on his voting-paper the course he would take in such a contingency, so that the Registrar and Poll-Clerks may carry out his wishes, as they see the position of each candidate disclosed in sorting the voting papers; so that as a list is sent to a library by a messenger to show what books the subscriber would like, the first being preferred to the second, the second to the third, the third to the fourth, so the elector shall make a list of say from three to eight* names of men whom he would like to see in Parliament in the order of his preference; so that if either his first choice can get in without his vote, or is not popular enough to make up the quota required, the elector shall not lose his vote altogether, but fall back upon his second choice; if he too should be over or under, the third shall be taken, and so on. The difference is this, that if the book is popular it is pretty sure to be out; if the man is popular, he is sure to be in.

4. That each man's vote shall aid in the return of one member. However long the list may be, the vote is only appropriated to one; as, however long the subscriber's list may be, the messenger only obtains one book.

5. That in appropriating votes of the same rank in the lists, local votes shall be preferred to those out of the district, and the lists which contain few names shall be preferred to those which have many.

From the popular press I demand on this important subject either support or refutation. If I meet with neither—if the criticisms are confined to remarks on the style of writing, on the outward appearance of my pamphlet—if they deal merely in quibbling details, such as the question whether the member who was returned by a minority of Yatala and a number of outside votes should be called the honourable member for Yatala in Parliamentary speeches or the honourable member for No Man's Land,† leaving unchallenged or unsupported the principles from which I start and the conclusions to which I arrive, I will be constrained to admit that the mischiefs of our present pseudo-democracy have penetrated deeper than I had imagined. If I am accused of not going into every detail, I can only say that I am not framing an Act of Parliament —I do not understand Parliamentary formulas or proceedings. I am only trying to show the principles on which an Act of Parliament should be framed. But if the press fails me, I fall back upon the people, who are really the masters of the press, and if they are moved, I have no doubt that the press will follow.

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* I think eight names would make a needlessly long list; but there is no necessity for a rule to restrict the voter's choice. He may have a pleasure in shewing his good will and marking the names of his favourites, even though it may be useless.

† Even this little matter might be settled by allowing members of the House of Assembly to call each other by their names, as must be done in the Upper House. It is a great inconvenience to ordinary readers to distinguish between the six members for the City, and the three members for the Burra and Clare, and the two members for other districts, and a trouble to the newspapers to have to explain. If we make the Parliament respectable, the language used in it will be respectful. But if we have not the spirit, we need not care about the form.

Politically speaking, I agree with the popular orator, "One man is as good as another." I only object to the commentary of his Irish admirer —"Yes, that he is, and better, too" Yet, though political equality is desirable, mental and social equality is not desirable, even though it were possible. We know that if an equal distribution of property were made to-day it would be unequal to-morrow. So long as men are differently constituted and differently endowed, inequality of condition is a necessary result. Supposing, however, that it were possible to equalise the powers and faculties of body and mind; and to impose upon all men an average health and strength, an average intellect, and an average morality; and to educate the whole of the people in an average unvarying system, so as to keep up this equality—supposing that this impossible thing could be done, would it be advantageous to our moral, mental, and national development?

With no one fitted to lead, and no one inclined to follow; with no one capable of discovering what inferior minds could appreciate, and what others lower still could accept; with no ambition, no magnanimity, no originality, no eccentricity; with no opposition and no defence—the world would be a dull world, and man would not make that progress for which he was intended by his maker. It is the hope of rising either in wealth, in power, or in knowledge, that is the great stimulant to wealth, to industry, to energy, and to study.

The most frequently urged objection to the scheme of equal representation is that we are sufficiently represented already; and that for practical purposes minorities have a voice. It may be through defects in the working of our present machinery, or it may be because the majority are too intelligent, or too indifferent to exercise the power which they undoubtedly possess of silencing and extinguishing minorities. There is truth in this, but just so much as to make it exceedingly dangerous. Whatever may be the working of our present electoral law, no one can shut his eyes to its tendency. Every fresh election will make the majorities more aware of their power, more impatient of contradiction, more arbitrary in their demands, more inclined to pay delegates than to confide in representatives; and in the present state of political knowledge, no more fertile root of corruption and mis-government could be devised than to offer 36 prizes for the loudest declaimers and the most adroit flatterers of the governing classes—naturally, under universal suffrage, the least educated classes, and the least qualified by reading and reflection to rectify the statements of the popular orator.

It is because our Legislature and our newspapers are at present so respectable, that I would press the consideration of the subject *now*. We know that if the measure of reform were imperatively demanded by the exigencies of the time and place, it would be impossible to carry it. It is not from a people who have plunged themselves into every variety of blunder, and who have lowered the tone of political knowledge and political morality so fatally as to render it impossible for truth and justice to obtain a hearing, that a great measure of constitutional reform is to be expected.

And South Australia appears to be marked out for the initiating of this greatest political improvement of modern times. Mr. Hare, in

Frazer's Magazine for February, 1860, in his article on "Representation in Practice and Theory," thus mentions this colony :—

"The earliest conception on record of a system of representation based on a recognition of the varieties of opinion within the same constituency, is believed to be in a paper suggesting a plan for the establishment of municipal government in South Australia. It is said to have proceeded from Mr. Rowland Hill, the Secretary of the Colonization Commissioners. It recommends that the election of Town Councils shall be by voluntary classification of the electors into as many equal quorums as there are members to be elected; and that each of these who can agree upon an unanimous vote, shall return one member."

"Ignorant of Mr. Hill's suggestion, the contributor of this paper, in 1857, published a scheme of parliamentary representation founded on a similar principle. In single towns when the state of the poll is known by the voters as the election proceeds, this plan presented no difficulty; but in parliamentary elections it afforded no convenient, perhaps no practicable, means of dealing with the vast number of surplus votes which would be given for popular candidates." (Mr. Hare's complete plan was not published till two years later.—See a Treatise on the Election of Representatives, Parliamentary and Municipal, by Thomas Hare, Esq., Barrister-at-Law; Longman's, 1859—in which every contingency likely to occur in the United Kingdom is provided for.)

The scheme of Mr. Hill's alluded to above was not only laid before the Commissioners, but actually carried out in the first election for the Municipal Corporation, and two councillors were returned by two quorums. In one instance the workmen in Messrs. Borrow & Goodiar's yard combined to elect their foreman as their representative, and another quorum of citizens chose a councillor for themselves. X The late Mr. William Stanley

As the power of combination was optional, and as the citizens generally preferred to vote for all the council instead of plumping for one, the division into quorums was never again carried out, and after the extinction of the old corporation, when another Act was passed to reconstruct a municipal body, the original idea was lost sight of and forgotten. It is a pity that such was the case, for if there had been a provision for representing minorities in the corporation, it would not only have improved the municipal body in the first place but it would have familiarized the public with the idea that it was practicable.

The next conception of giving some power to considerable minorities was broached in the *Edinburgh Review*, and embodied by Lord John Russell in one of his Reform Bills, to divide the country into constituencies to return three members, and to prevent the electors from voting for more than two. This measure was lost by the factious opposition of the Conservatives, who did not appreciate the scope of the idea. It is an approximation to a true principle of representation of great value; but unless the voter is allowed to give his two votes for one man it does not secure the return of one member for a unanimous third part of the constituency. By splitting votes the majority can increase their power. For instance, in a constituency composed of 900 electors who come to the poll, we will suppose that 600 belong to the majority, and 300 to the minority. The majority put up three members A, B, and C, the minority

X My father David Spence (who died in 1846) was Town Clerk at the time and explained the unique clause in the Act to me when a girl of fifteen.

combine to return D. The result of the poll may be this by skilful tactics on the part of the majority:—200 vote for A and B; 200 vote for B and C; and 200 for A and C. Thus the 600 voters give to each of their three men 400 votes, and the minority of 300 cannot get in their man. If each only voted for one man, the principle would be better. But I cannot say that this principle is at all equal to Mr. Hare's; for minorities of a smaller number than a third have a right to their share in the representation. It is no more just that a fifth or a sixth of the people should be unrepresented than that a third; and I think, that minorities down to thirty-sixth, have a right to a share of thirty-six representative Another advantage of Mr. Hare's scheme over this of Lord John Russell' is that, by the latter, the contests would be exclusively local, and th every vote taken from one man would be looked on as a gain by anothe and so that the electioneering tactics would not be so much elevated we hope to make them by Mr. Hare's plan. But the main objection that it would not give equality of representation; it is not pure democrac, and it is for pure democracy that we contend. "Democracy," says John Stuart Mill, "according to its definition, is the government of the whol people by the whole people equally represented. Democracy, as commonl conceived and hitherto practised, is the government of the whole peopl by a mere majority of the people exclusively represented. The former is synonymous with the equality of all citizens; the latter, strangely enough confounded with it, is a government of privilege in favour of the numerical majority, who alone possess practically any voice in the state."

I wish that we in South Australia may take the proud stand of being the first democracy that would clear up this confusion of ideas, and set about in earnest to the task of reforming itself, and thus wipe off the reproach so liberally bestowed on democracies, that they are incapable of reform. Let us show the example of being the first community who can appreciate the ideas of the most advanced thinkers in Europe, and within less than three years from the first broaching of the scheme, give it the most careful and impartial consideration.

We kindle with enthusiasm at the example of such men as Washington, and Garibaldi; who, after having freed their country, and won the confidence of their fellow-citizens, have disdained selfish aggrandisement and retired to the obscurity of private life, when they were no longer needed in the active service of their country. We feel that the whole world is the better for such instances of individual heroism and unselfishness. But another, and a still rarer example it is left for South Australia to show—that if a people, who, entrusted with the framing of their own laws, and already invested with absolute political power upon the principle of majorities ruling, can voluntarily divest themselves of it and submit to the check of the equal representation of minorities; upon the conviction that such exclusive power as they at present possess is unjust in principl and mischievous in tendency. Thus would they show a path for the civilized world towards the safe extension of the suffrage to its widest limits; thus would they prove by their noble abnegation of the *sole* power that majorities are worthy to be entrusted with the supreme power in the State.

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