

you be?" said an old woman, who had never seen her laird's wife before; "I'm thinking you'll be the new female teacher."

An attempt was made by Sir Henry James, in his Corrupt Practices Act, to make canvassing illegal; but obstruction was too determined and vested interests too strong, and he had in the end to abandon the well-meant endeavour. If he had succeeded, a heavy blow would have been struck at intimidation and indirect bribery, candidates would have been spared much wearing and uncongenial work, and electors would have been left free to exercise the great privilege and the heavy responsibility of the franchise in the way they thought best. The old system, by which agents rambled over the various districts, note-books in hand, to bring back reports of probable majorities, gave rise to much deception, and can only be described as miserable. For the poor persecuted farmer or labourer or workman dependent on a master's favour was frequently inclined to give pledges which he had no intention of fulfilling, and though told, as men too often are, that the ballot is not really secret, he promised wildly, sometimes to both sides, on the off-chance that his deceit would never be found out.

It was now necessary for me to take my seat, and with mingled feelings of awe and apprehension I entered the sacred precincts of St Stephen's. The dramatic way, of course, is to make a good win for your party at a bye-election, and to walk up the floor of the House between your two sponsors, amid enthusiastic cheers, to be renewed when you have shaken hands with the Speaker. I merely came in with the ruck, unnoticed and unwelcomed, and perhaps just a shade discouraged after the excitement of the contest and the triumph of victory. Here I was a mere unit among a struggling mob, shoving towards the table, seizing the Book from other eager hands, kissing it in frantic haste, and