

that "the women and girls wear a petticoat made of pandanus fibre which descends from the waist almost to the knees," and in this way interest in the subject is excited. At the public school the school girls "wore fibre petticoats." The New Guinea women again "wags her petticoat with as much style and effect as her sex in any more civilized place," a fact of tremendous importance in ethnological science. At Hall Sound "the women wore the grass petticoat or skirt, though it was not long enough to reach their knees"; a subject on which, of course, a man with a fine flow of words might dwell with immense moral effect. At Yule Island "the petticoats were of the same material" as at Port Moresby, that being, naturally, the centre of fashion. The Queen of, or at, Cape Suckling "was attired in a grass petticoat" and a string of beads, which shows that it only required a little development to enable her to reach the point of artistic perfection at which, like Lord Beaconsfield, she would want "ropes of pearls." When the Queen was photographed "her grass petticoat was arranged as gracefully as possible," with results not as satisfactory as any photographer with a conscience for art would desire. At Motu Motu things are getting worse, style is vanishing and propriety is disappearing; "the women and girls were scantily attired, though most of them wore a kind of grass or fibre petticoat." The petticoat is not only the principal object of Mr. Lyne's attention, but it appears also to be a considerable article of commerce. "They had nothing to sell" at one place "but petticoats"; leading one to the inevitable conclusion that one of the first things a moral nation like England is bound to do is to purchase all the garments in the market and—present them to the natives. In such case future travellers will be spared the astonishment that Mr. Lyne experienced, and that left him in a mental condition so feminine that he could write of nothing, or next to nothing, but petticoats. It will be a subject for regret if the "spirited foreign policy" of the Empire should result in the annexation of a country in which the natives make and sell "nothing but petticoats," because there is no demand for them, of that material and length, in the Mother Country—unless, indeed, the managers of theatres should see their way clear to a cheap and virtuous decoration of their ballet troupes.

The good effect of purely feminine criticism on law and literature and art and domestic architecture is admitted with decent gratitude by us all. There is still a field in which feminine effort may effect wholesome reforms. It is the field of travel. Given a woman traveller with a bright wit, a sharp pen, and a taste for writing, and the good she might do is incalculable. Railway conductors might be made civil. Steamboat servants, even on Lake Ontario, might be made less indecently offensive. Hotel clerks might be made to wince even in their most stolid moods. And some decent regard for comfort and for the delicacies of life might be made to supplant the garish glitter and barbarous discomfort of our railways and river steamers. Two little volumes have recently appeared which in some degree fulfil a small part of the desired object. Mrs. Howard Vincent has published "Forty Thousand Miles Over Land and Water," and the well-known Mrs. Emily Pfeiffer has given us "Flying Leaves," a journal of travel from East to West. The books are not works of genius at all, but they are bright and womanly and clever; and they have a freshness that makes them easy reading. To Mrs. Howard Vincent one desires to pay instant homage, for in her third chapter she startles us agreeably by saying of Canada "it may have been prejudice, but we thought that the country bore signs of greater prosperity than over the American border." Prejudice—not at all, it is a delightful compliment from a charming writer, and is conveyed to us in that delightfully ungrammatical style of which women alone are graceful professors. Most travellers say just the opposite about the relative appearance of the two countries; but then most travellers are stupid, whereas Mrs. Vincent is a truly observing woman, and is much more accurate than most travellers. Hamilton, she tells us, is "a prosperous town"—which some natives have indeed denied, but only for a purpose; and Toronto pleased her greatly. A slip of the pen makes her say that "the comfortable wooden houses of the upper and middle orders (this is very felicitous) convey an idea of prosperity." Mrs. Vincent acknowledges with thanks the kindness of Mr. Hodgins, Q.C., who introduced Mr. Vincent to "some of the chief political men," i.e., Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. Blake, and Mr. Ross, which shows a somewhat one-sided view of the situation, and obviously deprived the Tories of a very charming opportunity and acquaintance. Mrs. Vincent, in spite of the introduction to Hon. Mr. Ross, declares that the Provincial Assembly structure "is a dingy building," and if that does not set the project of a new building booming nothing will. Mrs. Pfeiffer is a little more discursive and also a little more daring than Mrs. Vincent, being more used to the sight of herself in print. She records her cabman's veracious history of the not undistinguished French-Canadian "who with two successive wives" (it is always well to

be accurate, and "successive" is accurate and moral,) "had distinguished himself by being the father of twenty-two children," and who, as our informant declared, was "as fine a Frenchman as ever stepped, and weighed two hundred pounds"—to all of which there are some who can testify. Mrs. Pfeiffer talks of the "ill-paved, ill-lighted streets" of Ottawa. That was the case a year ago, even less than a year ago; but thanks to the Mayor's energy, the reproach is no longer deserved, and Ottawa streets, next summer when the snow goes, will be the best in Canada. Mrs. Pfeiffer is not satisfied with the régime of the Princess Louise, is very sharp in her attack on the National Gallery of paintings; but is "delighted with the aspect of Toronto," though she has a fierce and feminine attack on the accommodations and food of the river and lake mail-boats. A complaint that Rideau House (meaning, I suppose, Rideau Hall,) was not occupied in order that a letter from the Foreign Office might be presented, strikes one as being a trifle unreasonable. The Foreign Office is not, by the practice of public life or by the Canadian Constitution, at liberty to send out people to stay at Rideau Hall. One of the few privileges which a Governor-General should possess is certainly that of choosing his own guests and fixing his own hours of being at home. But travellers, male and female, are apt to be hasty at times.

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### PARTY GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

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GOVERNMENT by Party is the dominant fact in the political system of the United States, as of many other countries. The Federal Constitution takes no account of this fact, and makes no conscious provision for its operation. Hence, the theory and practice of government are out of harmony, and thereby results great friction, non-action, and dislocation in the working of the machinery of administration.

It is so difficult to bring about the slightest change in our Constitution, by reason of the complex procedure of amendment, that any defect or omission in it, resulting in weak or misdirected play of its functions, is especially serious. Those who made it were not strangers to the phenomena of Party organization and government (although in their day Party had not received anything like its present development); but their judgments happened to be limited and their wills controlled by the two overshadowing necessities that had brought them together. The young Republic was going to pieces internally, and this danger threatened the ultimate political independence of the whole family. To restore the several States of the Confederacy to mutual harmony, and to organize the common strength as a barrier against foreign aggression, were the tasks that our Constitution makers set themselves to do. This could not be done without a strong and single Executive, and yet, if made too strong, it might absorb all the powers of government. To guard against this, they separated the legislative power utterly from the executive power, even to the extent of providing that no person holding an office under the United States should be a member of the Legislature, and they conferred upon the Senate a negative upon the appointment of all public officers. Having thus fenced the President about with safeguards against despotism, they proceeded to make him independent within his sphere, by protecting his official salary against reduction and reserving to him the power of laying before the Legislature projects of legislation.

In a recent commentary on the message of President Cleveland to the Congress lately assembled at Washington, I pointed out one result of the exclusion of the President from the business of legislation, in the feeble, incomplete, and even inaccurate grasp which he had acquired of the state and the needs of the law in respect of important matters of government. He had found in the course of administration that things were going badly in certain directions, and he advised Congress to find out if anything was wrong with the laws governing such matters, and, if there was, to devise a remedy. This double-headed injunction was addressed to two debating bodies, one consisting of seventy-eight and the other of three hundred and twenty-five members, all of them excluded from participation in the practical work of government, and who are dispersed and attending to their personal business for nearly two-thirds of their term of office. Let one fancy the Queen's Speech telling "My Lords and Gentlemen" that life and property were insecure, and peace and prosperity prostrate, in Ireland, and that they had better see if the laws were defective and devise amendments of them—fancy this, and then the whole body of cabinet and departmental officers betaking themselves off, leaving the House of Commons to do the work of scrutiny and invention, and to regulate the conduct of business, without aid and direction from the Executive, and one has a fair picture of the actual relations between the President and the Congress of the United States. Is it any wonder that Congress has become a mob, legislation a football, and the sessions almost sterile of any result but disturbance to business and industry?

Take the Silver question, which the President's Message presents as one of extreme and urgent importance to the public, and which is equally important to the fortunes of his own political party. Although the nominal head of his party, there is no authorized way in which he can impose his leadership upon that party, or relieve himself of his formal responsibility should the party refuse to follow his lead. He has said openly that he will not use the public patronage to bribe Democratic members of Congress into support of his leadership, and the party is tearing itself to pieces on