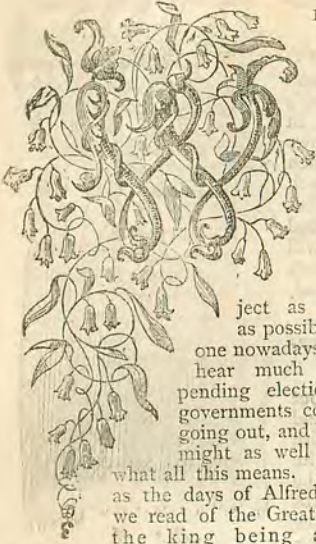


## THE GOVERNMENT OF OUR COUNTRY.

By the Hon. MRS. ARMYTAGE.



ALL this title frighten my readers, and the page be closed for fear of its exceeding dryness? I promise to do my best to make the subject as interesting as possible. Every-

one nowadays must often hear much talking of pending elections and of governments coming in or going out, and surely they might as well understand

what all this means. As far back as the days of Alfred the Great we read of the Great Council of the king being assembled

at least twice a year to assist the King in making wise laws, and from this we may look for the origin of our Parliaments. For a lengthened period the council was only formed by the King's barons, holding Crown estates, but after Magna Charta archbishops, bishops, and earls were included, and thus we have our House of Lords. To these were afterwards added knights of the county, citizens, and burgesses, and these were incorporated in the council, and held their consultations together, but eventually were divided, and, as now, form two distinct bodies—the House of Lords and the House of Commons, who hold their consultations and “debates” in separate chambers under the same roof.

The Sovereign governs the nation through the Ministry, and these are chosen from the leaders in politics in Lords and Commons. By a leader in politics I would have you understand that in the council of the nation, consisting, as it does, of more than a thousand members of the two Houses, of course there is a difference of opinion on most of the subjects brought up for consideration, and for many, many years there have always been at least two distinct parties, at one time known as Whigs and Tories; later we have had Liberals and Conservatives, and even others, whom I will not discuss. Before any new law can be passed the consent of both Houses of Parliament must be obtained, and then it has the Sovereign's assent, though it is his or her prerogative to refuse assent, but such a thing has not occurred since the reign of Queen Anne. My readers will at once see that one or other of these parties must have a majority and from this majority we find the Ministry in office. The Sovereign sends for one of the leading statesmen and desires him to form a Ministry, this command making him the Prime Minister, or Premier, for the time being. Thus charged with his Sovereign's order, the Premier seeks for twelve or more of the ablest of his supporters in Parliament, to form his Cabinet Council, which will sit apart and discuss affairs in private before making any propositions to the Houses of Parliament. The discussions which take place are never made public, but the Sovereign is of course informed of their import. Each member of the Cabinet is appointed to one of the great offices of national importance, which is then under his management, with subordinates chosen to assist him who are not in

the Cabinet, but whose political opinions agree with those of the Premier. These great offices are:—First Lord of the Treasury, which is almost always filled by the Prime Minister; the Lord High Chancellor, the Lord President of the Council, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord Privy Seal, three Secretaries of State for Foreign and Home Affairs, First Lord of the Admiralty, Postmaster-General, and Chief Secretary for Ireland.

Now we have the Ministry; and in their hands the management of home and foreign affairs is carried on. But of course there is another body of men in Lords and Commons who do not agree with what is done, and these are called the Opposition, and very often when some new law or scheme comes to be discussed there is a great deal said for and against, and then comes the division to see if there are most on the Government or on the Opposition side, and by this division the matter is either passed or thrown out. If the Government repeatedly fail to carry what they believe to be in the interest of the nation, they must do one of two things, namely, resign office or “go out,” as the saying is, or else they may apply to the Sovereign to dissolve the sitting Parliament, and apply to the country to elect a new one, which brings me to another point which will need explanation.

A seat in the House of Lords is an hereditary position; that is to say, a son succeeds his father as a peer, and therefore has his place in the House, excepting, of course, spiritual peers (archbishops and bishops), whose office is not hereditary, but who sit in the House of Lords by right of their bishopric. Thus, year after year, and Parliament after Parliament, the roll of peers remains almost the same.

The second House, that of the Commons, is differently constituted, every county in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland returning one or more members, as well as the principal cities and towns of Great Britain and Ireland. These are men who come forward and offer themselves as fitting persons to go up to Parliament and represent the opinions and wishes of a certain number of men in the place who have the right of choosing their candidate. This would, however, lead me to give a long digression on elections, which must be left for another time. I must confine myself to how the business of the nation is carried on. When all the members are elected, and Parliament is actually at work—a fact we are always reminded of in the Church Service when the “Prayer for the High Court of Parliament” is read—we might glance into the great palace at Westminster one summer evening, and watch the busy, anxious looks of some whom we pass, and with the privilege of an unseen intruder we enter the solemn chamber of the House, where we see one person sitting in a large chair of state, and know that this is the Speaker. My readers will be amused to hear that he does not fulfil his title, for his voice is less heard than any in that House, his duty being to regulate the debates and see that the proceedings are legally conducted. On the right hand side of the Speaker we shall see the principal statesmen who form the present Ministry, excepting those who, being Peers, are to be found in the House of Lords; and on the other side are ranged those members who, disagreeing with the existing Ministry, are called the Opposition. One member is standing and making a speech, perhaps when he has finished another on the opposite side of the House will rise and argue on the other line, and so it goes on until a call is heard to divide, and then, rising from their places, all the members leave the House and, passing into different lobbies, the numbers for and against are taken, and then declared, but every question has to obtain a double majority, three discussions being necessary on every

Bill, and to become law must be twice carried by numerical superiority. Having passed through the lower House; we must follow the Bill to the Lords, who as a rule generally ratify the decisions of the Commons. Sometimes they make objections to some details, and it then has to go before the Commons again. Both Houses being agreed, the Sovereign's assent makes it law. Thus we see that whatever political party be in power, they cannot conduct the affairs of England without the majority in the House of Commons is on their side. A new Parliament must be summoned every seven years, though it can be and is dissolved very much oftener by royal authority. This enables the voters throughout the kingdom to choose fresh representatives, and, according to the results of such general election, the feeling of the nation is obtained. Upon the death of the Sovereign a new Parliament must be summoned within six months.

When Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837 Lord Melbourne was Prime Minister, and remained so until succeeded by Sir Robert Peel in 1841. His tenure of office and that of Lord Palmerston are the longest since the year 1827, when Lord Liverpool retired after fourteen years.

It is illegal to hold any monster meetings on political questions within a certain distance of the Houses of Parliament; neither may a large body of persons go together with any petition to Parliament. It has happened, though, once in the reign of Queen Victoria that a great attempt was made to break this law and to get up a serious disturbance known as the “Chartist demonstration.” The utter and entire failure of the affair makes one look back on it as simply ridiculous, but one who remembers all the events of that week gives an amusing account of it from the official residence he then inhabited:—“Rumours of the determined Chartist meeting had been heard on all sides, and, with violent leaders urging them on and fiercely-denounced intentions of walking down to the House in thousands with their petition, with threats of fighting any body of police or troops that attempted to stop them, made most people rather nervous, while authorities looked grave, and the great Duke of Wellington, who was then Commander-in-Chief, undertook the whole disposal of the military arrangements which were considered necessary for the preservation of the peace, the safety of London and its inhabitants, as well as to show how futile any such attempts would be. In the different Government offices all the clerks and messengers were sworn in as special constables, stores of arms were also sent into the Admiralty and other places, while thousands of gentlemen were enrolled in the same manner, and among the number Prince Louis Napoleon, afterwards Emperor of the French. Provisions for troops came quietly into various convenient store places. A body of Marines marched up to London and were billeted in the Admiralty for two days. The Household Troops from Windsor were brought into the metropolis, and all were prepared. Before daylight the troops from their various barracks were silently marching to different places where it was thought advisable to station them, and they were kept unseen throughout the day. The Royal Horse Guards were in the riding-school at Stafford House, one regiment of Guards in Bride-well, and all in readiness to come out if needed. Meantime shops were all shut; no one ventured out in a carriage, and the streets were silently guarded by the police and extra special constables. In one or two churches a service was held at early morn to implore the preservation of peace and to avert all the horrors of disturbance.

“The day advanced. At Vauxhall Bridge artillery were stationed, as it was the an-

nounced intention of the Chartists to assemble at Kennington Oval, and march in overwhelming numbers across that bridge. A strong body of police were first to bar their progress, and if not sufficient the military would act. After hours of anxious watching the news at last came that the meeting had assembled, had listened to two or three of their orators who spoke from the top of a four-wheeled cab, had satisfied themselves with this, committed the monster petition to the charge of a few, and quietly dispersed, thus ending the great Chartist demonstration of April 10, 1848."

Having briefly sketched an outline of the Government and its position, I would at some future time say more of the different offices of State if my readers are sufficiently interested in the subject.



## A LETTER FROM A KITCHEN.

[To the Editor of THE

GIRL'S OWN PAPER.]



HONOURED SIR,—I take the liberty of writing you these few lines to tell you how much my fellow-servant, Sarah, and me like your paper. I was always fond of reading, from a child, and mother used to make rare fun of me, and say she believed I would sit with a book written in French in my hands sooner than not be reading at all; but I don't know that I ever read anything I liked so

much as THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, for there's a bit of all sorts in it—something to make you laugh, as well as something to teach you; but there's some of the writings in it I thought I'd like to say a word about, in case there was any readers might be placed like myself.

You must know that I am a general servant, only there's a girl of sixteen kept too, being rather more work than one can do properly, as it is a largeish house, and master and mistress very particular, not but what they are good people, and kind to us girls in many ways that some would never think of.

Well, as I was saying about THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, there's many pieces in it very nice to read, and useful, no doubt, to the ladies as have not got to work all day, but that poor folks might pass by, with—"Oh, that isn't suited for the likes of us; however could we do all that's written down here?" That's what I thought when mistress made me a present of the first few numbers, and advised me to take it in regular.

There are some pieces written, I should say, by a medical gentleman, to tell you how to

improve your appearance, and all by fair means; not any of those nasty messes for the complexion as you see advertised. I could not help smiling when I saw those rules for making you look healthy and bright; and I remember saying to the other girl, "Ah, Sarah, we haven't time to be thinking about our complexions, have we?" But then I thought to myself, why shouldn't we try to look nice as well as them as happen to be born young ladies; so said I to Sarah, "I'll just see what the gentleman has to say about it."

With that I took the book up again and read all about taking care of your hair. Certainly it would not be right nor yet reasonable for such as me to take new laid eggs to wash mine with, but we always have the best yellow soap, or else the soft soap, which is better to my thinking, and I don't know but what that is as good as the eggs when all's said and done. At any rate, since I began to wash my hair thoroughly with it once a fortnight, and give it a good brush every night, no one would believe the difference. Even mistress said once, "Why, Jane, how nice and bright your hair do look now; quite different from the dusty-looking wig you used to have."

I felt pleased at that, I can tell you, for mistress don't often pass a remark about our appearance, unless she thinks we are getting too fine, and then it isn't praise she gives us.

Then it seems you can't be healthy without having a bath every morning, leastways it says so times upon times in those papers I'm speaking about. If anybody has a need to be strong and well, certainly it is servants, for if they fall ill, whatever is to become of them? But I never was in a place yet where the servants could have a bath, neither night nor morning, and what with being in such a desperate hurry in the morning, and too tired to do anything at nights, most girls aren't so particular as they might be about washing themselves regular.

But though we can't have a regular bath like the paper says we ought to, there's not much difficulty about having a thorough good wash all over, say once or twice a week. Sarah and me share the same bedroom, and how we manage is this. On bath night, as we call it, I get a can of hot water and go to bed half an hour earlier than usual, which mistress has no objections to, as, if anything is wanted, there is Sarah to attend to it; and on her bath nights she does the same, and I attend to her work, for I have persuaded her into following the same way. And certainly it's time well spent, for I feel a different girl since I began, and Sarah's mother says she shall be about keeping her children a bit tidier, for Sarah puts them all to shame when she goes home on a visit.

Then there are all the papers about cooking, and many's the hint I have taken from them. I can call to mind feeling rather angry when I read about us English cooks being wasteful when compared with foreigners, which I've always understood lives on frogs; but certainly by using up the scraps and bones, and even saving the water meat has been boiled in, I must say it has brought down the butcher's book above a bit, and many's the tasty little dish I've sent to table, made, as you may say, out of nothing, and mistress soon noticed them, and likewise the change in the butcher's book, and when I told her the reason she *did* seem pleased. "If that's the case, Jane," says she, "I shall have to raise your wages, or you will be wanting to leave us and take a grand cook's place now you're getting such a first-rate one, and so economical too."

It says in one place that your meat ought never to be laid down on a dish, but always hung up. But suppose your larder hasn't any hooks in it, and the larder not over good nor

over large, which is the case with ours. That stopped me at the first; but then I thought to myself, "Mistress won't begrudge a shilling or two if it keeps the meat better," and I have a good strong wrist, so I took and bought a dozen long nails and a few stout iron hooks, and hammered them in the larder walls, and sure enough there were my meat hooks, as good as if the first carpenter in the land had made them.

I must not forget the papers about needle-work, which those on cutting out and making dresses have been most useful to me, and others too, no doubt, for it is a shame to pay three shillings or more for making a plain print, when anyone can make it themselves by following what it says in the book, for most has an hour or two to themselves of an evening. I saved up the old newspapers that came downstairs, and gummied them together, and though I did not get on so very well at first, I managed at last to cut out a pretty fair pattern, taking the measures from an old dress, and kept it by me, so I can always cut out a dress now without any trouble about the pattern.

There are some beautiful pictures of what might be termed fancy darning, and very well described, too, as come in very useful for mending the table linen; also one, more proper for knitted things, that I use when I have time for mistress's stockings, and very nice they look, for you can't see where the hole was; but in general it is the table linen I use the directions for, for you can even copy the pattern of the damask if you go by what the book says.

If you will please excuse me being so long-winded, as the saying is, there is one more thing I should wish to tell you about. There was a piece in the paper about making your bedroom look nice, though some might say the writer did not mean them for such as us. Perhaps not; but I daresay she will be all the better pleased to think they have been followed out by one, at the least. Most girls in service don't care what their rooms are like, so long as there's a bed and a washstand, and just room to turn round; but after I had read that piece up to Sarah one evening, we thought we should like to make ours more comfortable than at present. Of course I asked mistress if she would object to my putting up a shelf or two, and when she took it in what I had in my mind, and what had put me up to it, she said quite pleasant, "Oh, certainly, anything in reason; tell me what you want, and I will give you a shilling or two to pay for them."

With that Sarah and I talked it over, and decided to have a bracket covered with American cloth by the washstand, which is terrible crowded, what with a water-bottle and soap dish, and one thing and another, and in a corner we shall have a shelf with a curtain hanging from it for a cupboard to keep our other dresses in, just like the young ladies in the story did. Then under the bed we have a wooden box where we keep our best bonnets and boots and such like, and we thought we might cover that and make it look quite handsome, and keep it out in the room instead of under the bed, and it will make another seat, which at present we have only one chair; and we are going to stuff the top with paper torn up small and make it like a cushion.

So what with one thing and another the paper has been very useful to me, though a poor girl, and may you go on as interesting as you have begun is the sincere wish of

I remain, your obedient servant,

JANE COOPER.

[The Editor has, with Jane Cooper's permission, inserted the above interesting letter, and he hopes that the perusal of it will prove of benefit to many of his readers.]

Miss Nancy made no answer to this speech, nor did she seem to pay much attention to it; those who live near a waterfall get so used to its roar, that they sleep through it soundly, and perhaps it was from some such cause that Miss Nancy often appeared to heed very little certain words of her brother.

"I expect Miss Ringwood is a handsome, commanding-looking girl, such as her position requires her to be," she began, following calmly the course of her own reflections. "Now Ruby Stanton will, no doubt, have all sorts of sly, creeping ways, as people always have who have lived in a house in the situation she has. Don't you go and spoil her, Matthew, just because she makes up to you with a few buttery words, and soft, sneaking ways."

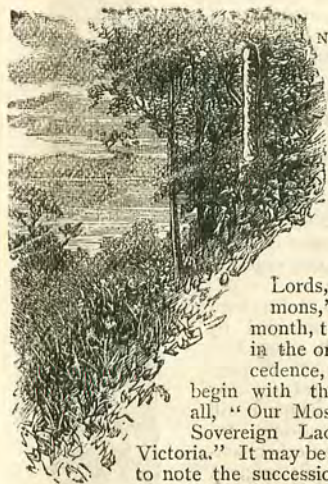
"I shall do just as I please," retorted the amiable brother in his usual key. "I shall—"

But here the conversation was interrupted by the sound of wheels on the gravel outside.

(To be continued.)

## THE GOVERNMENT OF OUR COUNTRY.

By the HON. MRS. ARMYTAGE.



IN the first article on this subject I briefly glanced at the general constitution of England—"King (or Queen)

Lords, and Commons," and this month, taking them in the order of precedence, I must

begin with the head of all, "Our Most Gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria." It may be interesting to note the succession in which the royal titles have swelled

since the time of Henry IV., "Grace" and "My Liege" then being conferred on him. "Excellent Grace" added in 1422. Edward IV. was styled "Most High and Mighty Prince." Henry VII. and VIII. were variously styled "Highness" and "Grace"; but on the memorable Field of the Cloth of Gold the French King addressed his Royal brother as "Majestie," ever since retained, with the present addition made by James I. of "Sacred" or "Most Excellent Majesty," but it was reserved for the later years of Queen Victoria's reign to add yet one title more, and in the year 1877 Her Majesty was proclaimed "Empress of India." The present line of succession to the Crown was regulated by an Act in the reign of William III., by which the Roman Catholic branch of the Stuart family was forever excluded from reigning; neither can a marriage be contracted between any member of the Royal Family and a Romanist. At the time of our Queen's engagement to the late Prince Consort the subject was under discussion, and Lord Lyndhurst, in a speech in the House, reminded the nation that there

could never be a question as to the legality or not of an alliance with a Romanist, as such a marriage necessarily involved forfeiture of the Crown, and if the Heir Apparent were to contract such a marriage he would from that moment forfeit his position.

"The King never dies" is a very old saying, the explanation of which may be found in the fact that when the official announcement is made of the death of the Sovereign, the successor is at once publicly proclaimed. Some of us can remember that lovely summer day when a vast crowd assembled in the courtyard of St. James's Palace, and there watched for the moment when a young fair girl, dressed in deep mourning, appeared at the open window, and the heralds proclaimed aloud the royal titles of *Victoria, Queen of England*. In the following year she was solemnly anointed and crowned in Westminster Abbey, according to the Divine institution, and her person is forever sacred. The maxim of the law is that the sovereign can do no wrong; that is, cannot be responsible for any act, as of course there is no human tribunal competent to call him to account, and no admission upon his part can be taken advantage of. Certain rights, belonging exclusively to the sovereign, are often spoken of as the prerogative of the Crown, and these include pardon to convicted offenders, the creation of all titles of nobility, the gifts of all civil and military orders. Besides the multiplicity of other State documents, every commission in the army bears the royal signature, by which my readers will see that the duties of our Queen are not a mere sinecure, but that many, many hours of her life must be devoted to real business often of a very uninteresting description.

The taxes forming the revenue of the kingdom and the rental of certain estates throughout the country, which are called Crown lands, are collected into the funds out of which large sums have to be paid for the support of the Royal household and the dignity of the Royal state, and from this source the expenses of keeping up the army, navy, &c., are supplied. The Queen has another title, that of Duchess of Lancaster, and as such she receives the rents of the Duchy of Lancaster, and they are not paid into the national funds.

The State ceremonials and the many old customs attendant thereon would provide material for an article to itself. The Lords should next demand our notice, and the roll of peers is now over 500, in which are included the five Royal Princes (the Prince of Wales and his three brothers and the Duke of Cambridge). Since their union with England, both Ireland and Scotland have representative peers in the National Assembly: 16 Scotch, who are elected at each new parliament, and 28 Irish, who are elected for life. The Sovereign can add to the number of English peers, *ad lib.*, and such elevation is often the reward of illustrious generals in our army or distinguished statesmen. But a peer of Scotland is no longer created, and only one Irish peer when there have been three lapsed peerages through the failure of any heir. Twenty-four bishops have a seat in the House of Lords, besides the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Primate of Ireland.

On the creation of a new peer there is a quaint ceremonial connected with his first entry into the House which may amuse my readers.

At the appointed time the Lord Chancellor, who is the President of the Upper House, as the Speaker is in the Commons, takes his seat on the woosack (of which more hereafter) with robe and Chancellor's wig, and mace by his side; a few peers in ordinary morning dress are on the benches, when through the doors at the lower end of the House a small

procession advances. First a herald in quaint dress precedes the Duke of Norfolk, Marshal of England, following the Usher of the Black Rod, and the newly-created peer comes next between two supporters, and peers of older standing, all wearing their scarlet robes. Passing round the House, all make low obeisance to the Chancellor and to the empty throne; then, advancing to the table, a clerk reads the style and title of the new peer, who signs the roll, and again the little procession walks round the House, and then the three peers take their seats on the lower side of the House; each of them puts on a small cocked hat, and three times removing it as they bow low to the throne, the ceremony is over and the procession leaves the House. The scarlet robes are set aside, and they appear in their places in usual attire. The peers never wear their robes in the House except on this occasion, and when Parliament is opened by the Sovereign in person. The distinctive marks of a peer's rank are the bands of fur on his robes, and the bright new shade of the cloth betokens new creations, as of course they are hereditary, and their antiquity is their special value.

I have no doubt my readers will feel curious about the Lord Chancellor's seat being called the woosack. It is best described as an ottoman, having neither back nor arms, no luxurious change in its shape having been made since its first introduction, which dates from the time of Henry VIII. or Queen Elizabeth, some difference of opinion among historians existing upon the point. From the "Lives of Lord Chancellors" we read that in an Act respecting the precedence of the Lord Chancellor it is stated that he should "take his seat upon the uppermost sack in the Parliament Chamber, called the Chancellor's woosack." Others state that when an Act of Parliament was passed in Queen Elizabeth's reign against the exportation of wool from this country the Chancellor took a sack of wool for his seat as a memento of the Act. It is also known that in the earlier days of history sacks were placed for the members to rest upon, and no doubt, wool being the staple commodity in England, it was chosen as the seat of honour for the President of the Council; but I think its official recognition and establishment may be reckoned from the reigns of the Tudor Sovereigns. Upon one memorable occasion during the present century, during the great debate on the Reform Bill, Lord Brougham in an ecstasy of enthusiasm threw himself upon his knees on the woosack at the close of his own speech.

Curiously enough, when the Lord Chancellor would make a speech he cannot do so from the woosack, but has to move to the top of the dukes' bench on the left of the throne, he taking precedence of all temporal peers, save Princes of the blood royal. History explains this by saying that in olden times the Lord Chancellor was not of necessity a peer, and therefore had no right to a seat in the Lords' Chamber, so the woosack was brought in, but is still according to law no part of the House, and therefore a speech cannot be made from it.

The peers have some privileges which do not extend to other persons. They have the right of audience with the Sovereign upon any occasion. A peer cannot be arrested for debt, and by his brother peers alone could one of their order be tried for felony or treason. In the House of Lords a vote may be given by proxy as well as in person, a privilege not accorded to the Commons; and in the details of any debate in their chamber a slight difference is perceptible. As I have before said, all alteration of law, or introduction of any new bill, must originate with Parliament and receive the assent of the Sovereign; there is, however, one exception to this rule. Should it be the in-

tention to pass an Act of General Pardon, this must be an original act of the Crown, who sends it to the Houses of Lords and Commons, where, after being *once* read, it is passed.

The old French terms are still much used in official documents and announcements, and the Clerks of the House may still be heard to say, "La reigne remercie ses bons sujets, accepte leur b n volence et ainsi le veult," when a Bill of Supply has been granted on the occasion of some allowance to any member of the Royal Family, &c., &c.

As a rule the debates in the House of Lords are less frequently of the exciting nature of those in the Commons: the reasons are many. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has his place in the Lower House, and there the great financial question of the Budget is discussed. The members of the Lower House are chosen from every phase of political opinion, and thus arise discussions on points which would receive unanimous support in the Lords. But great orators are alike to be heard in each House when some great event of national importance is before them.

### RACK-FRAME KNITTING.

UNDER this new name I am not going to introduce to you any novel work. A look at the illustrations will show you at once that you are familiar with a few of them. You have all made, or at least heard of, this kind of knitting as scarf or frame-knitting, which is, in fact, its trade designation. Neither term, however, conveys a fair idea of the work; there is another sort of frame used for the same purpose, and scarves too can be done as well with needles as with pegs. Moreover, with the latter other things besides comforters can be turned out; therefore to the uninitiated the trade-appellation is perfectly vague. Now, being rather old-maidish in my ways, I am most particular to have a place for everything and everything in its place, and for the same reason I like outspoken things, which lead to no indecision or equivocal. "A spade is a spade," that is my motto. Hence, for your better enlightenment, I have coined the speaking title of rack-frame knitting. I had first thought of calling it *peg*, but this would not have been so precise. Pegs take different shapes and may lie in different sorts of rows, while a rack is even one of the toys of a baby, and our frames have the pegs set in just the same straight way.

You see that in the most trivial matters a little thought and trouble are always indispensable; never forget this if you want to do your duty and to succeed in the world. The new title explained, I must tell you why I consider such easy work sufficiently important to rite a paper upon. I acknowledge that for a long time I looked upon the occupation as a childish pastime, but one day, being very ill and unable to see, to think, or even to bear the slightest sound, I listlessly took up a frame which happened to be near me, and almost unconsciously wound the wool round and round until, behold! I saw that I had got through quite a good piece of knitting! This surprise rather roused me up, and gradually I seemed to feel better as the work proceeded. How true it is that the best solace for physical and mental depression lies in some *trifling employment* which will divert our thoughts from our sufferings and prevent the hours lagging so wearily! Indeed I believe the rack-knitting is just the very thing for elderly ladies and invalids, it does not call for any attention or good sight, so large are its wooden spikes and so thick the wool. It has also another advantage: it can be made in a recumbent position, either with the right or left hand, and requires but little motion, and that only from the elbow.

Mark well that when I said invalids I did not specify ladies, for I think the frame will be quite as much a boon to the infirm or rheumatic man, and not less so to the boys during the long winter evenings or wet half holidays, when, for want of something to do, they drive the whole household nearly out of their wits. I really wonder that in these days, when so much is astir for the distraction and improvement of our boys, nothing as yet seems to have been done to give them a love for some quiet fireside pastime, which, keeping them at home a little more, will preserve them from the society of bad companions, and later in life from the inducements of the publichouse. I have well studied the subject, and have been struck by the difference between the homes of idleness and those where father and sons take to some little hobby, such as fretwork, knitting, &c. The Kinder-garten system has this very end in view; unfortunately it is not sufficiently followed, specially in the lower classes. Anyhow I strongly advise mothers and sisters now and then to induce their sons and brothers to share their occupations, were it only for peace' sake. I have generally found boys very much delighted with the framework, particularly as they had no tools to buy for it, and with a little coaxing they will manage a very fair piece to help you on. Therefore to the invalid, the blind, and the young of both sexes the work may prove useful.

Like everything else, this knitting has a drawback; no attempts seem to have been made in England to extend its application beyond mufflers, nor to greatly diversify the stitch. Yet, as shown by the illustrations, there are many innovations to be brought in, and no doubt when once the class of workers whom it specially benefits will have taken it in hand, they will soon discover fresh and pretty modes of turning it to account. I have never tried it, but it occurs to me that the braid for bath towels might readily be made on the spiked frames in any width, for although from twelve to thirty pegs are current in the trade, any size could be ordered of a turner.

As I told you, the work is very old, and in all our grandmothers' workboxes might be found a small ivory tube fitted with pegs. This tiny instrument is the origin of the frame-knitting, and by schoolgirls it is replaced by a more primitive tool—the reel.

The cut represents a cork, another thing always ready at hand, but I far prefer the machine reel as being so much firmer; besides, the hole is already bored, needing only widening to the required size. The cork or reel prepared, you have but to fix in the four or six pins or needles, which serve as tiny posts on which to twine the stitches. Now, with a bit of wool, silk, narrow braid, or whatever you have at disposal, lay the foundation round, thus:—Pass the wool from left to right at the back or inside of the poles, twist it round one peg, pass to the next, twist again, and repeat for the remaining two or four. You have now fastened a loop on each pin. In the second circle, do not coil the wool round the pegs, but merely hold it in front, with the left hand, and make it secure at each post by lifting over it, with a large pin, the loop of the first circle. Work thus, round and round, always keeping but one set of loops on the pins; little by little you will see your small tube-chain emerging down through the hole of the reel; continue till you have the length desired. Fig. 1 shows the work mounted on the cork, and fig. 2 the pipe in course of execution, though very much enlarged.

Necessarily the cord obtained by the reel cannot be very wide, and is only suitable for watch-guards, eye-glass chains, &c. As children are seldom trusted with a large amount of silk, they spend their pennies in skeins of some bright Berlin wool, always giving the

preference to the shadod and the Dolly Varden. Then they race one another as to who will make the greatest number of yards, and I assure you the boys are not by any means the drones of the hive.

When they can proudly display six, eight, or even twelve yards of tubing, they remove the loops from the pins, and fasten off by drawing the wool tightly through all at once. "What is to be made with that endless pipe?" you may ask. Very pretty and compact mats by sewing the cord round and round, just as for the string mats, and finishing off by an upright wavy border, similar to those you have probably often made for crochet cuffs. Into one hole work a scallop of seven long trebles, and, without any intervening chain, make the same number of trebles a quarter of an inch or so higher up, but exactly in the same line of holes. To descend and complete the wave make one single crochet a thread farther on, then seven trebles again, slantwise downwards on the level of the first group of trebles. Naturally the space between depends on the desired depth of the fluting.

A much stouter cord can be obtained by working it upon two opposite pairs of pegs on the rectangular frame, of which I will speak by-and-by. Indeed, many other contrivances will suggest themselves to the intelligent girl.

### ROUND OR CROWN FRAME.

Now, to pass to a more important undertaking, I will tell you how to make a scarf on the round or circular frame. Choose a coarse wool. Any of the Scotch fingering yarns are too thin, but double Berlin, or, for less expense, three or four thread fleecy, will all do very nicely. These round frames are not ruinous. One of twenty-eight pegs costs about two shillings, and with it you will produce a seamless tube, 15 inches in circumference—i.e., right round; the prongs stand a little more than an inch high and half an inch apart. Take your wooden crown in the left hand, seizing the inside of the rim with the fingers and resting the thumb on the outside. Under this thumb secure, for a little while, one end of the wool, and going from left to right, twist it round every peg, gradually twirling the frame as you

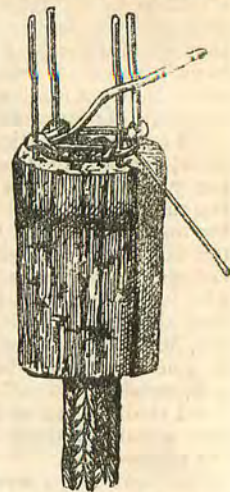


FIG. 1.—COMMENCEMENT OF CHAIN.



FIG. 2.—CHAIN ENLARGED.

But there are others who, in spite of their being good and gentle, and striving to grow better every day, remain solitary and unappreciated, and not at all unlike the girl in the story who says: "I am a poor maiden deserted by all but God alone." Their surroundings are not favourable, and those with whom their lot is now cast are not kindred spirits. What should they do? Let them have courage and patience, for things will take a turn, and their good qualities will perhaps one day secure as widespread affection as fell to the lot of the woman of whom Nanette spoke at the Wishington Stone.

JAMES MASON.

## THE GOVERNMENT OF OUR COUNTRY.—III.

By the HON. MRS. ARMYTAGE.



CONVERSING on the subject of the Lower House—the House of Commons—we must touch upon the subject of elections, by which means the members are returned to Parliament. If

a man be once returned for any city or borough he cannot resign the trust thus committed to him except by accepting any office under Government. This necessitates re-election, but there are a few sinecure offices which are really kept for the purpose; and therefore if my readers hear a member has accepted the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds, they can understand that he retires from Parliament, and of course need not seek re-election. His position may be forfeited by certain acts of his own: if he should be made a bankrupt, or if it should be proved that at his election votes were gained by himself or his agents through any act of bribery, &c. Of course a general dissolution of Parliament entails new elections for every county and borough. Writs of election are made out, and sent to the Returning Officer, whose business it is to see that the election is made within eight days of its receipt, if in a town, but double that time is granted for the counties. No one can take his seat who is under twenty-one years of age, nor can any foreigner (unless he has been naturalised), nor a clergyman, nor anyone holding certain appointments.

Elections are now carried on with much less excitement and party spirit than formerly, when the announcement of a coming contest for a vacant seat threw the whole neighbourhood into a state of tumult. Political feeling at one time ran to such excess that Whig and Tory would scarce treat each other with common civility. An election then, too, lasted many days: in fact, the poll might be kept open till every elector had given his vote; scenes of riot and disorder pervaded the place; most wholesale bribery went on openly; electors were prevented by their opponents from voting by violent measures; an unwary man was often waylaid and locked up on his way to vote. Thousands and thousands of pounds have been wasted at such times, and in some cases very large estates

have been heavily crippled through a severely-contested election. The candidates and their friends drove about in their respective colours; bands and banners were heard and seen in all directions, and many an exciting tale has been written of the doings at elections. The introduction of voting by ballot was with the hope of doing away with bribery and other evils, but the results have not proved it quite efficient, and additional checks are proposed. The polling booths, where the votes are received, are in various places in the borough. The hustings is the platform from which the candidates address the electors, and where they are first proposed. It does occasionally happen that there is no opposition, and therefore the candidate may be at once "returned" to sit in Parliament, but if not the returning officer calls for a "show of hands," but this would not satisfy either party, and the voters must come to the poll and register their votes, and the majority wins the day. The name of the successful candidate is then announced from the hustings. The old custom was that the member should then be "chaired," which meant that, hoisted in a chair on the shoulders of his supporters, he was carried through the town, with bands of music before him.

It now becomes the duty of the member to represent in Parliament the views and wishes of his constituency, and he may present any petitions to the House on their behalf.

Of all the important offices which are held by a member of Parliament when his party is in office, the first is the Chancellor of Exchequer, on whom devolves all questions connected with the financial matters of the country, and it is his duty each year to lay before the House a clear statement of affairs, which is called the Budget (taken from a French word for *bundle*). He has to state what money is required to be voted for the maintenance of the State, the Army, and Navy, &c., and, of course, this varies with the position of England as to her relations with other powers. A war necessitates a heavy demand to meet its expenses, and this entails the introduction of fresh taxation.

There is one curious fact worth telling my friends, which is that every year the Mutiny Bill has to be passed, and this is so important that, if it were not passed at the proper time, the whole army would be disbanded. The reason for this must be sought for in the past history of the country, when the Sovereign used his army to carry out any measures of his own, and coerced the liberty of his subjects. It was therefore thought wise that all laws relating to the discipline of the army should be passed for one year only, at the end of which time they are renewed, and these laws come under the head of the Mutiny Act. This reminds me that, at the time of an election, the soldiers who were in the neighbourhood were removed at the time of the contest to some place two miles from the polling place, to prevent any possibility of their force being brought into use. It is now only customary to order the troops to be confined to barracks while the election is going on.

The Lord High Chancellor, of whom we have spoken as having his seat on the Wool-sack, is the law adviser of the Crown, and is always chosen for his well-established legal ability. He holds in possession, while in office, the Great High Seal of England, which is affixed to certain State documents, and, on retiring, when his party give up office, my readers will notice that it is stated the Lord Chancellor "delivered up the Great Seal to Her Majesty," as it is from the Queen's own hand it is received on appointment.

The Lord Privy Seal holds another seal in like manner, which is the Privy Seal of the Sovereign. In 1784 the Great Seal of England was stolen from Lord Thurlow's house, he being Lord Chancellor. It was never re-

covered, no doubt being melted down for the silver, but it is recorded that a new one, to replace it temporarily, was made within twelve hours.

The Secretaries of State respectively conduct the country's affairs with foreign nations, colonial matters, and home duties; while there are also Secretaries of State for the War Department (our Army) and for India. The First Lord of the Admiralty, conjointly with naval men of rank and service, regulate the affairs of the Navy and form the Board of Admiralty. There is another important post (President of the Board of Trade) which regulates commerce and trade. All this is but a brief outline of the government of our country to induce my readers to inquire more than I can tell them in so short an article; and there are many interesting facts connected with the local government of the respective counties of England. In a former paper I just touched upon the Spiritual Peers who sit in the House of Lords, in virtue of their bishopric or see. England is divided ecclesiastically into two provinces, Canterbury and York, each of which has its archbishop. On the death of a bishop the Sovereign communicates to the authorities of the diocese, called the Chapter, his recommendation of the successor, whom the Dean and Chapter proceeds to elect. Archdeacons, rural deans, rectors, vicars, incumbents, and curates have each their different sphere in ecclesiastical work; the distinction between rector and vicar is that the former receives the great tithes of his parish, while the latter only the small tithes. The ordination of deacons and priests in the Church of England is not a subject for these brief sketches, but it is an impressive service, which my readers would do well to attend if they have the opportunity; and the consecration of a bishop is a most solemn sight. The Church and her faithful ministers have the battle to fight against the great enemy of mankind, and we are all enrolled the faithful soldiers and servants of our Great Captain. But I may not give more than a passing glance at the subject of the Church in England. The old historic abbeys, the remnants of many ancient monasteries, are of great interest, and well repay any time bestowed on reading about them.

The army of England in olden times was part of the feudal system, by which the knights were bound to be in readiness to attend the Sovereign when called upon for a certain time; and these men, numbering many thousands, could be brought into the field with little or no expense to the King. These soldiers of course were rough and untrained, and when we were at war with France the superiority of their trained bands was apparent, and by degrees, instead of turning out themselves, our ancestors paid money to the Crown for the providing regular soldiers, and at last this became the law of the land in the reign of Charles II.; and one of the oldest regiments of the standing army of England, the Coldstream Guards, takes its title from the little town in the North of England, where it was first raised by General Monk, afterwards Duke of Albemarle, in 1660.

The head of the army has the title of Commander-in-Chief. His office is at the Horse Guards, Whitehall. The great Duke of Wellington held the post for many years, and on the occasion of his public funeral, after the grand lying-in-state at Chelsea Hospital, the body was quietly taken late at night to the Horse Guards and there laid in the room where he had so long transacted business, and it was not the least impressive part of that great ceremonial to pass along the passage and, entering through heavy curtains the dimly lighted chamber, stand beside the Great Duke's coffin, now guarded by a single sentry for this last night, while on the morrow all

England's soldiers would be represented at the concluding service; and amid tears and lamentations from many who had served with him, the nation saw him carried to St. Paul's Cathedral with all the state and pomp befitting so great a hero.

We have, as all know, regiments of cavalry, infantry, and batteries of field artillery, as well as horse artillery and engineers; and we are the only nation in Europe whose military ranks are filled by volunteers. Other systems prevail in other countries, but Englishmen voluntarily enlist in the Queen's Service, and the saying often heard of "taking the Queen's shilling" expresses the bounty each man receives on enlisting. This may not be an inopportune moment for naming the decorations which are given by the Sovereign for distinguished service, though to give their history would require an article devoted to this alone. The Order of the Bath ranks first, and is divided into three classes:—Knights Grand Crosses, G.C.B., is the abbreviation affixed to the possessor's name; K.C.B., Knights Commanders; and Companions, C.B.

St. Michael and St. George is another. The many clasps and medals which we see on the breasts of our brave soldiers are struck to commemorate special campaigns and victories. We have them for the old Peninsular War, for Indian battles, Chinese victories, Crimean campaign, New Zealand war, Abyssinian, Ashantee, and South African engagements; but above all distinctions the Victoria Cross ranks highest, as it is given to an individual in either service and of any rank for distinguished acts of *bravery in face of the enemy*. It is a simple bronze cross, bearing as its inscription the words "For Valour."

The militia and the volunteer force of England must not be forgotten. These first are bodies of men respectively enlisted in every county who come out annually for a three weeks' training, and during the Russian War an Act of Parliament permitted their being used as regiments for service abroad. The volunteer force has been one of the great movements of the present reign, and consists of many thousand active Englishmen of all ranks who have joined it, and who meet and drill at stated times, and who are now a recognised and highly-valued body of trained troops, who yet pursue the callings of trade, or whatever may be their vocation, but are ready and willing to come out as a body should occasion need.

The Navy of England has ever been its pride, from the days of the gallant defeat of the Invincible Armada, in Queen Elizabeth's reign. Since the introduction of steam and the marvellous creations of steam-rams, &c., we have lost much of the beauty and poetry of ships and sailors. Seamen, like soldiers, now volunteer for the service, and receive pensions after long service. The affairs of the Navy are regulated by the Board of Admiralty. The dockyards of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham, &c., are where our ships are built and fitted out, though in late years some of the iron and steel ships are turned out from private yards, but their final fittings are completed at the Government dockyards, under the supervision of the admiral in command. The coastguard is a branch of the Navy employed to watch and prevent smuggling; but this work is less arduous than it was fifty years ago, when duty on foreign goods was so high that it was worth much risk to land them on our shores without paying any.



### SOWING AND REAPING.

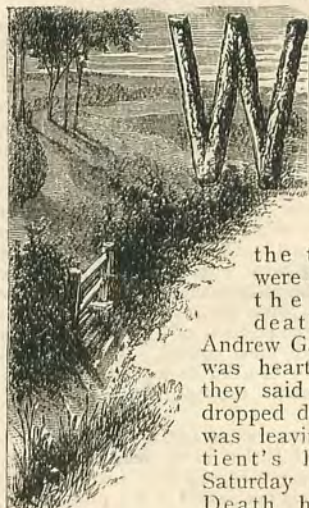
ONE day the master of Lokman, the Eastern fabulist, who was a slave, said to him, "Go into such a field and sow barley." Lokman sowed oats instead. When harvest came his master went to the place, and, seeing the green oats springing up, asked him, "Did I not tell you to sow barley here? Why then have you sowed oats?" He answered, "I sowed oats in the hope that barley would grow up." His master said, "What an absurd idea! Did you ever hear of such a thing happening?" Lokman replied, "You yourself are constantly sowing in the field of this world the seeds of evil, and yet expect to reap in the resurrection day the fruits of virtue. Therefore I thought also I might get barley by sowing oats." The master was abashed at the reply, and set Lokman free.

## MICHAELMAS DAISY.

By SARAH DOUDNEY.

### CHAPTER III.

"FAREWELL ALL WISHES, ALL DEBATE."



WHILE the church-bells of Bridleton were ringing for Sunday morning service

the townsfolk were discussing the sudden death of Dr.

Andrew Garnett. It was heart-disease, they said; he had dropped down as he was leaving a patient's house on Saturday evening.

Death had been instantaneous; there were no parting words, no signs of leave-taking. He had been lifted up and carried back to his own home, dead.

So the thing that Cecily Woodburn had greatly feared had actually come to pass.

Dr. Philip Garnett did not go to Bridleton to attend his brother's funeral. When the news of Andrew's death reached him he was lying sick on his bed and the shock retarded his recovery. He remembered that, in old days, he had loved Andrew well; and perhaps his conscience was not altogether silent. He might have been kinder to the brother who had not succeeded in life; he might have felt that success is, after all, something that ought to make us softer, not harder to others. And it was probable that poor Andrew had had drawbacks and burdens that he, Philip, had known nothing about; it might not have been shiftlessness and folly that had hindered him in running the race. Ah me, it is strange how leniently we can regard a failure when it ends in death!

The great doctor's elder daughter wrote to Daisy in her father's name. In that letter Dr. Garnett offered to take his niece into his house, and treat her as if she were his own child. It was a kind letter, stiffly written; but the stiffness

was due to Rhoda Garnett, who was secretly unwilling to write it at all.

"What shall I say to my uncle, Aunt Cecily?" Daisy asked, in a weary tone.

The funeral was over, and she was lying on the bed in her own room, utterly languid and spent. Cecily sat by her side, sometimes gazing anxiously at the pale young face, and sometimes letting her glance stray towards the window.

It was a true autumn day, golden and still. Even the smoke of Bridleton could not quite obscure the mellow light that came stealing over house-roofs and chimneys. It was that kind of light that gives a touch of poetry to the most prosaic scenes, and even brick walls and attic windows were beautified by the soft glow.

The Michaelmas daisies were still blooming in their corner, and Cecily remembered how often her sister's eyes had sought comfort in their beauty. And then she recalled the words that she had spoken to Daisy only a few days ago, telling her to be like the flowers, flourishing bravely in their dreary nook when all their companions had passed away. Once upon a time there had been jessamine sprays feathering out over that old wall, and late roses sighing in autumn sweetness among the yellowing leaves of the vine. There had been rich velvet dahlias and gay asters to keep the daisies company, and hardy evergreens had rustled their leaves in cheerful mimicry of summer foliage. In those days the daisies must have lived with a pleasant group of friends, always ready to talk to them in flower-and-leaf language. And now all were gone; and there was only that blue-grey cluster of blossoms looking up, golden-eyed, to the autumn skies.

"What shall I say to my uncle?" Daisy repeated in her tired voice.

"You must thank him for his kind offer," Cecily replied. "And you must tell him, Daisy, that you will go to him when you leave Bridleton. You have not long to stay here, my child."

"Must I really go to him? Must I leave you? Oh, Aunt Cecily, this is too cruel, too hard!"

It was very difficult to speak firmly at that moment, but Cecily Woodburn put her own pain resolutely out of sight. Gladly would she have kept the girl with her, and toiled for her day and night. But could she, if she did her uttermost, provide such a home for Daisy as Philip Garnett could give?

No; it would be a hard matter to make a home at all. Cecily, albeit there was a good deal of romance in her nature, was a practical woman who knew the price of bread and meat, and the cost of clothes. And she knew, too, that Daisy was a delicate girl, who required a full share of all the comforts of life.

"Daisy," she said earnestly, "don't you know that you are the dearest thing I have in the world? Do you think I would let you leave me if I could keep you?"

"If you will let me stay with you, aunty, I will teach, or sew, or scrub floors," cried Daisy, in desperation.

"There are already too many teachers and sempstresses, dear; and I doubt your ability for floor-scrubbing."

of the day and the novelty of all about her. She was, therefore, somewhat surprised, on happening to glance up at the sky, to see how the sun was sinking in the west. She had no watch, so she could not tell exactly what time it was, but she was certain it must be getting late, so she turned back, and for a little while believed herself to be going straight towards Stonecroft; but before long she began to doubt whether she was taking the right way. She had followed no path, or even track: she had been going completely at random across the heather. She was not by any means quite sure that she knew on which side Stonecroft lay. She paused for a few minutes, but, gaze around as she would, she could discern nothing which would at all serve her as a landmark. She did not know the country well enough to be guided by distant objects, such as the shape of far-off hills, or glimpses of white upland farms that gleamed in the sunshine, but were not close enough at hand for her to go to them to seek information. She wished she could meet someone, but no living creature passes her except the sheep and the ponies, and a bee hurrying home with a store of aromatic, heather-flavoured honey. She could, therefore, do nothing but go on in what she had before deemed the right direction.

And now something else began to increase her perplexity, until it grew into what was very like fear. A grey mist had been rolling for some little time around the neighbouring hills, now concealing their summits, now showing them as through a veil that made the whole landscape vague and unreal, now capriciously lifting in one place, and showing, through the rift, the red Devon cattle feeding in some green upland meadow, or a half-cut cornfield, or the glitter of a stream leaping down a ravine, or the snug rick-yard belonging to a neat homestead. But, suddenly, almost before Ruby could tell what had brought about the unexpected change around her, the fog came sweeping in a vast wave down upon the moor, making, in a few moments, the sunny heath one great grey sea, turning the clear air into a thick wall that shut her in pitilessly on every side, hiding from her view even objects close at hand.

Ruby waited for a while, hoping that the mist would go as quickly as it had come; but there came no such change. Turn which way she might, nothing met her eyes except that grey, impenetrable curtain. Then she went on again, for it seemed that moving forward was her only chance of reaching some cottage where she might find a guide, or, at least, of making her way into a road that would lead her to the haunts of men. The wind had fallen as the mist came on, and the deepest stillness—a stillness that filled her with an indistinct dread—reigned around. She felt as if she would have given worlds to hear but the cry of a bird. It seemed to her as if the horror of a great desolation was gathering closer and closer about her. It was a feeling of utter loneliness such as she had never known before—a feeling that pressed upon her, and made

her heart beat and her breath come short and quick.

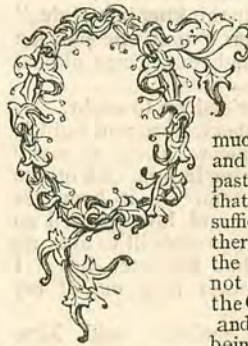
The shadows of evening now began to add to the alarm and difficulty of her situation. Every moment the air grew darker; but still her little weary feet went plodding on, though often they stumbled over a wortle-berry bush, or a tuft of heather. She had a great fear of walking into one of the bogs, and sometimes she started back, thinking that she felt the ground soft beneath her feet; then she would pause and tremble, and try to think what she had best do.

But no thought came to her that could give her any light or help. Unless she should meet someone, or find some house, she did not see that there was a reasonable hope of her getting home to-night. Her brain began to grow half dizzy; she was getting very tired, for she had been walking incessantly for several hours. Her position was different from anything that had ever happened to her in her whole life. Yet, still she struggled on through the gathering gloom, hoping for she knew not what; and still the deep, heavy silence brooded round; and still she saw nothing but that endless wall of mist; and still there seemed no boundary to the moorland.

(To be continued.)

## THE GOVERNMENT OF OUR COUNTRY.

By the HON. MRS. ARMYTAGE.



UR diplomatic relations with foreign Powers are a most interesting topic, and embrace so much that is curious and instructive, both in past and present times, that one article will not suffice to say all that there is to be said upon the matter. Though not essentially a part of the Government of England, the whole well-being and security of the nation is involved in the relations we hold with the other great Powers of the civilised world, and from some very slight misunderstanding in past years a long series of wars arose. The tact of a foreign minister has often averted a serious breach between nations, and when we think of what any war effects upon our country, we cannot fail to feel deep interest in the subject now before us. The very thought of ambassadors carries us back to the messengers sent by the King of Babylon to Hezekiah, which were an occasion, of sin to him, and their title is of very ancient date, though envoys, plenipotentiaries, *chargés d'affaires* and ministers are equally applied to representatives of foreign nations when sent on missions to other countries, and each has some distinctive dignity attached to their rank, ambassador being the first and highest. In olden times ambassadors were only sent over on special occasions, and were not residents at the Courts they visited, but now England has twenty-nine resident foreign ministers in London, or, as it is officially written, "at the Court of St. James," that being the formal heading of any royal documents of the English

Sovereign. When an ambassador is appointed by his own sovereign to go to any other Court, he is there treated as the representative of that Sovereign, and as such receives due honour. The precedence of the ambassadors is settled by the one who has been longest in the country ranking first, so that when it becomes necessary to fix for any Court ceremonial the exact rule of precedence, it is very easily decided, so that at one time the French, another year the Austrian or the German would be first, if the individual holding the position had been longer here than the others. Such a rule is the only way to prevent any national discussion, as it would be an invidious choice to determine which among the many nations of the world should be placed first.

The ambassador receives his "credentials" from his country and departs to England. He will first present these at the Foreign Office, and it then becomes the duty of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to present the ambassador to the Queen, and we often read that the ambassador from such and such a country presented his credentials to Her Majesty, and had the honour of being received. This done, he is the accredited minister through whom our diplomatic relations with that nation must be carried on. No foreigner would be received at Court save through the introduction of the representative of his own country; these introductions are generally made before the general company are received at the Queen's Drawing Room. An ambassador enjoys many special privileges, one of which is, that at any time if he wishes to see the Sovereign at whose Court he is residing, he can drive up to the palace and request an audience, which would at once be accorded to him. Neither the ambassador nor any of the servants in his employ can be arrested for debt. The distinction between an ambassador and a minister is no doubt a difficult matter to explain, as the diplomatic minutiae are numerous; but it may be understood that the nations recognised among the world as the Great Powers are represented by ambassadors, while those who rank less highly are represented by ministers and some by consuls. Only France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Turkey, and Italy have ambassadors in London, and England is in return represented by the highest in diplomatic rank at their respective capitals.

Ambassadors extraordinary are often sent on special missions, and it was not customary to have resident ambassadors in other countries until the 14th or 15th centuries, when the intercourse between one nation and another became more sound and lasting unions, and the constant relations between the countries rendered it advisable.

It was long before the American Republic were represented in London, but in the year 1785 the first American Minister came over. The great Empire of China has now a national representative in London, and great has been the amusement of seeing so many of these quaint denizens of the Celestial Empire walking about the streets. The wife of the Chinese Minister, on first arriving in England, very strictly adhered to her national rigorous etiquette, and for some time was never seen by any stranger; but time has wrought wonders, and now the Chinese lady may be seen at the Queen's Drawing Room, and has entertained in her own house.

The coming and departure of a resident ambassador is now a matter of no ceremony. Receiving letters of recall to his own country for any reason which may occur, he would simply proceed to the Queen of England, and at an audience take his leave. But when we refer to old folios and see the state and ceremony of olden times, one is surprised at all the details which had to be observed, and learn

that the most trifling deviation from some customary rule was made, an occasion of offence. All who bear the rank of ambassador are styled "Your Excellency," in honour of his representing the person and dignity of his Sovereign. The Congress of Vienna, in 1815, laid down the regulations which nations have since been bound by, respecting the different classes of diplomatic agents. Looking back to the Plantagenet kings of England, we remember that legates from Rome were attached to the Court of Westminster, and these preceded by many years their lay successors. In all Roman Catholic countries where the Pope sends his ambassador (a nuncio), he ranks before all others in right of the supreme authority allowed to the Pope.

In addition to the ministers or ambassadors who may be residing at any foreign Court, it is customary on any great occasion to send an embassy extraordinary, and in our own times we can recall many such—the coronation of the Emperor of Russia, Germany, &c. The marriage of a crowned head would also demand a special embassy if it were one of the Great Powers, and the honours accorded to them would be as representatives of their Sovereign.

The residences of foreign ambassadors are generally bought for them by the nation they represent, and are therefore inhabited by each successive ambassador. The French, Turkish, German, and Austrian have held the houses they now occupy for many years. No distinctive mark distinguishes them from any other mansion in this country, but in foreign towns the national arms are often seen over the entrance of the embassies. One curious fact in connection with diplomatic relations is that the marriage of any English subject abroad must be solemnised under the British flag to make it legal, and therefore at any Consulate the flag is often seen flying while the civil contract is there made.

When a rupture occurs between our nation and one with whom we have been on friendly terms, and have interchanged ambassadors or ministers, the first intimation of a breach is known by the recall of the respective agents at the Courts. The ambassador is hastily summoned to his own country, no courteous leave-taking occurs, and the embassy remains empty until such time as peace may again be restored. Such, many will remember, occurred during the war between England and Russia some twenty-five years ago. Since then there has been no rupture with any foreign powers.

The various chances and changes in the political and diplomatic circles often bring about curious episodes, and it was much noticed that at Queen Victoria's coronation, where the late Duke of Wellington was a very prominent figure in the group surrounding the throne on that auspicious day, the ambassador sent over from France to represent the king on the occasion was no less than Marshal Soult, one of Napoleon I.'s famous generals, who then met his great military antagonist with every expression of friendliness.

## ELEANOR'S AMBITION.

By the Author of "The White Cross and Dove of Pearls," "Selina's Story," &c.

### CHAPTER V.

"YOU'RE eating no breakfast," said Eleanor pityingly. "Do you think you could listen to a story?"

His mamma asked him if he would have some bread and milk.

"Yes, mamma, for once in my life I'll be a milkop."

"If you'll eat some bread and milk,"

said Eleanor, "I'll try to read the earache away. Perhaps, I shall read you to sleep, but the bread and milk must be my ally."

"Eleanor, have you time?"

"I'll make it."

"And you won't have to work harder for it?"

"Oh no!"

"What will you read to me?"

"Another story from the same author. 'The Two Captains,' or 'Sintram.'"

"And you shall have the breakfast-room all to yourselves," said Catharine.

"How good all the world is to a fellow that has earache," said Harry in a droning tone.

"Bless you, my dear boy, there's nothing like it," exclaimed Frederic. "It's only such small aches as finger-ache and heartache the world does not compassionate."

"Cynic!" exclaimed Catharine, "you haven't had to suffer from a want of sympathy. All your aches have been duly bemoaned so far."

"I anticipate the inevitable."

"But why cry out before you are hurt!"

"Because it's of no use to cry out after. If bread and milk, and Eleanor's story don't cure that ailing ear, Catharine, James Lovell must come and apply his stethoscope to it."

So they chatted lightly for Harry's benefit, and then in more subdued tones wondered how the poor Fittons were feeling this morning.

"There'll be no fun at *their* breakfast-table," exclaimed Mrs. Townsly.

"I could not help thinking last night," remarked Catharine, "that one petition in Keble's evening hymn seems almost extravagant—

'Be every mourner's sleep to-night,  
Like infants' slumbers, pure and light.'

We know that while we sleep, so many must be found tossing in pain with others weeping beside them. Is it heartless when one we know and love as well as we do Anna is dangerously ill to act and speak as if we had forgotten her? I am sure she is never long out of my thoughts."

"Nor out of mine," said Mrs. Townsly.

Mr. Townsly put down his paper. He was a man of few words, but when he spoke he commanded instant attention.

"When one half of the world is in sunshine the other must be in shadow. Now would it be wise for folks on the part visited with sunshine to put up their blinds out of sympathy with those in the dark. Never a night but lives dear to some of us go out of the world, and lives welcome or unwelcome come in. If we are only to be glad when the whole circle of our acquaintance can be glad too, then our term here must be all fast and no festival. It is possible to rejoice with those who do rejoice and weep with those who weep without an Eastern display of sackcloth and ashes, or an ostentatious piping and dancing."

"And," added Frederic, "our fasting is to consist of anointing the head and washing the face that it appear not unto men."

"Thank you," said Catharine, "for having cleared a difficulty. Who will go this morning to inquire if there has been news of Anna?"

Frederic volunteered, as Harry was poorly and Eleanor engaged.

"But I should like," suggested Mrs. Townsly, "for some of the children to come up here, or for some one to go down and sit an hour with the older girls. Of course, the Misses Oldfield will look after them, but we should show kindness too. But as Eleanor is giving up her morning to Harry, and Catharine has to go in the town, I suppose it can't be managed."

"I'll go down for the afternoon, if you wish it, mamma," was Eleanor's reply.

Her readiness took every one by surprise. Catharine asked her if it was not at too great a sacrifice of time.

"If it is I will go," she said.

"And don't you bother to read to me," put in Harry, but he would have looked very blank if she had taken him at his word.

"I shall read to you, and I shall go to the Fittons, so we may consider that as settled," she said, brightly.

All that morning she read to Harry, and chatted with him on the wonderful feats of the "Two Captains," and the way Fadrique astonished Heimbart when he told him Dona Clara was his sister. And he didn't seem to approve of him for a brother-in-law, though he had rescued her from a bull. Harry thought that grand. By the time there had been the meeting in the desert, and the duel Duke Alva interrupted with the presentation of the combatants to their brides, he declared that his earache was gone, and James Lovell need not do anything to it with his stethoscope.

As to Eleanor, she lighted up, and was like a new creature, entering the world of imagination just to please her little brother.

It was quite like old times, while between the pauses of the story Harry made the most comical faces at her, to signify that his mouth was all ready for kissing. "After all," he observed confidentially to his mother, when she came in towards noon to see him, "after all, when Eleanor takes it into her head to be jolly she isn't so easily beaten."

And his mother said, "I believe, Harry, you are right."

The afternoon found Eleanor at the Fittons, listening to the sad story they had to tell. Her visits there, except when Anna was at home, had resembled "angels' visits," in respect of being short and far between. But this afternoon she had come on an angel's mission, and she did not, as on former occasions, hurry away.

When she returned she brought with her Ada, as, being the most troublesome of the little Fittons, her absence was a relief to her sister Elizabeth, who, at fourteen years of age, had her work set to keep order while her mother was away.

This piece of generosity cost Eleanor a little struggle, for she knew she ought to take the charge of her little visitor as much as possible on herself. She was all the stronger for having conquered her disinclination.