

vering reluctance to obey the order that they interrupted the business of the House for nearly two hours." Since that memorable day ladies have never been allowed to sit within the House.

Townsend, in his "Memoirs of the House of Commons," tells how, after this forcible expulsion, ladies used to steal into the gallery in disguise. He gives Wraxall as his authority for the statement that the Duchess of Gordon has been seen, "habited as a man, sitting in the Strangers' Gallery;" and he adds that the beautiful Mrs. Sheridan was attracted to its precincts in similar disguise "by the charm of her husband's oratory, the sole justification that could be urged for such an intrusion in masquerade."

During the later years of the old House of Commons, which was destroyed by fire in 1834, the practice was introduced of admitting a small number of ladies to a place called the ventilator, above the ceiling, through the apertures in which, according to Townsend, "they saw and heard very well, but most inconveniently." Twenty-five tickets for this apartment were issued every night by the Serjeant-at-Arms.

The President of the Brontë Society lately announced that there are now 317 members, and also that an effort is to be made by the Society to purchase Haworth Parsonage, which is not ecclesiastical property, but is vested in trustees, and might therefore, it is thought, be secured on reasonable terms.

## A Book of the Week.

### THE ARBITER.\*

Mrs. Hugh Bell deserves credit for giving us a story which, though treating of modern life, and wholly wanting in the elements of sensationalism is distinctly original, and in places exciting.

Francis Rendel, an aspiring young politician, who has been one of the great Lord Stamfordham's secretaries, falls in love with Rachel Gore, the pretty, charming, and devoted daughter of Sir William and Lady Gore. The dialogue between the young man and his prospective mother-in-law, will give us Rachel's character.

"Perhaps," says Lady Gore, 'I ought to have begun by saying this—I wonder if Rachel is the right sort of wife for a rising politician?'

'She is the right sort of wife for me,' said Rendel, 'That is all that matters.'

'I'm afraid,' Lady Gore said, 'she isn't ambitious.'

'Afraid?' said Rendel.

'She has no ardent political convictions.'

'I have enough for both,' said Rendel.

'I'm afraid also,' the mother went on, smiling, 'that she is not abreast of the age—that she doesn't write, doesn't belong to a club, doesn't even bicycle, and can't take photographs.'

'Oh, what a perfect woman!' ejaculated Rendel.

'In fact I must admit that she has no breadwinning talent, and that in case of need, she could not earn her own livelihood.'

'If she had anything to do with me,' said Rendel, 'I should be ashamed if she tried.'

'She is not as clever as you are.'

'But even supposing that to be true,' said Rendel, 'isn't that a state of things that makes for happiness?'

\*Mrs. Hugh Bell. Arnold.

'Well,' replied Lady Gore, 'I believe that, as far as women are concerned, you are behind the age too.'

Very pretty, indeed! Rachel has no ambitions, and moreover she is "such a good daughter."

Then Mrs. Hugh Bell proceeds to show, very quietly, and without exaggeration, how very, very near the artless ignorance of this young woman comes to wrecking her husband's career completely.

The young couple, by the death of Lady Gore, find themselves saddled with the invertebrate Sir William, who, without his wife, is like a vessel without a rudder. The sweet filial devotion of Rachel makes her very tender of her father. She assumes, in the most natural way, that his claims shall be paramount with her husband too. Thus things stand, when the young politician "gets his chance"—an offer to be Governor's Secretary in Zambesiland—to go to the very centre of things, practically as second in command. He goes, tingling all over with the excitement of the thing, to show the letter to Rachel.

"O, what an opportunity!" she said, and a tinge of regret crept strangely into her voice. 'What a pity!'

'A pity!' said Rendel, looking at her.

'Yes,' she said, 'it would have been so delightful.'

'Would have been,' said Rendel, still amazed.

'Why don't you say 'Will be?' Do you mean to say you don't want to go.'

'I don't think I could go,' Rachel said, with a slight surprise in her voice, 'How could I?'

Rendel said nothing, but still looked at her as though finding it difficult to realize her point of view.

'How could I leave my father?' she said, putting into words the thing that seemed to her so absolutely obvious that she had hardly thought it necessary to speak it.

'Do you think you couldn't?' Rendel said slowly.

'O Frank, how could it be possible?' she said. 'We could not leave him alone here, and it would be much, much too far for him to go.'

'Of course I had not thought of his attempting it,' said Rendel, truthfully enough, with a sinking dread at his heart that perhaps after all the fair prospect he had been gazing upon was going to prove nothing but a mirage.

'You do agree, don't you?' she said, looking at him anxiously, 'You do see?'

'I am trying to see,' Rendel said quietly.'

G.M.R.

## What to Read.

"Jane Austen: Her Homes and Her Friends." By Constance Hill.

"James Russell Lowell: A Biography." By Horace Elisha Scudder.

"Peter III., Emperor of Russia: the Story of a Crisis and a Crime." By R. Nisbet Bain.

"The Soul of a Cat." By Margaret Benson.

"Sons of the Sword." By Margaret L. Woods.

## Coming Event.

Wednesday, February 12th.—Discussion on "The Prevention of Small-Pox in the Metropolis." Opened by A. Wynter Blyth, M.R.C.S., F.I.C., F.C.S., Barrister-at-Law, Medical Officer of Health, St. Marylebone. Parkes Museum, Margaret Street, W. Admission by Ticket only, for which early application should be made to E. White Wallis, Esq., Sanitary Institute, Margaret Street, W., 8 p.m.

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