

Mr. Shepherd, and carried:—"That editors be discouraged from inviting contributions to their journals from persons of wealth and position, thus depriving of valuable space those who were journalists by profession who had no means of living except by their profession."

We cannot consider this resolution a wise one. It is, of course, snobbish in the extreme to publish contributions, without regard to their merit, merely because the writers have wealth and position, but free competition must be admitted in journalism as in other branches of work, and any attempt at class protection is doomed to failure.

A new play is now being rehearsed at the Lyceum, in which the action of the piece begins on a farmstead out on the veldt in South Africa, with the British troops marching past on the way to Kimberley, and in which Miss Lily Hanbury appears as a hospital nurse.

One of the most interesting of the many congresses held at the Paris Exhibition this year, was the Women's Congress, which met under the presidency of Mme. Pognon, and which was attended by Mrs. May Wright Sewell, President of the International Council of Women; Mme Durand, Directress of *La Fronde*; Mlle de Saint-Croix, and delegates from many parts of the world. At least 1,000 people both men and women attended, many of whom took part in the debates which lasted for four days. Many important questions such as equal work, equal wages, education, the marriage laws, and women's suffrage were discussed. The banquet on the last day of the Congress to which all congressists were invited, and which was attended by 500 persons, was a brilliant gathering and served as an occasion for many excellent speeches. The feminist deputy, M. René Viviani, has promised to carry the wishes of the Congress to Parliament, and to endeavour to secure for them a favourable reception.

Owing mainly to the efforts of Minister Hartel a decree has been published permitting women to pass physicians' examinations at all the Austrian Universities, provided they have completed their preliminary studies. So far women have been allowed to study medicine at the Austrian Universities, but not to graduate. They will further be admitted as uniformed Government physicians in Bosnia and the annexed provinces. As Vienna is famed as a centre of medical progress it will probably attract many women students now that its degree is thrown open to them. The name of Minister Hartel, who has fought and won this keenly contested right for women, will be handed down to posterity by them with gratitude. How long will Oxford and Cambridge maintain their mediæval and unjustifiable attitude on this question?

Miss Edith May Miller has made her *début* at eighteen years of age as a political orator at Hope Centre, Maine. Her speech was in favour of Mr. Bryan, and is reported to have been concise, earnest, and at times eloquent. The following day she was engaged by the National Democratic Committee to make a tour of the doubtful States.

## A Book of the Week.

### THE MINISTER'S GUEST.\*

This book suggests in some of its detail the style of Miss Thorneycroft Fowler; and that not solely because the scene is laid in a small dissenting community in the Midlands; but also because Miss Smith, though quite without Miss Fowler's gift of epigram, is by no means quite without her power of hitting off character; and in depicting motive and in the gradual development of situation, is far beyond her brilliant prototype.

The idea upon which this novel is founded is a quaint one.

Nannie Burton is the child of one Antony Burton, an English gentleman of family, who made a marriage with Miss Anne Ketterley, the half-sister of a dissenting minister. The mother of Nannie, at her death, left in her will a special direction that the child Nannie, who was brought up by her Burton relations, should, before attaining the age of 21, pass twelve months with the Rev. Josiah Ketterley, and learn from him the grounds of his own form of belief.

Nannie grows up the petted darling of the Rectory, where lives her uncle the Rev. William Burton, and it is hard to say whether the request of the Rev. Josiah or the rector's assent to it, is more grudgingly given when the time comes.

Nannie's heart sinks at the idea of a year in Market Pately; and the good minister is quite at a loss to know what he and his terrible sister, Miss Penninah, will do with her when they get her. But it is not legally possible for the rector to prevent the visit, and poor Nannie is accordingly despatched.

The ménage which awaits her in the residence of the minister of Duck Lane Chapel, is so uncompromisingly described, that the only wonder is that Nannie ever stayed a week in the place. The whole of this part of the tale rather sounds as though it had been written some years ago. It seems hardly credible that any girl of twenty, in the year nineteen hundred, should submit to be snubbed and starved and criticised and ordered about in the way that the pretty and light-hearted Nannie does.

When once the beaux yeux of James Holbeach, the Deacon's son, have done their work, one understands her putting up with weak tea and stale bread, and the terrible lower middle-class nature of the society; but at first! One's only feeling is that she would have packed up her boxes and left the house.

The probabilities are, moreover, strained again at the end. In these days, girls do not give up their natural position without so much as a thought; and the social rank of Mrs. James Holbeach, of Mapletrees, would have so widely differed from that which Mr. Burton's niece would naturally hold, that it is impossible but that some objection should have been raised on this score. However, all such details are ignored, and the story proceeds as though such distinctions did not exist in provincial England. The cleverness of it all is the way the interest is throughout sustained on such very slender material, the wonderful way in which one is made to sympathise with the poor Minister, to breathlessly read page after page in search of the next meeting between James and Nannie, the power the writer has of holding her readers, with no smartness of style, but only a true and sympathetic gift of narration. No

\* By Isabel Smith. (Fisher Unwin.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)