

assume the responsibilities of government in the present state of affairs. From that great burden, however, they shrink; and they are in the curious and anomalous position of trying to discredit the Government at the moment when they are unwilling to take its load on their own shoulders. The Premier is a clear-headed, thoroughly trained lawyer, and the course he has marked out seems to those who stand outside the general whirl sensible and practicable. The English are a reasonable people, although, like us, sometimes given to explosions of unrestrained individuality. The Asquith Ministry was promptly confronted with a division on an amendment to the address to the Crown made by Mr. Austin Chamberlain in favor of tariff reform. While the vote was being counted there was great tension of feeling, and, when the result was announced, tremendous cheering from the Conservative members, who accepted it as indicating a great reduction of the majority against them. The amendment was rejected by a vote of 285 to 254, a majority of 31. The Nationalists of both wings abstained from voting, while the Laborites cast their votes with the Government.

**RUSSIA ON TRIAL** The personal letters written from her Russian prison by Catherine Breshkovsky and printed elsewhere in this number of *The Outlook* indicate in a touching way the serenity of character of this gentle and noble-minded woman, against whom the Russian Government is marshaling all its arbitrary power as if she were a frenzied Anarchist. The story told by Mrs. Barrows in connection with these letters, of her efforts to extend human sympathy and womanly friendliness to this prisoner and the obstacles which those efforts met, points out equally clearly the straits to which such a reactionary government is forced in its efforts to restrain free speech. So far as we have read or heard, there is no charge that Madame Breshkovsky has ever herself been guilty of a revolutionary act, or has incited others, except as that may be inferred from her open advocacy of freedom of person and action and the proper representation of the Russian people in their own affairs. The same may be said

of Nicolas Tschaykovsky, whose trial will precede that of Madame Breshkovsky. It is significant of the present Russian idea of a fair trial that the cable despatches seem to regard it as a great concession that the court will hear witnesses of the accused who offer proof that Mr. Tschaykovsky was neither the organizer nor a member of the Peasants' League. This charge and the admitted fact that he has advocated in other countries the establishing of a representative government in Russia appear to be the chief offenses for which he is to be tried. The same despatches, however, state that the court refuses to allow the defense to impeach the credibility of the chief Government witness, described in these despatches as a condemned revolutionist who volunteers testimony at all important political trials in order to postpone the carrying out of his own sentence. It is hoped that the trial will be open, and that one of the most eloquent of Russian lawyers will plead for Mr. Tschaykovsky. These concessions—for many prisoners accused of being revolutionists have been tried and condemned in secret sessions of the court and without adequate representation by counsel—are doubtless due (if indeed they are granted, which is not certain as we write) to the interest expressed in England and America as well as by intelligent Moderates in Russia. Many petitions from foreign men and women of distinction and influence have asked that Mr. Tschaykovsky and Madame Breshkovsky should be tried in accordance with the common principles of all civilized countries. The press and people of America, England, and France will follow these trials with keen interest and with sympathy for the now aged man and woman who have so long been confined on indefinite accusations, and who are known to the people of these countries to be unselfish and to be moved only by high ideals of the truth and the right. As we have said before, it is really Russia that is on trial.

**THE NEW THEATER: ITS  
AIM AND SUCCESS**

At a recent luncheon at the City Club of New York some very interesting statements were made with regard to the New Theater.

There has been, of course, a good deal of criticism of the plays and the management of the theater, as well as much cordial commendation. Mr. Ames called attention to the fact that the New Theater was still a long way from the perfection of the *Comédie Française*, but that it must be remembered that the New Theater is only fourteen weeks old, while the *Comédie Française* has been in existence one hundred and fifty years. He also made the very interesting statement that the New Theater is now playing to more people per week than any other theater in New York, and that its receipts are one and a half times greater than those of any other local theater. The New Theater was not founded for commercial purposes and is not being run in a commercial spirit; but, like every other enterprise, it needs strong financial support, and its financial success is not only gratifying from this point of view, but especially gratifying as evidence that the public is showing deep interest in the high-class performances at the theater. Mr. John Corbin, who has been so deeply interested in the organization and management of the theater, commenting on the criticism that some of the leading parts in some of the plays were not brilliantly rendered, said that the emphasis at the New Theater was not on parts but on plays, and the endeavor was, not to secure two or three star performers, but a high level of excellence in the presentation of a play as a whole. In other words, at the New Theater the play is treated from the standpoint of literary and dramatic art, and not from the standpoint of the exploitation of a particular actor. The degree in which the company of actors at the New Theater shares the aims and spirit of the institution was illustrated by Mr. Ames, who told his hearers that not long ago Miss Busley, who is a successful star, asked to be permitted to play a part which had only two lines in it, so eager was she that the apparently insignificant parts of the play should be rendered as well as the leading parts. The presentation of "The School for Scandal" is an excellent example of the thoroughness and artistic feeling for the play as a whole which the New Theater is putting into its work. Lady Teazle has been

more brilliantly played than by Miss Russell, but she puts into the part her keen intelligence and her excellent stage training; while the play, as a whole and in all its details, is presented with admirable spirit and general excellence of acting. This is a far better result from the standpoint of art than the concentration of the genius of a play upon a single rôle while the other parts remain more or less in judicious obscurity. Those who have seen "The School for Scandal" cannot but feel the difference between its brilliancy, its lightning-like play of wit, the superb talent which pervades it, and the monotonous level of commonplaceness which afflicts most of the plays in most of the theaters. It is reported that a conversation between two young people coming out of the New Theater ran like this: "Who wrote that play?" "I am blessed if I know, but whoever did was on to his job, every line." Some very good plays are now being written in this country, but the average popular play, even if it is not indecent or unwholesome, is too often written by a man who has only an elementary notion of his job.



IN MEMORY OF  
MR. GILDER

The meeting held in Mendelssohn Hall in New York City on February 20 in memory of Richard Watson Gilder was a very impressive tribute to a man who was not only a distinguished poet and editor, but an eminent citizen. The invitations for the meeting were sent out by a large group of societies representing almost every department of what may be called the higher American life—literature, art, music, public service, civil service reform, and tenement house reform; a list which brought into view the breadth of Mr. Gilder's interests and activities. Governor Hughes, who presided, said that in democracy we should reserve our highest honors for those who illustrate the worth and dignity of citizenship, and pointed out the various ways in which Mr. Gilder had conformed to this standard. "He was the pure gold of civic righteousness. He was sensible, he was a man of vision and a poet, but he was not a man of visionary aims."

We must walk [he said] in the footsteps of Richard Watson Gilder. The contribution