The Academy
A Weekly Review of Literature and Life.

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The Literary Week.

March 31 is the latest date for receiving MSS. for our Special Prize Competition, particulars of which will be found on page 2 of the cover of this number. Judging by the number of MSS. we have already received, the task of selecting the winners will be a heavy one. The awards will be made in our issue of April 21, on which occasion a Special Double Number of the Academy will be issued.

Those who indulge in the mild excitement of our Weekly Competition will observe that this week it takes the form of the best Book Tea suggestion. Here is one which gained a prize at a recent gathering. A lady appeared with a war telegram pinned to her dress, giving the speech of a distinguished general to the children who had endured the siege of Ladysmith. He looked at the wasted forms and pallid faces, and as he looked tears came into his eyes, and he said in a broken voice: "It will be all right now, children. You shall have a long holiday and plenty of bread and jam." Answer: "The Woman in White."

We who follow the trend of modern fiction are aware of three very plainly marked characteristics: (1) That women are increasingly active in this branch of literature; (2) That much of the best modern fiction comes from America; (3) That far and away the most popular form of fiction in America is the historical novel. Take, for example, Miss Mary Johnstone's By Order of the Company, which we review elsewhere in this number. It is a remark-

Johnstone, states that this novel raised the circulation of the Atlantic Monthly during its serial publication by 20,000 copies. Miss Johnston is a Virginian by birth and ancestry.

The Dictionary of National Biography will be completed in June. It is announced that the Lord Mayor will signalise the publication of the last volume of Mr. George Smith's heroic enterprise by giving a 'literary entertainment.' Lord Rosebery, Mr. John Morley, and the Bishop of London are expected to be present on the occasion.

The articles on village life which have appeared from time to time in the Outlook above the pseudonym "Clarissa" are to be published in volume form. The dedication of the book will run: "To my brother, George Wyndham."

We regret to learn that there is no improvement in the condition of M. Edmund Rostand, who is suffering from congestion of the lungs. A chill caught at the rehearsals of "L'Aiglon" was the beginning of the illness.

Mr. Goldwin Smith has been on the old quest of trying to trace the personality of Shakespeare in the plays. The result will be contained in a short book, Shakespeare: the Man, soon to be published.

Mr. Gilbert Murray, who wrote a scholarly History of Ancient Greek Literature three years ago, has attempted to re-capture Greek life and feeling through the more literary medium of an original play, entitled "Andromache." Mr. Murray dedicates his effort to Mr. William Archer in the following interesting terms:

My dear Archer,—The germ of this play sprang into existence on a certain April day in 1896, which was and is spent chiefly in dragging our reluctant bicycles up the great hills that surround Buxted Abbey, and during which the blinding rain allowed us the questions whether all sincere comedies are of necessity crude, and how often we had had tea since the morning, and how far it would be possible to treat a historical subject loyally and unconventionally on a modern stage. Then we struck, as I fear, too often the fate of those who converse with mists on the subject of the lost plays of the Greek tragedians. We talked of the extraordinary variety of plot that the Greek dramatist found in his historical tradition, the fierce, the deep, the depths of character-play. We thought of the marvellous dramatic possibilities of an age in which actual and living heroes and heroines were to be seen moving against a background of primitive superstition and blank savagery; in which the soul of man walked more free from trappings than seems ever to have been permitted to it since. But I must stop; I see that I am approaching the common pitfall of playwrights who venture upon pretexts and am beginning to prove how good my play ought to be! . . . We agree that a simple historical play, with as little convention as possible, placed in the Greek Heroic Age, and dealing with one of the ordinary heroic stories, ought to be well, an interesting experiment.

The "experiment" is issued at a price which would have commended itself to the democratic Athenian citizens—eightpence.
Reviews.
A New-Old Movement.

(Heinemann. 6s.)

In this grave and admirably-written volume Mr. Symons has a subject which suits his idiocy very well; and the work is, in most respects, better—more spontaneous, more sympathetic, more constructive, and more homogeneous—than any section of Studies in Literature. He has always had a tendency towards the exotic, the mysterious (if not the vague), the Un-obvious; and he has always shivered away from contact with that positiveity of daily common facts, that hard British physicalism (call it the cold, call it Elevation, or whatever you like), which characterizes so deeply our nineteenth-century poetry and prose. Here, in this movement which found its most child-like expression in the Baudelaire, its most brilliant in Mallarmé, and its loftiest in Mallart, there is nothing to dismay, and everything to enchant, a spectator of life and letters such as Mr. Symons. It is only natural, then, that he should be at his best. And his best is really something quite distinguished. Mr. Symons has nursed and watched over his critical talent with an almost maternal care and conscientiousness. We have seen it grow, during some ten years now, not only in strength, but in fineness and beauty. Essentially Gothic in literary temperament. Mr. Symons yet owes more to Walter Pater than to Baudelaire. His book is a study of the Gay-Scallop, a measure, every quality of Pater's except the crowning quality of wistfulness. It is a noble style, elaborately perfected, in which the elusive word is the substance of the whole. To take, for instance, this, from pages 39 and 40: "Even during the time when his inner life may be said to have begun, he was occupied with the task of unceasing meditation, in which one seems to overhear him talking to himself, in that veritable, little, ornate way he often had." In the art of personal portraiture—a valuable and legitimate, if somewhat modern, adjunct of criticism—Mr. Symons specially excels. There are several examples which might be quoted. We will give his picture of Joris-Karl Huysmans at the house of "The Bizarre Madame X."

He leans back on the sofa, rolling a cigarette between his thin, expressive fingers, looking at no one and at nothing, while Madame X. moans about with solid virility in the midst of her extraordinary mannerism of la-volte. The spoils of all the world are there in that incredibly tiny room; they lie unheeded, they climb up walls, they climb to windows, to the center, to the balcony, to the corners, to the chairs, to the tables, to the arms of the couches, to the center of the room, to the center of the house. The secret of the house is in the center of the room, the center of the house. The spoils of all the world are there in that incredibly tiny room; they lie unheeded, they climb up walls, they climb to windows, to the center, to the balcony, to the corners, to the chairs, to the tables, to the arms of the couches, to the center of the room, to the center of the house. The secret of the house is in the center of the room, the center of the house.

Mr. Symons finds Symbolism (let us yield to the word) first in Gerard de Nerval, and he traces its course onwards through de l'Eclat Adam, Lamartine, Verlaine, Mallarmé, and Masterlinck. And though, as we take it link by link, we see no flaw in the chain, it is still clear that the Symbolism of Mallarmé was an essentially different thing from that of de Nerval. The movement might almost be divided into two halves, partly concurrent: the first consisting of de Nerval, Rimbaud, and Verlaine; and the second of de l'Eclat Adam, Lamartine, Mallarmé, and Masterlinck. The former were children of Nature, singing they knew not how nor why; the latter were children of Art, belonging to a scientific period.