

ers' army to march to Ottawa with the cry "save us or we die," during the budget debate.

The Premier has said we did not delay Parliament to enable us to follow in the wake of the United States, but we wanted to get the business knowledge their tariff discussion added, for the task that lay before us. Unfortunately, the business knowledge that has chiefly come to us is how not to do it. However, before this reaches your readers they will be in possession of the changes proposed by the Government, and writing in the dark is neither entertaining nor profitable. Winter is on us again. We are not alone in that respect. Along the Canadian latitude the same news comes. Fresh winter in the East and in the West. The Canadian roarer borealis has evidently repented of the leniency which he has dealt out to his northern subjects for the past four months. His reign must soon be over, and smiling spring will ere long gladden all hearts. The past week has been a week of activity in the churches, not only among those who actively participate in the management of the churches and their choirs, but in the humble attendants who participate in the devotion called forth during this solemn week. Every church appeared to be crowded to its fullest seating capacity, and the practical side of the Christian life in Christ's Church showed itself by an offertory of three thousand dollars on Easter Sunday. A rush of visitors is expected after the re-assembling of the House in the transaction of the ordinary sessional business with Parliament.

Ottawa, Easter Monday.

"VIVANDIER."

VIEWS OF CANADIAN LITERATURE.]

The accompanying letters are a continuation of expressions of opinion on the subject of our literature.

L. E. HORNING.

Permit me to express my gratification at bearing a share in a movement which so entirely commends itself to my good wishes as a "Canadian evening" in a Canadian University. Whatever tends to promote the welfare and progress of our country must be interesting and dear to her children; and her literature, that which should, equally with trade, make her known to the outside world, and her people known the one to the other, is perhaps the means to which we ought most heartily to wish prosperity and success. I trust that the example set by you will be often in the future followed by others.

Kingston, Ont.

ANNIE ROTHWELL.

I see great possibilities for our literature. We are cramped, just now, for the want of vehicles to convey to the public the best fruit of our authors. The editor of your Canadian Magazine is doing good work, in the way of stimulating and encouraging our writers, and introducing them to appreciative audiences. THE WEEK, too, has done much, and the daily newspapers, of late years, have not failed to keep before their readers, the achievements of Canadian men and women of letters. But, until Canadian publishers make up their minds to pay their contributors a fair honorarium, they cannot expect to get the best productions of their pens. Canadian poets, historians, essayists and sketch writers find ready acceptance of their work in the great magazines and reviews of the Mother Country and the United States, at remunerative rates. This proves that our literary workmen are quite capable of tak-

ing good places alongside of the British and American masters of thought. Every month from two to three foreign publications are enriched by the writings of our own authors. This fact speaks well for our mental output, and it is satisfactory to find that every year, new men and women are coming upon the scene, and adding their names to the already very respectable list of litterateurs belonging to our country. I do not believe in the idea, that until Canada is an independent nation, she can never have a literature. Considering our natural limitations, sparse population and the want of a large wealthy and leisure class, our people have done wonders, and kept very good pace with the intellectual progress and development of the century.

Quebec.

GEORGE STEWART.

The relations of the universities to the development of literature have always seemed to me to be too little considered. They can do much to quicken our higher aspirations and to guide our taste as well as to cultivate our intellectual faculties.

The very fact that our universities are showing an interest in our literature must, when known, have a good effect, and the plan you have chosen for that end deserves the fullest recognition and encouragement.

You give me a comprehensive subject for a letter when you ask me to write of Canada's contribution to the prose literatures of the French and English-speaking worlds. The pioneers of the Old Regime were mostly endowed with the writer's gift and some of them left important works from which historians of later generations were to draw. Charlevoix had no inconsiderable library to consult as to the course of events in the writings of Cartier, Lescarbot, Champlain, the Recollet, Jesuit and Sulpician Fathers and several administrators, soldiers and explorers who wrote concerning the discoveries and experiences of themselves and their companions. Some of the explorers of the British period have also handled the pen of the ready writer, and Mackenzie, Henry, Sir George Simpson and others have left us admirable accounts of their adventures in the great West and the vast North.

But our prose literature, properly speaking, did not have its inauguration before the Victorian era. A long list could be made of the representatives of Canada's achievement in the various classes into which prose literature may be divided—history, biography, fiction, essay and criticism, constitutional history and comment, scientific exposition and technical writing.

Some authorities may question the right of all these subjects to be considered literature; others include under that term whatever is committed to writing, whether it come under the head of knowledge or of imagination and without regard to style. In a sense, both are correct. Every subject may be said to have its literature, and from this standpoint literature is manifold and all-embracing. But when we speak of prose literature as something to be encouraged, to be proud of, something without which (in alliance with poetry) no country has reached a high plane of civilization, we surely mean something more than that which has only the form of books, however necessary or instructive. Unhappily this difference is too often forgotten, not in Canada only, but in greater centres of literary culture. What

it is the duty of the universities and the press to encourage is not mere book-making, nor the indiscriminate admiration of all that bears the shape of a book.

To show what proportion of our prose writings may be deserving to rank as literature in the higher sense would, even if I dared to pronounce such a verdict, be no easy task. I cannot do better, under the circumstances, than to refer the inquirer to the critical survey of our literature in all its departments contributed by Dr. Bourinot, C.M.G., in his work, "Canada's Intellectual Strength and Weakness," which deals very fully with the whole subject thus indicated.

There is just one point on which I will venture an observation before I conclude this rather long letter. What is the best way to evoke and guide literary talent when employed in prose composition? It is hardly necessary to insist that to excel in literature, or to become known as a writer can be the aim of but one out of many of those who attend the classes of a college. But every student who takes (or whether he take or not) a degree ought to be taught to write as well as speak not only correctly, but clearly, vigorously and with some unaffected approach to the style of the best models. There is nothing more pitiable than an educated man (so-called) who is unable to use his pen with facility. There is now, as ever, a diversity of gifts. A student may have a genius for mathematics, for physical research, for the study of languages. But unless he learns to marshal his thoughts effectively, he is always at a disadvantage. His undergraduate years give him opportunities for learning to write which are not likely to recur in later life, and the advice of the Roman poet is still opportune, only that for us the best models are not Greek, but those of our mother tongue. From all the literatures that we have admission to through the gates of language we may, indeed, learn more or less, and from Greek even to-day not least. But to write our own tongue well we must give loving study to the masters and makers of it. With those masters, moreover, our Canadian writers must be compared, if we would judge them on their merits. Some of them have nothing to fear from such comparison, but these are the few. As a rule, our Canadian prose writers pay too little attention to style. It would be easy to pick out sentences from even reputable works that no leniency could excuse. The young learner should be taught to avoid such constructions. He will, however, find much to admire in our prose writers of the higher class and the more the works of such writers are studied and prized, the higher will the attainable standard of excellence be raised.

Montreal.

JOHN READE.

In the first place, our prose, like our verse, does not derive its interest from its power compared with the standard productions of Europe. In that respect we need to be very modest, indeed, having accomplished little if anything great, except the humorous works of Haliburton, and perhaps Kirby's "Golden Dog" in some aspects. Its interest is to be found in the fact that it comprises the beginnings of a school of work and the first intellectual movements of a new country. In saying the beginnings of a school of work, I mean that in this quarter of the globe we have, besides our heritage of the world's thought and problems, the task before us of trans-