

not being deemed pedantic) a suggestion about matters physical around us: on the origin and cause of circular storms, the variation and dip of the needle, a theory of currents and trade-winds, or other speculation and discussion on the physical geography of the sea, under Maury's tuition, &c., &c. Occasionally, one hears a wish expressed for news, the day's telegrams, what—the doings of the world, what—the state of the markets? The legislation of the statesman, the policy of governments, the intrigues of diplomatists, and, it may be, the ambitions of throned rulers and the broodings of war, engage stray conversation; but, shut out as we are from all facts, and from all incidents that may be transpiring ashore, the motives and the results of action amid the strife of nations and among the haunts of men, are but indifferently and listlessly discussed. There is much, however, to interest one in an ocean voyage, though many chafe under it, and regard the enforced seclusion from the world as an awful blank in one's life—yet how character comes out in thus being withdrawn from the active scenes of life. To a keen observer, and if he be stout of stomach and rugged of constitution enough to withstand the unpleasantnesses of "a life on the ocean wave," and so find his sea-legs as to profit by his observations, he will find much in the study of those with whom he comes so closely in contact to interest, and either amuse or instruct him—both perhaps. In the varied mental calibre around him, in the peculiarities of temperament, or in the characteristics of disposition and feeling though in the absence of all excitement to call these into play—one finds much to study, and material enough to reflect on. Still, to our seeming, if there is anything to attract or delight one in a voyage such as this, it is to be found in the utter rest and retirement from the strife and anxieties of business or occupation. To do absolutely nothing but enjoy, in the change from the life one has led, the tranquillity of this seclusion from the world.

But, we near the coast, and now, like an electric spark, spreads the news over the ship that land is made out; and what seemed for many days but dormant life is seen now full of activity and bustle. Interests that seemed dead, linking one to land and kindred, are now revived, and the whole ship seems to wake as from a dream. We, ourselves, who had, for the nonce, laid aside all care and thought, now assume both, and prepare again for the contact of men and the world. Duties loom up, work faces one, yet all is softened and made supportable by the delight of visiting again old familiar places, scenes that were fair in childhood, fairer now; and having also the kindly greeting of well known voices, and the sympathy and interest of warm friendly hearts. Nature, too, gives its greeting. For how attractive are the shores of the mother-land, how refreshingly green are the tints, and how grateful to the eye all nature is, when coming off the sea, accustomed for so many days to nothing but sky and water. The long twilight, too, of home, and the soft land breezes that come up over the stretch of England's rich downs, or through her winding lanes of scented hedges, are a pleasure to those who have been strangers, for a time, to both. Yet we say a kindly adieu to the good ship that has brought us safely from the deep, and has bridged us pleasantly over from continent to continent.

And now, on landing, how we have to go back on Time, and "catch up" on each day's doings, and the events that have transpired since we quitted communion with the world. In these days of telegraphs and the thousand-throated press, one is placed so much on courant with all that is happening on either

side the water, that it seems to us, coming from the sea and ignorant of all news for some ten days, that we must have been asleep or dreaming, or that we must live fifty years earlier than we do, and that the custom of our grandfathers is still current—to meet the mail, *ex the old stage-coach*, or go to the harbour on the arrival of a vessel from sea, for the latest news.

Then, as one gathers all that has transpired, reflectively comes up the thought "how the world wags." So and so is dead, such a policy has been declared, such a measure becomes law—one ambassador recalled, another commits suicide, the bank rate has advanced, gold is up, and the Pope has declared infallibility. But dominant over all items of news, and intelligence which thrills all ears, is the breaking out of hostilities on the Continent. France and Prussia have thrust peace aside, and the dogs of war are about to be loosed—this is the fell news that startles all. How variedly and curiously is this news received, and how each interest crops out on the part of those who hear it—this one, stepping ashore, a pleasure-seeker, finds the Continent and its sights closed to him—this one, a merchant, refers to the advance in the markets; that one, an investor, hurries to see the influence on the stocks; another, a foreigner, hies him, to participate in the struggle; while this one, a man of peace and one whose duty leads him to remind men of the time when "nation shall not lift up the sword against nation," remarks on the horrors of such a conflict as this must be, and eagerly asks, "What is the position of England?" Mediation, we speedily learn, will not be listened to, and the dread arbitrament of the sword is resorted to. Chassepot or Needle-gun, which will prevail? Meanwhile, will either of the combatants definitively say what they fight for, or why they thus disturb the peace of Europe?

Referring to this subject and the exactions of a state of war in withdrawing men, however employed, and recalling those of our fellow-passengers who wanted to travel on the Continent, and see, among other sights, the famous *Ober-Innmergau Passion Play*, that extraordinary scenic representation of the incidents connected with the betrayal and death of our Lord at Jerusalem, and which takes place once in ten years, in a village among the mountains of Bavaria, it seems such a comment on the Christianity of the age that, not only between two such countries as France and Prussia, who are both so strongly appealing to the God of Battles to grant success to their arms, they should at the same time forget to consider whether their cause is righteous or no, but that the very man who, in this great play acted the part of *Christ*, and who in the middle of the performance, had just spoken the Master's words of peace, "My kingdom is not of this world," and "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword," should be among the first to be called away to the war; and by the withdrawal of this character and several of those who took leading parts in the representation, and of those who (not to speak irreverently) had to exchange their parts as Pontius Pilate's guard to do duty on the Rhine for King William, should bring to a close this impressive religious drama, which seeks, among the simple people of Bavaria, and by a powerful representation of the central truth of Christianity, to effect much good.

But leaving general gossip and miscellaneous matters, and that this letter—which is written at excessive disadvantage—may have some professional character, we turn aside to work, and proceed to give the readers of THE BOOKSELLER a few brief jottings of the doings of the publishers here, as one comes across them. But at the start we are thrown back on the subject of the war again—as, catching the