

the many efforts nobly made to establish a national serial literature. To-day all we can point to, as filling this field, are one or two magazines, leading a precarious existence in other provinces, and a single illustrated paper, also published outside of Ontario. What has been the cause of this? Lack of capital—lack of material—lack of vigor in tone and style; sometimes too heavy, sometimes too light—and, finally, an active, constant, and ever-increasing competition from foreign periodicals. These causes have combined to render Canadian literary enterprizes fruitless, almost hopeless undertakings. But in spite of failure and weary years of trials and disappointments, new attempts are made every few months to launch some new Canadian venture upon the market; and, certainly, if spirit and determination are guarantees of ultimate success, we can hopefully look forward to a time when with all difficulties met and a fickle public propitiated, a native serial literature will become a fixed fact. In connection with this subject, we believe that a good weekly review, devoted to Canadian interests, political and literary, ably conducted, would be a most successful pioneer of the promised future. It would for many reasons. First, carrying a free lance, and being the organ of no man and no party, it would command the support of politicians, because they would find there independent

discussion from a purely Canadian point of view. At present our newspaper discussions are entirely regulated by the interests of individuals and parties, without regard to those of country and nationality. Secondly, it could be made a home paper, to some extent original, partially eclectic, and a welcome visitant to every educated domestic circle. Thirdly, it could have a department carefully prepared for literary and scientific essays, and would afford a field for native literature and scientific men to give to the world and their country the benefit of their researches. And lastly, it would give a tone to our political and other discussions of a much higher character than the ephemeral, personal, and superficial style adopted by the newspaper press, and, we trust, be the advent of a new era in Canadian literature. We have heard a rumour of the possibility of such an enterprise being attempted. We wish it a hearty God speed, and thoroughly believe that, if boldly and ably brought out, it will meet with abundant success, and will certainly fill a place that has been long vacant in our native literature. It will raise and purify the tone of the ordinary press, it will afford a medium to our best writers to place before the public their best articles, and it will be a noble attempt to establish the *avant courier* of a bright and hopeful literary future.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A LETTER FROM "OVER THE SEA."

On board S.S. *Prussian*,

Bound Eastward, July, 1870.

The readers of THE CANADA BOOKSELLER will, we trust, "put in no demurrer" to our proposal to occupy a brief space in this number of our serial, with the jottings by the way of its Editor on his annual business visit to the great book marts of the world, and which, it is hoped, will be found as interesting and readable as may have been the articles which, in our previous numbers, have engaged the pen of the writer.

In these days of travel and transit, letter-writing is an institution of our times, and the increasing intercourse of nations has added amazingly to the department of Travels in the literature, at least, of English-speaking countries. We have "Letters from the East," "Letters from the Far West," "Letters from High Latitudes," and "Letters from the Low Countries," and the record and diaries of the traveller's movements cover every known quarter of the globe. From the broad highway of the ocean, from the deepest recess of the desert, from the busy haunts of life, and from nature's seclusions, come, it may be, the few lines of the explorer, or the full despatch of the special correspondent.

But, here, we write from the high seas, with a waste of waters about us, and shut into a little world of passive life, strangely in contrast to communities on land, where the din of work, work, and the sounds of going and coming, and all the stir of intercourse and communication, world with world, are heard and felt. Here, 'mid the subtle elements, tho' we have had calm and fair weather, and the steady throb of the screw propels us onward to our haven, and all seems in subjection to the power of steam and the skill of man, yet how changed, oftentimes, is the scene, and how the turbulent waves and the blustering winds make a strife and havoc more awful and disastrous than the conflict ashore of a million armed men. Serenely, however, we hold on our way, and thought and observation are shut in on each other.

The concave vault above, and the water-line of the horizon below, almost bound our thought as they do our vision. Thoughts, only, akin to the circumstances of our position, are about all that interest one—a speculation as to the day's run of the vessel, or the probable date or hour of our arrival in port, with occasionally, it may be, an anxious thought of home and its treasures, and a forecast of the duties that may lie before the passenger on the varied missions of business and pleasure of those on board. Varying with the more careless thought, it may be, starts up more ambitious reflections—say, (with-