

# LITERARY CHAT.

BY DANVERS HAMBER.

*The Seafarers* by Mr. John Bloundelle-Burton is a volume in Messrs. Bell's Indian and Colonial Library. The author has inscribed this book to his "Old friends and comrades who have been or are still seafarers, either in the Royal Navy or other branches of the sea service." There is a love story of course, and there are tales of shipwreck and other harrowing adventures through which the heroine, the hero, and the villain, "not wholly bad," come with miscellaneous fortune. Here is a sample of the author's conversational style:--

"'Yet,' said Mrs. Waldron, to whom advancing years brought the power of philosophic resignation, if not the thorough strength to overcome that which rendered her unhappy, 'yet, Bella, my dearest, it is so much for you. Such a position, such a future! Oh, think of it! A position you could scarcely ever have hoped to obtain. And the love, my child, the love! Think how Gilbert loves you and you love him. For you do love him, Bella. Of all men, he is the one for you.'

"'With my whole heart and soul I love him,' her daughter answered. 'Mother, if I had never met him I do not believe I could ever have loved any other man. Ah, I am glad Juliet called Romeo the god of her idolatry. It has taught me how to think of Gilbert.'

"'And the position, Bella. The position—think of that! In our circumstances, though you come of a good stock and are descended from ladies and gentlemen on both sides from far-off years, you could never have hoped to make such a match.'

"'The position is nothing to me, mother. I love Gilbert fondly. I long to be his wife. Why should I think of the position?'"

In the end Bella's longing is satisfied, but she goes through a lot beforehand. I think I have quoted enough to show that Mr. Bloundelle-Burton's seafaring friends must wish he had never forsaken the sea. In case anybody would like to know more about Bella and Gilbert, I may say the book is on sale at Messrs. Wildman and Lyell's. Seriously speaking I think it rather a pity that Messrs. Bell should publish such poor fiction in their Colonial Library. We want raising up, not levelling down.

MESSRS. WILDMAN AND LYELL, of Auckland, have forwarded me the Rev. Joseph Hocking's *The Purple Robe*, a book that has occasioned much talk, some little controversy, and a good deal of admiration. Mr. Hocking's work, which forms a volume of Messrs. Ward, Lock and Co.'s Colonial Library, is a sort of sequel to that excellent book, *The Scarlet Woman*, for Father Ritzoom, the Jesuit, again appears in this less vividly-titled story. Mr. Hocking writes with a certain amount of Protestant bias, yet at the same time he is not too anti-Catholic. He makes his priests, Father Sheen and Father Ritzoom, completely lifelike, men of the Church, yet men of the world. The chapter on Ideal Catholicism is very finely written, and all through the book there is much about the Romanists to hold the interest of even the most prejudiced Protestant. Duncan Rutland is a well-conceived character, but there is nothing about him at all fascinating, though he is a genuine, honest and sincere fellow most of the time. There is a period when he would forsake his Church for the love of a woman, but happily the author does not require him to make that sacrifice. The girl of her own accord solves that