

indeed. Poor Princess! how lucky you was to find a friend who loved you for your own sake, and when all the rest of the wuld turned its back kep steady to you. As for believing that Lady Sharlot had any hand in this book,* Heaven forbid! she is all gratitude, pure gratitude, depend upon it. *She* would not go for to blacken her old friend and patron's carrickter, after having been so outrageously faithful to her; *she* wouldn't do it, at no price, depend upon it. How sorry she must be that others an't quite so squemish, and show up in this indesent way the follies of her kind, genus, foolish bennyfactris!

* The "authorised" announcement, in the *John Bull* newspaper, sets this question at rest. It is declared that her Ladyship is not the writer of the *Diary*.—O. Y.



EPISTLES TO THE LITERATI.

CH-s Y-LL-WPL-SH, ESQ., TO SIR EDWARD LYTTON
BULWER, BT.

JOHN THOMAS SMITH, ESQ., TO C-s Y—H, ESQ.

NOTUS.

THE suckmstansies of the following harticle are as follos:—
Me and my friend, the sellabrated Mr. Smith, reckonised each other in the Haymarket Theatre, during the performints of the new play. I was settn in the gallery, and sung out to him (he was in the pit), to jine us after the play, over a glass of bear and a cold hoyster, in my pantry, the family being out.*

Smith came as appinted. We descorsed on the subjick of the comady; and, after sefral glases, we each of us agreed to write a letter to the other, giving our notiums of the pease. Paper was brought that momint; and Smith writing his harticle across the knife-bord, I dasht off mine on the dresser.

Our agreement was, that I (being remarkable for my style of riting) should cretasize the languidge, whilst he should take up with the plot of the play; and the candied reader will parding me for having holtered the original address of my letter, and directed it to Sir Edward himself; and for having incopperated Smith's remarks in the midst of my own:—

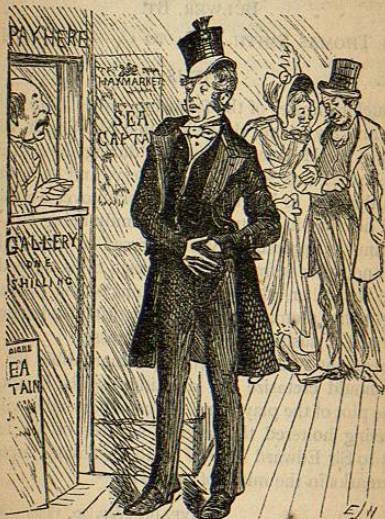
MAYFAIR, Nov. 30, 1839. *Midnite.*

HONRABLE BARNET!—Retired from the littery world a year or moar, I didn't think anythink would injuice me to come forrards again; for I was content with my share of reputation, and propoas'd to add nothink to those immortal wux which have rendered this Magaseen so sallybrated.

Shall I tell you the reazn of my re-appearants?—a desire for the benefick of my fellow-creatures? Fiddlestick! A mighty truth with which my busm laboured, and which I must bring forth or die? Nonsince—stuff: money's the secret, my dear Barnet,—money—*Pargong, gelt, spicunia.* Here's quarter-day

coming, and I'm blest if I can pay my landlud, unless I can ad hartificially to my inkum.

This is, however, betwist you and me. There's no need to blacard the streets with it, or to tell the British public that Fitzroy Y-ll-wpl-sh is short of money, or that the sallybrated hauthor of the Y— Papers is in peskewniary diffickities, or is fiteagued by his superhuman littery labors, or by his famly suckmstansies, or by any other pusnal matter: my maxim, dear



B, is on these pints to be as quiet as possible. What the juice does the public care for you or me? Why must we always, in prefizzes and what not, be a-talking about ourselves and our igstrodinary merrats, woas, and injaries? It is on this subjick that I porpies, my dear Barnet, to speak to you in a frendly way; and praps you'll find my advise tolrabbly holesum.

Well, then,—if you care about the apinions, fur good or evil, of us poor suvvants, I tell you, in the most candied way, I like you, Barnet. I've had my fling at you in my day (for, *entry nou,*

that last stoary I roat about you and Larnder was as big a bownsir as ever was)—I've had my fling at you; but I like you. One may object to an immense deal of your writings, which, betwist you and me, contain more sham scentiment, sham morallaty, sham poatry, than you'd like to own; but, in spite of this, there's the *stuff* in you: you've a kind and loyal heart in you, Barnet—a trifle deboshed, perhaps; a kean i, igspecially for what's comic (as for your tradgady, it's mighty flatchlent), and a ready plesnt pen. The man who says you are an As is an As himself. Don't believe him, Barnet! not that I suppose you wil,—for, if I've formed a correck apinion of you from your wucks, you think your small-beear as good as most men's: every man does,—and why not? We brew, and we love our own tap—amen; but the pint betwist us, is this stewpid, absud way of crying out, because the public don't like it too. Why shood they, my dear Barnet? You may vow that they are fools; or that the critix are your enemies; or that the wuld should judge your poams by your critticle rules, and not their own: you may beat your breast, and vow you are a marter, and you won't mend the matter. Take heart, man! you're not so misrable after all: your spirits need not be so *very* cast down; you are not so *very* badly paid. I'd lay a wager that you make, with one thing or another—plays, novvles, pamphlicks, and little odd jobbs here and there—your three thowsnd a year. There's many a man, dear Bullwig, that works for less, and lives content. Why shouldn't you? Three thowsnd a year is no such bad thing,—let alone the barnety: it must be a great comfort to have that bloody hand in your skitching.

But don't you sea, that in a wuld naturally envious, wickid, and fond of a joak, this very barnety, these very cumplaints,—this ceaseless groning, and moning, and wining of yours, is igsackly the thing which makes people laff and snear more? If you were ever at a great school, you must recklect who was the boy most bullid, and buffitid, and purshewd—he who minded it most. He who could take a basting got but few; he who rord and wep because the knotty boys called him nicknames, was nicknamed wuss and wuss. I recklect there was at our school, in Smithfield, a chap of this milksop spoony sort, who appeared among the romping, ragged-fellers in a fine flanning dressing-gownd, that his mama had given him. That pore boy was beaten in a way that his dear ma and aunts didn't know him; his fine

flanning dressing-gownd was torn all to ribbings, and he got no pease in the school ever after, but was abliged to be taken to some other saminary, where, I make no doubt, he was paid off igsactly in the same way.

Do you take the halligory, my dear Barnet? *Mutayto nominy*—you know what I mean. You are the boy, and your barnetey is the dressing-gownd. You dress yourself out finer than other chaps and they all begin to sault and hustle you; it's human nature, Barnet. You show weakness, think of your dear ma, mayhap, and begin to cry: it's all over with you; the whole school is at you—upper boys and under, big and little; the dirtiest little fag in the plaec will pipe out blaggerd names at you, and take his pewny tug at your tail.

The only way to avoid such consperracies is to put a pair of stow shoulders forrards, and bust through the crowd of raggy-muffins. A good bold fellow dubs his fist, and cries, "Wha dares meddle wi' me?" When Scott got *his* barnetey, for instans, did any one of us cry out? No, by the laws, he was our master; and wo betide the chap that say neigh to him! But there's barnets and barnets. Do you recklect that fine chapter in "Squintin Durward," about the too fellos and cups, at the siege of the bishop's castle? One of them was a brave warrier, and kep *his* cup; they strangled the other chap—strangled him, and laffed at him too.

With respeck, then, to the barnetey pint, this is my advice: brazen it out. Us littery men I take to be like a pack of school-boys—childish, greedy, envious, holding by our friends, and always ready to fight. What must be a man's conduct among such? He must either take no notis, and pass on myjastick, or else turn round and pummle soundly—one, two, right and left, ding dong over the face and eyes; above all, never acknowledge that he is hurt. Years ago, for instans (we've no ill-blood, but only mention this by way of igsample), you began a sparring with this Magaseen. Law bless you, such a ridicklus gaym I never see: a man so belaybord, befustered, bewolloped, was never known; it was the laff of the whole town. Your intelackshal natur, respected Barnet, is not fizzickly adapted, so to speak, for encounters of this sort. You must not indulge in combats with us course bullies of the press: you have not the *staminny* for a reglar set-to. What, then, is your plan? In the midst of the mob to pass as quiet as you can: you won't be undistubbed. Who is?

Some stray kix and buffits will fall to you—mortal man is subjiect to such; but if you begin to wins and cry out, and set up for a marter, wo betide you!

These remarks, pusnal as I confess them to be, are yet, I assure you, written in perfick good-natur, and have been inspired by your play of the "Sea Capting," and prefiz to it; which latter is on matters intirely pusnal, and will, therefore, I trust, igscuse this kind of *ad hominam* (as they say) diskcushion. I propose, honrable Barnit, to cumsider calmly this play and prephiz, and to speak of both with that honisty which, in the pantry or studdy, I've been always phamous for. Let us, in the first place, listen to the opening of the "Preface to the Fourth Edition:"—

"No one can be more sensible than I am of the many faults and deficiencies to be found in this play; but, perhaps, when it is considered how very rarely it has happened in the history of our dramatic literature that good acting plays have been produced, except by those who have either been actors themselves, or formed their habits of literature, almost of life, behind the scenes, I might have looked for a criticism more generous, and less exacting and rigorous, than that by which the attempts of an author accustomed to another class of composition have been received by a large proportion of the periodical press.

"It is scarcely possible, indeed, that this play should not contain faults of two kinds: first, the faults of one who has necessarily much to learn in the mechanism of his art; and, secondly, of one who, having written largely in the narrative style of fiction, may not unfrequently mistake the effects of a novel for the effects of a drama. I may add to these, perhaps, the deficiencies that arise from uncertain health and broken spirits, which render the author more susceptible than he might have been some years since to that spirit of depreciation and hostility which it had been his misfortune to excite amongst the general contributors to the periodical press; for the consciousness that every endeavour will be made to cavil, to distort, to misrepresent, and, in fine, if possible, to *run down*, will occasionally haunt even the hours of composition, to check the inspiration, and damp the ardour.

"Having confessed thus much frankly and fairly, and with a hope that I may ultimately do better, should I continue to write for the stage (which nothing but an assurance that, with all my defects, I may yet bring some little aid to the drama, at a time when any aid, however humble, ought to be welcome to the lovers of the art, could induce me to do), may I be permitted to say a few words as to some of the objections which have been made against this play?"

Now, my dear sir, look what a pretty number of please you put forrards here, why your play shouldn't be good.

First. Good plays are almost always written by actors.

Secknd. You are a novice to the style of composition.

Third. You *may* be mistaken in your effects, being a novelist by trade, and not a play-writer.

Fourthly. Your in such bad helth and sperrits.

Fifthly. Your so afraid of the critix, that they damp your arder.

For shame, for shame, man! What confeshns is these,—what painful pewling and piping! Your not a babby. I take you to be some seven or eight and thutty years old—"in the morning of youth," as the flosopher says. Don't let any such nonsince take your reazn prisoner. What! you, an old hand amongst us,—an old soljer of our sovring quean the press,—you, who have had the best pay, have held the topmost rank (ay, and *deserved* them too!—I gif you lef to quot me in siasiaty, and say, "I am a man of genius: Y-ll-wpl-sh says so"),—you to lose heart, and cry pickavy, and begin to howl, because little boys fling stones at you! Fie, man! take courage; and, bearing the terrows of your blood-red hand, as the poet says, punish us, if we've ofended you: punish us like a man, or bear your own punishment like a man. Don't try to come off with such misrable lodgie as that above.

What do you? You give four satisfackary reazns that the play is bad (the secknd is naught,—for your no such chicking at play-writing, this being the forth). You show that the play must be bad, and *then* begin to deal with the critix for finding folt!

Was there ever wuss generalship? The play *is* bad,—your right,—a wuss I never see or read. But why kneed *you* say so? If it was so *very* bad, why publish it? *Because you wish to serve the drama!* O fie! don't lay that flattering function to your sole, as Milton observes. Do you believe that this "Sea Capping" can serve the drama? Did you never intend that it should serve anything, or anybody *else*? Of cors you did! You wrote it for money,—money from the maniger, money from the book-seller,—for the same reason that I write this. Sir, Shakspeare wrote for the very same reasons, and I never heard that he bragged about serving the drama. Away with this canting about great motifs! Let us not be too prowld, my dear Barnet, and fasy ourselves marters of the truth, marters or apostels. We are but tradesmen, working for bread, and not for righteousness' sake. Let's try and work honestly; but don't let us be praying pompisly about our "sacred calling." The taylor who makes your coats (and very well they are made too, with the best ot velvit collars)—I say Stulze, or Nugee, might cry out that *their* motifs were but to assert the eturnle truth of tayloring, with just as much reazn; and who would believe them?

Well; after this acknollitchment that the play is bad, come sefral

pages of attack on the critix, and the folt those gentry have found with it. With these I shan't middle for the presnt. You defend all the characters *r* by *r*, and conclude your remarks as follows:—

"I must be pardoned for this disquisition on my own designs. When every means is employed to misrepresent, it becomes, perhaps, allowable to explain. And if I do not think that my faults as a dramatic author are to be found in the study and delineation of character, it is precisely because *that* is the point on which all my previous pursuits in literature and actual life would be most likely to preserve me from the errors I own elsewhere, whether of misjudgment or inexperience.

"I have now only to add my thanks to the actors for the zeal and talent with which they have embodied the characters intrusted to them. The sweetness and grace with which Miss Faucit embellished the part of Violet—which, though only a sketch, is most necessary to the colouring and harmony of the play—were perhaps the more pleasing to the audience from the generosity, rare with actors, which induced her to take a part so far inferior to her powers. The applause which attends the performance of Mrs. Warner and Mr. Strickland attests their success in characters of unusual difficulty; while the singular beauty and nobleness, whether of conception or execution, with which the greatest of living actors has elevated the part of Norman (so totally different from his ordinary range of character), is a new proof of his versatility and accomplishment in all that belongs to his art. It would be scarcely gracious to conclude these remarks without expressing my acknowledgment of that generous and indulgent sense of justice which, forgetting all political differences in a literary arena, has enabled me to appeal to approving audiences—from hostile critics. And it is this which alone encourages me to hope that, sooner or later, I may add to the dramatic literature of my country something that may find, perhaps, almost as many friends in the next age as it has been the fate of the author to find enemies in this."

See, now, what a good comfrable vanaty is! Pepple have quarld with the dramatic characters of your play. "No," says you; "if I *am* remarkabble for anythink, it's for my study and delineation of character; *that* is presizely the pint to which my littery purshuits have led me." Have you read "Jil Blaw," my dear sir? Have you pirouzed that xelnt tragady, the "Critic"? There's something so like this in Sir Fretful Plaguy, and the Archbishop of Granadiers, that I'm blest if I can't laff till my sides ake. Think of the critix fixing on the very pint for which you are famus!—the roags! And spose they had said the plot was absudd, or the langwitch absudder still, don't you think you would have had a word in defens of them too—you who hope to find frends for your dramatic wux in the nex age? Poo! I tell thee, Barnet, that the nex age will be wiser and better than this; and do you think that it will imply itself a reading of your trajadies? This is misantrophy, Barnet—reglar Byronism; and you ot to have a better apinian of human natur.

Your opinion about the actors I shan't here meddle with. They all acted exlently as far as my humble judgement goes, and your write in giving them all possible prays. But let's consider the last sentence of the prefix, my dear Barnet, and see what a pretty set of apiniuns you lay down.

1. The critix are your inymies in this age.

2. In the nex, however, you hope to find newmrous frends.

3. And it's a satisfackshn to think that, in spite of politticle diffrences, you have found frendly aujences here.

Now, my dear Barnet, for a man who begins so humbly with what my friend Father Prout calls an *argamantum ad misericordiam*, who ignowledges that his play is bad, that his pore dear helth is bad, and those cussid critix have played the juice with him—I say, for a man who begins in such a humbill toan, it's rayther *rich* to see how you end.

My dear Barnet, do you suppose that *polititicle diffrences* prejudice pepple against you? What *are* your politix? Wig, I presume—so are mine, *ontry noo*. And what if they *are* Wig, or Raddiccle, or Cumsuvvative? Does any mortial man in England care a phig for your politix? Do you think yourself such a mity man in parlymint, that critix are to be angry with you, and aujences to be cumsidered magnanamous because they treat you fairly? There, now, was Sherridn, he who roat the "Rifles" and "School for Scandle" (I saw the "Rifles" after your play, and, O Barnet, if you *knew* what a relief it was!)—there, I say, was Sherridn—he *was* a politticle character, if you please—he *could* make a spitch or two—do you spose that Pitt, Purseyvall, Castlerag, old George the Third himself, wooden go to see the "Rivles"—ay, and clap hands too, and laff and ror, for all Sherry's Wiggery? Do you spose the critix wouldn't applaud too? For shame, Barnet! what ninnis, what hartless raskles, you must beleave them to be,—in the fust plase, to fancy that you are a politticle genus; in the seeknd, to let your politix inter-fear with their notiums about littery merits!

"Put that nonsince out of your head," as Fox said to Bonypart. Wasn't it that great genus, Dennis, that wrote in Swift and Poop's time, who fansid that the French king wooden make pease unless Dennis was delivered up to him? Upon my wud, I doan't think he carrid his diddlusion much further than a serring honrrable barnet of my aquentance.

And then for the nex age. Respected sir, this is another

diddlusion; a gross mistake on your part, or my name is not Y—sh. These plays immortal? Ah, *parrysampe*, as the French say, this is too strong—the small-beer of the "Sea Capting," or of any suxessor of the "Sea Capting," to keep sweet for sentries and sentries! Barnet, Barnet! do you know the natur of bear? Six weeks is not past, and here your last casque is sour—the publick won't even now d̄rink it; and I lay a wager that, betwist this day (the thuttieth November) and the end of the year, the barl will be off the stox altogether, never never to return.

I've notted down a few frazes here and there, which you will do well to igsamin:—

NORMAN.

"The eternal Flora
Woos to her odorous haunts the western wind;
While circling round and upwards from the bougs,
Golden with fruits that lure the joyous birds,
Melody, like a happy soul released,
Hangs in the air, and from invisible plumes
Shakes sweetness down!"

NORMAN.

"And these the lips
Where, till this hour, the sad and holy kiss
Of parting linger'd, as the fragrance left
By *angels* when they touch the earth and vanish."

NORMAN.

"Hark! she has blessed her son! I bid ye witness
Ye listening heavens—thou circumambient air:
The ocean sighs it back—and with the murmur
Rustle the happy leaves. All Nature breathes
Aloud—aloft—to the Great Parent's ear,
The blessing of the mother on her child."

NORMAN.

"I dream of love, enduring faith, a heart
Mingled with mine—a deathless heritage,
Which I can take unsullied to the *stars*,
When the Great Father calls his children home."

NORMAN.

"The blue air, breathless in the *starry* peace,
After long silence hushed as heaven, but filled
With happy thoughts as heaven with *angels*."

NORMAN.

"Till one calm night, when over earth and wave
Heaven looked its love from all its numberless *stars*."

NORMAN.

"Those eyes, the guiding *stars* by which I steered."

NORMAN.

"That great mother
(The only parent I have known), whose face
Is bright with gazing ever on the *stars*—
The mother-sea."

NORMAN.

"My bark shall be our home;
The *stars* that light the *angel* palaces
Of air, our lamps."

NORMAN.

"A name that glitters, like a *star*, amidst
The galaxy of England's loftiest born."

LADY ARUNDEL.

"And see him princeliest of the lion tribe,
Whose swords and coronals gleam around the throne,
The guardian *stars* of the imperial isle."

The fust spissymen has been going the round of all the papers, as real reglar poatry. Those wicked critix! they must have been laffing in their sleafs when they quoted it. Malody, suckling round and uppards from the bows, like a happy soul released, hangs in the air, and from invizable plumes shakes sweetness down. Mighty fine, truly! but let mortal man tell the meanink of the passidge. Is it *musickle* sweetniss that Malody shakes down from its plumes—its wings, that is, or tail—or some pekwliar scent that proceeds from happy souls released, and which they shake down from the trees when they are suckling round and uppards? *Is* this poatry, Barnet? Lay your hand on your busm, and speak out boldly: Is it poatry, or sheer windy humbugg, that sounds a little melojous, and won't bear the commanest test of comman sence?

In passidge number 2, the same bisniss is going on, though in a more comprehensible way: the air, the leaves, the otion, are fild with emocean at Capting Norman's happiness. Pore Nature is dragged in to partisapate in his joys, just as she has been befor. Once in a poem, this univserle simfithy is very well; but once is enuff, my dear Barnet; and that once should be in some great suckmstans, surely,—such as the meeting of Adam and Eve, in "Paradice Lost," or Jewpeter and Jewno, in Hoamer, where there seems, as it were, a reason for it. But sea-captings should not be eternly spowting and invoking gods,

hevns, starrs, angels, and other silestial influences. We can all do it, Barnet; nothing in life is esier. I can compare my livry buttons to the stars, or the clouds of my backpipe to the dark vollums that ishew from Mount Hetna; or I can say that angels are looking down from them, and the tobacco silf, like a happy sole released, is circling round and upwards, and shaking sweetness down. All this is as esy as drink; but it's not poatry, Barnet, nor natural. People, when their mothers reckonise them, don't howl about the suckumambient air, and paws to think of the happy leaves a-rustling—at least, one mistrusts them if they do. Take another instans out of your own pal. Capting Norman (with his eternll *slack-jaw*!) meets the gal of his art:—

"Look up, look up, my Violet—weeping? fie!
And trembling too—yet leaning on my breast.
In truth, thou art too soft for such rude shelter.
Look up! I come to woo thee to the seas,
My sailor's bride! Hast thou no voice but blushes?
Nay—From those roses let me, like the bee,
Drag forth the secret sweetness!"

VIOLET.

"Oh what thoughts
Were kept for *speech* when we once more should meet,
Now blotted from the *page*; and all I feel
Is—*thou art with me!*"

Very right, Miss Violet—the scentiment is natral, affeckshnit, pleasing, simple (it might have been in more grammaticle languidge, and no harm done); but never mind, the feeling is pritty; and I can fancy, my dear Barnet, a pritty, smiling, weeping lass, looking up in a man's face and saying it. But the capting!—oh, this capting!—this windy spouting captain, with his prittinesses, and conseated apollogies for the hardness of his busm, and his old, stale, vapid simalies, and his wishes to be a bee! Pish! men don't make love in this finniking way. It's the part of a sentymente, poeticle taylor, not a galliant gentleman, in command of one of Her Madjisty's vessels of war.

Look at the remaining extrac, honored Barnet, and acknollidge that Capting Norman is eternly repeating himself, with his endless jabber about stars and angels. Look at the neat grammaticle twist of Lady Arundel's spitch, too, who, in the course of three lines, has made her son a prince, a lion, with a sword and coronal, and a star. Why jumble and sheak up metafors in

this way? Barnet, one simily is quite enuff in the best of sentences (and I preshume I kneedn't tell you that it's as well to have it *like*, when you are about it). Take my advise, honrabble sir—listen to a humble footmin: it's genrally best in poatry to understand puffickly what you mean yourself, and to igspress your meaning clearly afterwoods—in the simpler words the better, praps. You may, for instans, call a coronet a coronal (an "ancestral coronal," p. 74) if you like, as you might call a hat a "swart sombrero," "a glossy four-and-nine," "a silken helm, to storm impermeable, and lightsome as the breezy gosamer;" but, in the long run, it's as well to call it a hat. It *is* a hat; and that name is quite as poetticle as another. I think it's Playto, or els Harrystottle, who observes that what we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Confess, now, dear Barnet, don't you long to call it a Polyanthus?

I never see a play more carelessly written. In such a hurry you seam to have bean, that you have actially in some sentences forgot to put in the sence. What is this, for instance?—

"This thrice precious one
Smiled to my eyes—drew being from my breast—
Slept in my arms;—the very tears I shed
Above my treasures were to men and angels
Alike such holy sweetness!"

In the name of all the angels that ever you invoked—Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel, Zadkiel, Azrael,—what does this "holy sweetness" mean? We're not spinxes to read such dark conandrums. If you knew my state sins I came upon this passidg—I've neither slep nor eton; I've neglected my pantry; I've been wandring from house to house with this riddl in my hand, and nobody can understand it. All Mr. Frazier's men are wild, looking gloomy at one another, and asking what this may be. All the cumtributors have been spoak to. The Doctor, who knows every languitch, has tried and giv'n up; we've sent to Docter Pettigruel, who reads horyglifies a deal ezier than my way of spellin'—no anser. Quick! quick with a fifth edition, honored Barnet, and set us at rest! While your about it, please, too, to igspain the two last lines:—

"His merry bark with England's flag to crown her."
See what dellexy of igspreshn, "a flag to crown her!"

"His merry bark with England's flag to crown her,
Fame for my hopes, and woman in my cares."

Likewise the following:—

"Girl, beware,
THE LOVE THAT TRIFLES ROUND THE CHARMS IT GILDS
OFT RUINS WHILE IT SHINES."

Igsplane this, men and angels! I've tried every way; backards, forards, and in all sorts of trancepositions, as thus:—

The love that ruins round the charms it shines,
Gilds while it trifles oft;

Or,

The charm that gilds around the love it ruins,
Oft trifles while it shines;

Or,

The ruins that love gilds and shines around,
Oft trifles where it charms;

Or,

Love, while it charms, shines round, and ruins oft,
The trifles that it gilds;

Or,

The love that trifles, gilds and ruins oft,
While round the charms it shines.

All which are as sensible as the fust passidg.

And with this I'll alow my friend Smith, who has been silent all this time, to say a few words. He has not written near so much as me (being an infearor genus, betwigt ourselves), but he says he never had such mortal diffickly with anything as with the dixcripshn of the plott of your pease. Here his letter:—

To Ch-rl-s F-tar-y Pl-nt-g-n-t Y-ll-wpl-sh, Esq., &c. &c.

30th Nov. 1839.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,—I have the pleasure of laying before you the following description of the plot, and a few remarks upon the style of the piece called "The Sea Captain."

Five-and-twenty years back, a certain Lord Arundel had a daughter, heiress of his estates and property; a poor cousin, Sir Maurice Beever (being next in succession); and a page, Arthur Le Mesnil by name. The daughter took a fancy for the page, and the young persons were married unknown to his Lordship.

Three days before her confinement (thinking, no doubt, that period favourable for travelling), the young couple had agreed to run away together, and had reached a chapel near on the sea-coast, from which they were to embark, when Lord Arundel abruptly put a stop to their proceedings by causing one Gausen, a pirate, to murder the page.

His daughter was carried back to Arundel House, and, in three days, gave birth to a son. Whether his Lordship knew of this birth I cannot

say; the infant, however, was never acknowledged, but carried by Sir Maurice Beevor to a priest, Onslow by name, who educated the lad and kept him for twelve years in profound ignorance of his birth. The boy went by the name of Norman.

Lady Arundel meanwhile married again, again became a widow, but had a second son, who was the acknowledged heir, and called Lord Ashdale. Old Lord Arundel died, and her Ladyship became countess in her own right.

When Norman was about twelve years of age, his mother, who wished to "waft young Arthur to a distant land," had him sent on board ship. Who should the captain of the ship be but Gaussen, who received a smart bribe from Sir Maurice Beevor to kill the lad. Accordingly, Gaussen tied him to a plank, and pitched him overboard.

About thirteen years after these circumstances, Violet, an orphan niece of Lady Arundel's second husband, came to pass a few weeks with her Ladyship. She had just come from a sea-voyage, and had been saved from a wicked Algerine by an English sea captain. This sea captain was no other than Norman, who had been picked up off his plank, and fell in love with, and was loved by, Miss Violet.

A short time after Violet's arrival at her aunt's the captain came to pay her a visit, his ship anchoring off the coast, near Lady Arundel's residence. By a singular coincidence, that rogue Gaussen's ship anchored in the harbour too. Gaussen at once knew his man, for he had "tracked" him (after drowning him), and he informed Sir Maurice Beevor that young Norman was alive.

Sir Maurice Beevor informed her Ladyship. How should she get rid of him? In this wise. He was in love with Violet, let him marry her and be off; for Lord Ashdale was in love with his cousin too: and, of course, could not marry a young woman in her station of life. "You have a chaplain on board," says her Ladyship to Captain Norman; "let him attend to-night in the ruined chapel, marry Violet, and away with you to sea." By this means she hoped to be quit of him for ever.

But unfortunately the conversation had been overheard by Beevor, and reported to Ashdale. Ashdale determined to be at the chapel and carry off Violet; as for Beevor, he sent Gaussen to the chapel to kill both Ashdale and Norman: thus there would only be Lady Arundel between him and the title.

Norman, in the meanwhile, who had been walking near the chapel, had just seen his worthy old friend, the priest, most barbarously murdered there. Sir Maurice Beevor had set Gaussen upon him; his reverence was coming with the papers concerning Norman's birth, which Beevor wanted in order to extort money from the Countess. Gaussen was, however, obliged to run before he got the papers; and the clergyman had time, before he died, to tell Norman the story, and give him the

documents, with which Norman sped off to the castle to have an interview with his mother.

He lays his white cloak and hat on the table, and begs to be left alone with her Ladyship. Lord Ashdale, who is in the room, surlily quits it; but, going out, cunningly puts on Norman's cloak. "It will be dark," says he, "down at the chapel; Violet won't know me, and, egad: I'll run off with her."

Norman has his interview. Her Ladyship acknowledges him, for she cannot help it; but will not embrace him, love him, or have anything to do with him.

Away he goes to the chapel. His chaplain was there waiting to marry him to Violet, his boat was there to carry him on board his ship, and Violet was there, too.

"Norman," says she, in the dark, "dear Norman, I knew you by your white cloak; here I am." And she and the man in a cloak go off to the inner chapel to be married.

There waits Master Gaussen; he has seized the chaplain and the boat's crew, and is just about to murder the man in the cloak, when—

Norman rushes in and cuts him down, much to the surprise of Miss, for she never suspected it was sly Ashdale who had come, as we have seen, disguised, and very nearly paid for his masquerading.

Ashdale is very grateful; but, when Norman persists in marrying Violet, he says—no, he shan't. He shall fight; he is a coward if he doesn't fight. Norman flings down his sword, and says he *won't* fight: and—

Lady Arundel, who has been at prayers all this time, rushing in, says, "Hold! this is your brother, Percy—your elder brother!" Here is some restiveness on Ashdale's part, but he finishes by embracing his brother.

Norman burns all the papers; vows he will never peach; reconciles himself with his mother: says he will go loser; but, having ordered his ship to "veer" round to the chapel, orders it to veer back again, for he will pass the honeymoon at Arundel Castle.

As you have been pleased to ask my opinion, it strikes me that there are one or two very good notions in this plot. But the author does not fail, as he would modestly have us believe, from ignorance of stage-business; he seems to know too much, rather than too little, about the stage; to be too anxious to cram in effects, incidents, perplexities. There is the perplexity concerning Ashdale's murder, and Norman's murder, and the priest's murder, and the page's murder, and Gaussen's murder. There is the perplexity about the papers, and that about the hat and cloak (a silly foolish obstacle), which only tantalise the spectator, and retard the march of the drama's action: it is as if the author had said, "I must have a new incident in every act, I must keep tickling the spectator perpetually, and never let him off until the fall of the curtain."

The same disagreeable bustle and petty complication of intrigue you

may remark in the author's drama of "Richelieu." "The Lady of Lyons" was a much simpler and better wrought plot; the incidents following each other not too swiftly or startlingly. In "Richelieu," it always seemed to me as if one heard doors perpetually clapping and banging; one was puzzled to follow the train of conversation, in the midst of the perpetual small noises that distracted one right and left.

Nor is the list of characters of "The Sea Captain" to be despised. The outlines of all of them are good. A mother, for whom one feels a proper tragic mixture of hatred and pity; a gallant single-hearted son, whom she disdains, and who conquers her at last by his noble conduct; a dashing haughty Tybalt of a brother; a wicked poor cousin, a pretty maid, and a fierce buccanier. These people might pass three hours very well on the stage, and interest the audience hugely; but the author fails in filling up the outlines. His language is absurdly stilted, frequently careless; the reader or spectator hears a number of loud speeches, but scarce a dozen lines that seem to belong of nature to the speakers.

Nothing can be more fulsome or loathsome to my mind than the continual sham-religious clap-traps which the author has put into the mouth of his hero; nothing more unsailorlike than his namby-pamby starlit descriptions, which my ingenious colleague has, I see, alluded to. "Thy faith my anchor, and thine eyes my haven," cries the gallant captain to his lady. See how loosely the sentence is constructed, like a thousand others in the book. The captain is to cast anchor with the girl's faith in her own eyes: either image might pass by itself, but together, like the quadrupeds of Kilkenny, they devour each other. The Captain tells his lieutenant to *bid his bark veer round* to a point in the harbour. Was ever such language? My Lady gives Sir Maurice a thousand pounds to *waft* him (her son) to some distant shore. Nonsense, sheer nonsense; and, what is worse, affected nonsense!

Look at the comedy of the poor cousin. "There is a great deal of game on the estate—partridges, hares, wild-geese, snipes, and plovers (*smacking his lips*)—besides a magnificent preserve of sparrows, which I can sell to the little blackguards in the streets at a penny a hundred. But I am very poor—a very poor old knight!"

Is this wit or nature? It is a kind of sham wit: it reads as if it were wit, but it is not. What poor poor stuff, about the little blackguard boys! what flimsy ecstasies and silly "smacking of lips" about the plovers! Is this the man who writes for the next age? O fie! Here is another joke:—

SIR MAURICE.

"Mice! zounds, how can I
Keep mice? I can't afford it! They were starved
To death an age ago. The last was found
Come Christmas three years, stretched beside a bone
In that same larder, so consumed and worn
By pious fast, 'twas awful to behold it!"

I canonised its corpse in spirits of wine,
And set it in the porch—a solemn warning
To thieves and beggars!"

Is not this rare wit? "Zounds! how can I keep mice?" is well enough for a miser; not too new, or brilliant either; but this miserable dilution of a thin joke, this wretched hunting down of the poor mouse! It is humiliating to think of a man of *esprit* harping so long on such a mean pitiful string. A man who aspires to immortality, too! I doubt whether it is to be gained thus; whether our author's words are not too loosely built to make "starry-pointing pyramids" of. Horace clipped and squared his blocks more carefully before he laid the monument which *imber edax*, or *aquila impotens*, or *fuga temporum* might assail in vain. Even old Ovid, when he raised his stately shining heathen temple, had placed some columns in it, and hewn out a statue or two which deserved the immortality that he prophesied (somewhat arrogantly) for himself. But let not all be looking forward to a future, and fancying that, "*incerti spatium dum finiat avi*," our books are to be immortal. Alas! the way to immortality is not so easy, nor will our "Sea Captain" be permitted such an unconscionable cruise. If all the immortality were really to have their wish, what a work would our descendants have to study them all!

Not yet, in my humble opinion, has the honourable baronet achieved this deathless consummation. There will come a day (may it be long distant!) when the very best of his novels will be forgotten; and it is reasonable to suppose that his dramas will pass out of existence, some time or other, in the lapse of the *secula seculorum*. In the meantime, my dear Plush, if you ask me what the great obstacle is towards the dramatic fame and merit of our friend, I would say that it does not lie so much in hostile critics or feeble health, as in a careless habit of writing, and a peevish vanity which causes him to shut his eyes to his faults. The question of original capacity I will not moot; one may think very highly of the honourable baronet's talent, without rating it quite so high as he seems disposed to do.

And to conclude; as he has chosen to combat the critics in person, the critics are surely justified in being allowed to address him directly.

With best compliments to Mrs. Yellowplush, I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your most faithful and obliged humble servant,

JOHN THOMAS SMITH.

And now, Smith having finisht his letter, I think I can't do better than clothes mine lickwise; for though I should never be tired of talking, praps the public may of hearing, and therefore it's best to shut up shopp.

What I've said, respected Barnit, I hoap you woan't take

unkind. A play, you see, is public property for every one to say his say on ; and I think, if you read your prefez over agin, you'll see that it ax as a direct incouridgment to us critix to come forrard and notice you. But don't fancy, I besitch you, that we are actiated by hostillaty : fust write a good play, and you'll see we'll prays it fast enuff. Waiting which, *Agray, Munseer le Chevaleer, l'ashurance de ma hot cumsideratun.*

Voter distangy,

Y.

END OF THE MEMOIRS OF MR. C. J. YELLOWPLUSH.

CATHERINE: A STORY

BY

IKEY SOLOMONS, ESQ., JUNIOR