

as a writer of fiction is in his taking us out of that conventional world which hack novelists have invented, and delineating choice bits of that world of which all of us have some experience. For the first twenty chapters or so of "Green Pastures and Piccadilly" the story evolves itself after Mr. Black's best style, and we follow the ante- and post-nuptial love-story of Lady Sylvia and Mr. Balfour with appreciative interest, and entertain lively expectations in regard to what is to come. But beyond that, the story is a complete failure. It is as if Mr. Black had set out to write a story worthy of his reputation, but when it was half done his health failed him; so, coming to this continent by way of relaxation, he bethought him of making his holiday notes do service for the concluding portion of the book. We can quite believe that Lady Sylvia's jealousy of politics, which seemed to sever her husband from that close and loving communion which her nature yearned for, was part of Mr. Black's original conception; but to bring about Balfour's financial ruin so suddenly, and to change the story to the dry narration of a transatlantic (or, should we in Canada say, cisatlantic?) tour, savours very much of the *Deus ex machina*. It is true that the story passes through Canada by rail, and that we are treated to Impressions of Niagara, but, even to readers in this Dominion, these facts will not compensate for the lack of artistic conditions in the second half of the story. The first impression recorded of Canadians is, that they "converse in guttural French;" and the readers of the book who happen to know something of western Canada must smile when they read that. After leaving Niagara, the excursionists "plunged into that interminable forest-land between Lakes Huron and Erie,"—a statement as absurd in point of fact as of geography. We learn from the title-page that the work was written in conjunction with an American writer. This will account for the local colouring given to the scenes laid in the Far West, but we cannot help thinking that "Green Pastures and Piccadilly" is spoiled as a work of art because of its being taken beyond Piccadilly and the green pastures around Lady Sylvia's home, beyond the range of Mr. Black's experience and observation.

Critics have frequently brought the objection against stories written by the author of "Ginx's Baby," that they were written with a purpose. His most recent production,* however, is not one of them, and a capital story in fourteen chapters it is. In his preface to it the author says, he shall be content if "The Captain's Cabin" reads its perusers some good lesson of human sympathy, forbearance, and charity. Whether this be so or not, they cannot fail to be interested in the story, which professes to relate simply the incidents of a particular Atlantic voyage, but which manages to introduce complications and incidents enough to satisfy the readers of three-volume novels. In one respect, the book is highly objectionable. We understand that the author, Mr. Jenkins, is himself a Canadian, and as several of the characters in the story are represented to be Canadians, it is a matter of astonishment to us that he should depict them all as—more or less—so many prigs. Sir Benjamin Peakman, a "Quebec politician," is a prig, as is also his wife. So, to some extent, is Sandy McGowkie, "of the firm of McGowkie & Middlemass, who keep a store at Toronto." To the only "gentleman" whom Mr. Jenkins has thought proper to depict, he has given the name and title of "Lord Pendlebury." Mr. Jenkins published some time ago in *St. James's Magazine*, "Legends of Musakoka," and, judging both from these and "The Captain's Cabin," we really think he ought to leave Canada and the Canadians alone, until, at least, he has taken some little pains to understand his own country and countrymen.

Vennor's reputation as a weather prophet, notwithstanding some unlucky

**The Captain's Cabin: a Christmas Story*. By EDWARD JENKINS, M.P. Illustrated Montreal: Dawson Bros: