"Jes' killed hisself." "Too mean ter live."
They didn't hav one word ter give
Of comfort as they hovered near
An' gazed on Jim a-lyin' there!
"That ain't no use to talk," they sed,
"He's better dead."

But suddenly the room growed still, While God's white sunshine seemed ter fill The dark place with a gleam of life. An' o'er the dead she bent—Jim's wife! An' with her lips close, close ter his, As though he knew an' felt the kiss, She sobbed—a touchin' sight ter soe—"Ah, Jim was always good ter me!"

I tell you, when that sum ter light,
It kinder set the dead man right;
An' round the weepin woman they
Throwed kindly arms of love that day,
An' mingled with her own they shed
The tenderest tears—when Jim was dead,
—Frank S. Stauton.

ROMANCE OF A PLAY.

"But what put the idea into your head?" asked the leading man of the dramatist, as they stood together dur-ing the rehearsal of the new play."

The dramatist was a lady, a tall, slight woman of perhaps thirty, with a striking face, lighted by a pair of dark-blue eyes. The beauty of those eyes made people sometimes fancy Mrs. Clavering was beautiful, but she was not; she was intellectual; she was charming and sympathetic, and she charming and sympathetic, and she had suffered—you could see that in her face. Perhaps, then, she was, in a sense, beautiful. The leading man was inclined to think so, and he liked very much to talk to her. As for her, she thought him "a nice fellow," and ad-mired his acting, but that was all. She

smiled at his question.
"Oh, I harlly know!" she said, with an absent look in her blue eyes. "Don't you like it?"
"Like it? Yes, of course, I do; it's

telling, very telling; a bit romantic,

you know."
"Oh, yes! not like real life; but real life is sometimes too prosaic for the stage. I often think these pessimists one hears so much of now have known very little trouble. They are too fond of dabbling in the miseries of exist ence.

The leading man gave the speaker a quick look; but his cue came just then-in fact, he had missed it-and he had to run forward to take his

Mrs. Clavering was a novelist who had not been very long in London, having spent most of her life abroad. She had written two or three one act pleces, which had been well received; and now she had launched into a three-act piece and was going to produce it at a matinee. It was a clever play, well put together and well writ-ten, but not calculated to set the town talking, though superior to a good many plays that do set the town talk-What the leading man alluded to was, as it were, the motif of the piece. The hero, in the first act, east off his wife and left her, declaring he would *live as he chose, she hampered him, and so on. The wife, still loving the man who was so cruel to her, declared he could not shake her off. "I sha'l be with you," she cries, "whether you will or no! You shall hear me call to you when the darkest hour of your life comes; and if I cannot win you back to love, I will at least keep you from crime."

In the second act the hero is about to marry a rich girl; the wedding guests arrive, all is ready, when sud-denly he starts; he hears his wife's voice calling him; he is appaled, conscience-stricken; he confesses his in-tended crime. In the third act matters have reached a climax; the hero, ruined socially and in purse, is about to commit suicide; once more the warning voice arrests him, he flings the pistol away, and as he does so his wife enters and the two are completely re-

"A charming idea," said the leading lady to the author, "but don't you make Margaret too forgiving?" 'I don't know-Graham is her hus-

"That makes it harder."

"Oh! no, I think it makes it ensier."
"Do you?" aloud—but to herself:
"Her husband was one of the good sort, or she wouldn't talk so. It's all right to forgive like that in a play; in real life the husband would go the

old way again in no time at all."
"Yes," said Mrs. Clavering. "Have
you ever read Browning's 'Any Wife to Any Husband?"

The leading lady raised her brows.
"No. indeed?" she said. "Browning is too deep for me." "Any one can understand that. Read

The stage manager came up to ask about a proposed "cut," and the lead-ing lady turned away to ask the leading man whether Mrs. Clavering was

a widow, divorced or separated.
"I'm sure I don't know," was the
answer; and nobody else did. She lived in apartments near one of the West Central squares, and was always welcome in the literary and artistic circles in which she moved, and, though it was generally presumed that her husband was dead, it could not be recalled that she had ever said so; and sometimes in these days it isn't wise to be curious about people's ab-sent or non-est husbands. When you came to think of it, indeed, it would be difficult to assert positively that Clavering was her real name. Her novels were published as by Alix Clavering, and when she came to Lon-don she called herself Mrs. Clavering. which might or might not be a nom-de guere; for it was her publishers who first introduced her into London literary society; and it was not their busi-ness to disclose her real name, supposing that she had another name than

that under which she chose to appear.

The rehearsal was over and Mrs.
Clavering went home. She had a few alterations to make in the second and third acts and after a plicely acts. third acts, and after a slight luncheon third acts, and after a slight inhenced she settled herself to the task. Set-tled? She seemed very resiless and worked very fitfully. Sometimes, for minutes together, she sat with her face hidden in her hands and more than once tears trickled through her fingers.

"They say the piece is likely to catch on," said a gentleman, who, in truth, was a backer in a West End theatre. He was one of a group of men in the smoking-room of a rather bohemian

club and his remark was in continuation of a desultory chat between himself and a well-known actor manager. "Yes." answered the other carelessly.

as he knocked the ashes off his cigar. They say that of so many of these matinee shows, and they're generally

"What play is that, if I may ask?" inquired a man who had just caught the last words.

handsome man, apparently about thirty-six or thirty-seven, but he had a reckless look, not pleasant to see. A cautious man would thirk A cautious man would think twice before introducing this gentleman into his home, for besides his personal good looks, he had a sweet-toned voice and an attractive address, and with these weapons of attack he could easily conquer women's hearts, breaking them afterwards at his leisure. The "backer" answered him. "A

piece written by Mrs. Clavering, the novelist. She's not a prender hand. Some one-act plays of hers have been done about?"

done already. "I romember reading one of her novels; it was clever," said Mr. Leslie. "What's the play about?" You noticed, when he spoke, that his English was slightly tinged with foreign accent. That was natural enough, for his life, since his youth, had been passed abroad, and he had only come to Eng-

land about a month ago.
"I can't tell you; story out of the beaten track, they say, again. I shall be able to send you a stall, if you care to go. You needn't sit it out if you are too much bered."

Wilmot Leslie was already a favorite with the men who knew him. In this topsy-turvey world it often happens that the least worthy are the most attractive.

"Thanks, ' Leslie answered, "I shall be very pleased to go. A trial matinee is something of a novelty to me, you know. One doesn't have them abroad."

"No, thank heaven!" grouned the actor-manager and Leslie laughed, but his laugh was not mirthful; it would not strike you that he was a happy man. Perhaps, like a good many, he was trying to live down his conscience. Some one suggested cards, and a move was made to the card-room.

There Leslie proved a "plunger," but he generally won, and a keen observer of human nature might have noticed that there was something fletitious in his excitement-us if he were keeping his excitement—as if he were keeping up the steam, as it were, to prevent his "inner self" asserting itself. At a. m. he walked through the growing dawn to the chambers, but the ghosts that flitted along by his side all the way followed him in and kept their silent watch, ghosts of evil deeds and missayent hours. There was one chost missspent hours. There was one ghost that came nearer to him than the others and looked at him with the eves of unutterable pain and sorrow. He covered his face, but he saw these eyes all the same; he called himself a fool and cursed his "nervous mood," but the spectres never stirred, and sad eyes grew sadder-that was the all.

"I have done with it all!" he cried, with a reckless laugh. "I'm getting sentimental. Pouf! I'll settle accounts with a six-shooter if I can't get rid of these fancies any other way. It's too late to bark back."

The day of the matines game. The

The day of the matinee came. The play was called "Opal." from the legend of that beautiful stone that glows bright while the love of the wearer for the giver burns clear and strong, and grows dim when love falters and falls. Leslie's stall was in the last row, and he knew none of the people near him; his acquaintances in England were at at present not many. He looked careless'y over his programme, and bit his lip for a moment with a quickdrawn breath; his tongue almost whispered the name of the heroine, Margaret. But the name is common enough. He listened to the clatter of the people about him mostly interest for him, but because he balled anything that took his attention from retrospection-anything that drove the ghosts a little further

The curtain rose; the play began. Leslie listened at first with the languid indifference of the blase playgoer. By and by he became interested; he watched and list ned intentiy. He held his breath when the hero flung his wife from him and went out. It was the close of the act and the peo-ple in front applauded, all except Wilmot Leslie. He did not stir.

In the second act the interest deepened; the man in the stalls with the handsome, reckless face was enthralled. The fellow in the play was haunt-ed—so was he. Wilmot Leslie. He scarcely heard the applause; never lifted a hand—how could he? For this was not a play-it was reality. Margaret loves her husband through allthrough unfaith and desertion and all his piled-up sins against her. Bah! it is a play-a woman's sentimental notions. Let the author be tried. She She would not keep the opal bright. The man wasn't worth one tea of hers. Let him be cast out and be forgotten.

as he deserved. And now came the third and last act, where the husband is prevented from committing the crime he meditates; and in the end, in a beautifully written scene-which alone, said the critics afterwards, ought to make the fortune of the play-Margaret forgive the man who so bitterly wronged her. Wilmot Leslie, white as death—yet otherwise masking, for pride's sake, the agony in his heart-listened to the words every one of which stabbed him with fatal blows. A play-yes, only a play!-but, oh; that there could be for wasted, sinful life such a last act

The curtain was down and the house applauding and calling for the author. Wilmot Leslie, eager to see the wo-man who could write like this, lingered, and presently Mrs. Clavering appeared at the wing to bow her thanks. The face flashed for a second upon Leslie's startled gaze; the next his eves were blinded by a scarlet mist-he saw nothing, heard nothing, knew nothing. He groped his way out to the lobby; some one spoke to him; he gave no answer, he had not heard. He reached his own rooms-going on through the streets in the same dazed way-and there he flung himself down, and with a great and exceedingly bit-ter cry, "Margaret! Margaret!"

"A gentiman, ma'am, asks to

"What name, Jant?" said Alix Clay ering, putting aside a pile of morning papers, all of which, more or less, praised the new play, though some said that Margaret's love was too nearly divine to be possible in real

"He said you would not know it, ma'am. He would not detain you

long. "Still, I suppose he has a name

Well show him up."

The servant retired, and in a minu'e opened the door again. A tall man came in, just a step beyond the threshold, and paused there, the door closing behind him.

Mrs. Cavering rose to her feet, trembling, paling, and they stood face to face—after seven years—husband and wife; seventy times seven years of wrong between them.

The man spoke first, his head bent, his voice hourse and broken, the sentences falling from his lips in disjoint-

ed fragments.
"I have been in England for a "I have been in England for a month past. I did not know that you called yourself Clavering. No matter—I should not have troubled you, only—" He paused. It might have helped him if he had seen her face; but he did not see it; he dared not lift his eyes to hers. He went on with an effort: "I saw your play yesterday, and I saw you—The woman—Margaret—that was not you—you? Only—a—beautiful play—isn't that it?"
"No." she s ald slowly. She did not move, but clasped her hands tightly

move, but clasped her hands tightly over her laboring heart. "The woman Margaret is my heart. She loved him all through—though his sins were sear-let, he was her husband! And he loved her once! So when he came back to her, casting all the evil years behind

her, casting all the evil years behind him, she forgave him!"
"No. no!" the man cried, trembling in every limb. "She could not forgive such a wrong! The message was for me. Margaret; it was only a play!"
"It was deep calling unto deep," she said: "It was my heart calling to vours!"
She stretched out her bear to be said.

She stretched out her hands towards She stretched out her hands towards him, and he looked up and saw the light in her eyes. He staggered forward, with a broken cry, and fell down at her feet, and she laid her arms about his neck and drew his head against her. "My husband," she said.—London Sketch.

Stambled, but Conquered.

Stambled, but Conquered.

The crowning specimen of judicrous haplessness in the face of clusive syllables is that of the unfortunate speaker who, at a pathetic point of his address, when his hero was about to undergo a heartrending parting from home and friends, uttered, in his most melting voice:

"Biddy, diddy—"

He stopped confused; flushed, set his mouth and tried again, with a difficult resumption of the interrupted pathos:
"Diddy, biddy—"

"Diddy, biddy—"
Something was wrong still. He grew scarlet, perspired, and gasped forth a third attempt, not more intelligible. His hearers could none of them interpret it. It might be High German or it might be a Mother Goose refrain: "Diddy, biddy, biddy doo!"

The situation was desperate; but the persistent orator rallied, paused until he had fully recovered his self-control. and trying once more, with slow ut-terance and distinct enunciation, conquered at length the simple phase which had overthrown him. He said: "Did he bid adieu?"

The apple has always been a popular divining medium in love affairs. Horace mentioned its use in this connection. A lover would take a pip between the inger and thumb and shoot it up to the ceiling, and if it struck it, his or her wish would be ac-complished. Nowadays a malden tests the fidelity of her beloved by putting a pip in the fire, at the same time pronouncing his name. If the pip bursts with a report, it is a sign that he loves her; but should it burn silently, she is convinced of his want of true affection. Gay's "Hobnelia" experiments with the pips by placing one on each cheek-one for Lubberkin and the other for Boobyclod:

"But Boobyolod soon drops upon the ground, A certain token that his love's un-While Lubberkin sticks firmly to the last."

Hope Deferred. "It was too bad about young Chuck-ster and Miss Plimmer." "Why, I thought they were married

Christmas Day?"
"They were to have been, but Chuckster was taken sick with the measles and the wedding had to be postponed two weeks."

two weeks."
"Well, they were married at the end of the two weeks, weren't they?" "No, there came a smallpox scare, yos remember, and Miss Plimmer was vaccinated. It took with so much enthusiasm that when he got well she was still sick, and they had to put off the wedding are the restriction." the wedding another two weeks."
"At the end of that time they were

married, I suppose?"
"No, the preacher that's to marry them is down with the grip."-Chicago

His Large Family,

said the principal of the young ladies' seminary to the proud parent, "you ought to be very h be the father of so large a family

to be the father of so large a family all the members of which appear to be devoted to one another."

"Large family! Devoted!" gasped the old gentleman in amazement.

"What on earth do you mean, ma'am?"

"Why, yes, indeed," said the principal, beaming through her glasses.

"No fewer than eleven of Kate's brothers have been here this winter to take her to the theatre, and she tells to take her to the theatre, and she tells me she expects the tall one with the blue eyes again to-morrow."-Exchange.

Hot Mflk.

Hot milk is a regularly recognized drink in some of the German cafes. It is served in a cup with a saucer, and two lumps of sugar always accom-pany it. The drink has several things to commend it, since it has none of the dangerous qualities of tea, coffee or alcoholic drinks, and it is actually an excellent remedy for disorders of the stomach, arising from certain forms of indigestion. forms of indigestion.

How Those Girls Love One Anotheri Jess-How do you suppose he came to propose to me? Bess-Got tired talking about the weather, probably.-Truth

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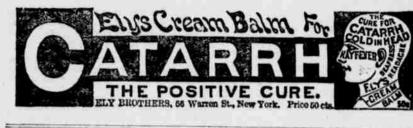
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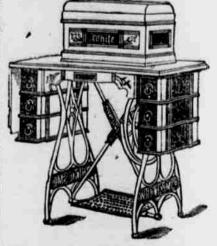
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