

WHEN JIM WAS DEAD.

When Jim was dead— "He snarled him right," the neighbors said, "An' bused him for the life he'd led, An' him a'lyin' that at rest, With not a rose upon his breast! Ah! mummy cruel words they said When Jim was dead."

ROMANCE OF A PLAY.

"But what put the idea into your head?" asked the leading man of the dramatist, as they stood together during the rehearsal of the new play. The dramatist was a lady, a tall, slight woman of perhaps thirty, with a striking face, lighted by those eyes 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 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 admired his acting, but that was all. She smiled at his question. "Oh, I hardly 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."

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 of his cigar. "They say that of so many of those matinee shows, and they're generally such rot!" "What play is that, if I may ask?" inquired a man who had just caught the last words. The speaker was an uncommonly handsome man, apparently about thirty-six or thirty-seven, but he had a reckless look, not pleasant to see. 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 novice hand. Some one-act plays of hers have been done already."

"What name, Jant?" said Alex Clavering, 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 life. "He said you would not know it, ma'am. He would not detain you long." "Still, I suppose he has a name. We'll show him up." The servant retired, and in a minute opened the door again. A tall man came in, just a step beyond the threshold, and paused there, the door closing behind him. Mrs. Clavering 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 hoarse and broken, the sentences falling from his lips in disjointed fragments. "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 said slowly. She did not 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 scarlet, he was her husband! And he loved 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 yours!" 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.

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