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a new man, and be able to work better than before. Please, please dear old boy, you'll go!" You've got your future to think of—"

It was true. He did not answer at once. But at length he reached out his hand a little shakily, and touched one of hers. "You'd have been better off if we'd never married," he said slowly. "But as you say there's the future to think of. So yes, I'll go."

* * *

She had just got back from the depot and the little flat struck dark and chill as she entered. On the mat she kicked against a letter. She picked it up and switching on the light, read with excitement.

"Dear Mr. Maude, I have read your play with great interest and I am willing to put it 'on' if you care to partly rewrite and strengthen the third act, also providing this can be done at once. Am returning the M.S. to you this evening. Yours truly,

Sydney Blythe.

She sat down with the letter still clasped in her nerveless fingers staring stupidly at the big hand writing of one of the most popular theatrical managers. Then she suddenly jumped up, and began to arrange her writing materials. "I need not tell him!" she muttered, thinking of her husband.

"Isn't it wonderful?" his voice had the old gay youthful ring in it, and he was back again, had just walked into the room quickly, the picture of health and strength. She had half expected him, because of a paper she had sent him three days before, and which he now held in his hand.

"And I'm going to conquer London?" he said and tilted up her chin suddenly "How could I have left you?" he added.

Then she freed herself with a little jerk. A staring headline in the paper met her gaze.

"Disappointed audience wait in vain for absent author of the year's greatest theatrical success."

"Wait," she said, and her voice shook nervously. "You—I must tell you something first." Then she told him.

To her was the praise due he found, as he listened for she had rewritten the third act. There had been no other way.

Suddenly, however, his arms were around her. "My little woman," said he, "I cannot do without you. We are going to collaborate in future. You and I, and tonight the 'joint authors' will take their 'call.'"

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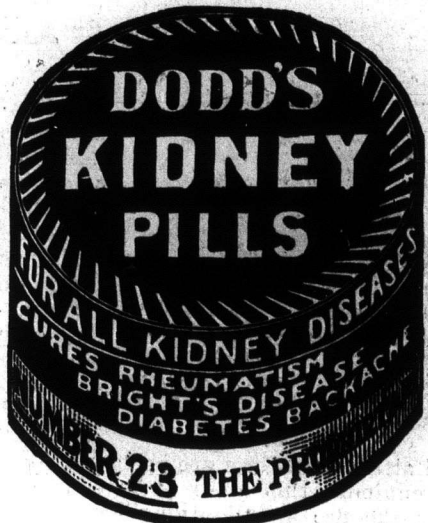
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