While William Makepeace Thackeray may indeed be best known as the author of *Vanity Fair*, to examine all of his novels is to understand why his contribution to the history of the novel is singular. His use of the intrusive narrator, although presaged by Henry Fielding, was developed so carefully that it became a new form of fiction, a "genuine creation of narrative experiment," as critic Alexander Welsh calls it. The subtitle of *The History of Pendennis*—"His Fortunes and Misfortunes, His Friends and His Greatest Enemy"—gives ample indication that the novel is a Bildungsroman. As Juliet McMaster points out, however, it is also a Künstlerroman; that is, a tale about the development of an artist. But novels such as William Pett Ridge's *Mord Em'ly* (1898) and Albert Neil Lyons' *Arthur's* (1908) deliberately sought to counter a bleak vision of south London's criminogenic streets and offered an alternative to this monolithic conception of metropolitan identity. William Pett Ridge (1859-1930) was an extremely prolific and popular author, publishing over sixty novels and short-story collections. We have ten novels by William Pett Ridge in the collection; click here to see the full list. Pett Ridge's upbringing was humble; his father was a railway porter, and the young Pett Ridge became a clerk. Pett Ridge specialised in depictions of the London poor, and Thomas Henry is an example of this. However, as its inclusion in the "Mills and Boon Laughter Library" suggests, he did not portray London life as grim or tragic. He was part of a "Cockney school" of novelists, including Henry Nevinson, Edwin Pugh, Arthur St John Adcock, all owing a great deal to Dickens.