

A Railway "Plant" Blighted
by Andrew Forrester, Jr.

DURING the summer of 1854, Mr. W. J. —, a man of extensive experience in such business, or professional enterprise, was lessee of the Theatre Royal, at B—. Somehow or other, it is not in the power of the most indefatigable and skilful manager of theatres to command success, although we never knew one of that versatile and conscientious order of geniuses, from the great Lumley of operatic renown to Mr. Wilde of peripatetic notoriety, who would not, if the assertion had been made on the threshold of eternity, affirm that he constantly, uniformly, and without exception, endeavoured to deserve it.

Numerous circumstances, over which no management can exercise the slightest control, such as the weather, the state of trade, competitions in the "entertainment line," and last, but certainly not least, that shifting eccentric, kaleidoscopic, intangible thing called public taste will overthrow preliminary calculations, and turn golden hopes into blank disappointment.

No blame, then, can attach to Mr. W. J. —, nor should it excite astonishment in the reader to learn that a more than usually hazardous venture, the summer season, had not up to the moment of our narrative prospered. In truth the spec. had turned out very badly, as every member of Mr. W. J.—'s company could tell, at least as well as he could.

One morning, the manager had risen from—or, to speak with more precision—in his bed, to read half a dozen letters just brought him by the post. He grasped them with avidity, for, as he afterwards declared, amid a variety of solemn expletives and adjurations, he had a presentiment that "something good would turn up," and that "luck was in store for him."

Mr. W. J— never relates this story without a very ample preface about a dream he had the night before, and an exposition of the reasons why he felt assured the empty exchequer of that and former nights were and must be followed by "glorious triumphs," "crowded houses," an abundant exchequer for him, and the rare blessing of a full salary for each member of his company. We spare the reader these details. It is enough for our purpose to say that Mr. W. J.— was in the position to reject "no reasonable offer" which might descend from "a star" to his lowly boards—or from any other man or woman. He, therefore, patiently and thoughtfully read over each communication brought to him that morning, although, at least, all but one would, in seasons of prosperity, have been hastily thrown aside with ejaculations more emphatic than elegant. All the present communications were, however, after due consideration set down as unworthy of reply—except the last. That letter ran thus:—

"— TERRACE, ISLINGTON, LONDON,
"10th July, 1854.

"SIR,— Having perceived, from the frequent encomiums of the impartial critics of the *Era* newspaper, that you have recently taken the B— theatre for a summer season, and that you have, in a spirit worthy of the reputation you had earned many years before entering upon your present arduous but creditable undertaking, resolved to place upon your stage and before the people of B— only the works of the great Shakespeare and our most celebrated modern

legitimate dramatic authors, I am emboldened to make a proposition to you, that will, I hope, be not unacceptable, and which being accepted, will, I hope, assist in rendering your (I may say noble) experiment remunerative to you, as it unquestionably deserves to be.

“I may, without further preface, say that I shall be happy to arrange with you to appear in a series of leading female characters under your spirited management.

“I have not, it is true, had much experience—having only appeared a few times in amateur representations—but I am assured, by two or three very competent advisers, that I have genius and dramatic power, which may, I hope, atone for, if not compensate for my deficiency in practice. At the same time, I admit the force of an objection to my inexperience so fully that I shall be perfectly satisfied to play a *rôle* of characters without any remuneration at all, and shall be very willing to treat with you afterwards, in a liberal spirit, if my first strictly professional appearances should prove successful, as I certainly hope, and am egotistical enough to think they will be.

“Having so far distinctly and frankly explained my views and wishes, I think it expedient to add, that I do not disregard those aids to effect, which so materially contribute to enlarge and deepen the influence of the truest and highest order of genius. My friends, who share my notions on this point, have, I am happy to say, therefore purchased me a wardrobe of unusual elegance, and appropriate jewelry at great expense.

“Will you be good enough to give this rather long letter your best attention, and oblige me with a line or two in reply at your earliest convenience.

“I am, Sir, yours very respectfully,

“ELLEN WILKINSON.”

“W— J—, Esq.,
“*Theatre Royal, B—.*”

“P.S.—I have, in confidence, given you my real name and address; but, I should, of course, not like to have the former appear in the local papers.”

The manager sat firm and rigid in his bed for a few moments. Then he broke out:

“By Jove, a sensible letter, at any rate. A splendid soul that woman has got in her, I’ll be bound. I’m not a marrying man, and I’m getting a little too old for romantic courtship, or I should be inclined to fall in love with Miss Ellen Wilkinson at once, without having seen her. And why not? Professor Somebody, that advertising chap, is right—character is best judged by handwriting and diction. I say she is a splendid woman. I know it as well as if she were my own sister, or—confound it—wife, I was going to say. Ah! but can she act? That is the question, as Hamlet says. It is not every clever, or even beautiful woman who can make a sensation in these days. Now, what a pity she does not give some further particulars. It’s just like these clever people, these geniuses, as they call themselves, and especially like female geniuses. She writes a

devilish clever letter, as I said, but she has left out some particulars she ought to know that I should like to be informed of. I wonder how high she stands in her tiny shoes? Is she fair or dark—slim or buxom—(single I take it for granted she is). But, confound her, I say, she might have told me her age—that is, within a few years, more or less. Yet I think she'll do. She's got a fine wardrobe, that's plain; and jewels, too—that's good. I've no doubt she's young, and tolerably good looking—slim, graceful, genteel, I fancy. I'll engage her, at least, for the first *rôle*. I can't do any harm by that. She'll cost me nothing, and may bring me lots of pewter. The wardrobe and the jewels are a first-rate draw. Won't the gods applaud if she's got any of the real stuff in her? My risk is what?—now, let me see exactly—a few advertisements, some bills for the walls, and some for distribution. I'm sure to get as much by her as will pay for these things. I'll engage her—that's settled in my own mind; but I must not appear to bite at the offer like a ravenous starving gudgeon would at a fat maggot.”

Thus soliloquized the manager.

He then adjusted his nightcap, and dropped his head upon a snow-white pillowcase, stuffed with genuine down, drew the clean bedclothes over him, and tried to sleep; but the glaring sun made the visit of its early rays obnoxious to slumber, and the daydream of an overflowing treasury rendered sleep impossible. So, after turning again uneasily, after the method of Dr. Watts's sluggard, the man of unwearied industry rose and called for breakfast.

This wholesome meal was soon despatched; and with the aid of an old gentleman who had seen better days, but now existed as a supernumerary of the theatre, or a hangeron of the great manager, that worthy concocted a reply to his fair correspondent, Which ran thus: —

“THEATRE ROYAL, B—,
“11th July, '54.

“MADAM,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your very polite and ably written favour of yesterday's date. That letter, I see, is the production of a highly cultivated mind, and of a lady who entertains an exulted (but very proper) sense of the noble mission which the drama, under conscientious management, is destined to fulfill.

“I am, Madam, almost persuaded by your letter to accept your very fair and reasonable offer, and agree to incur the heavy expenses which the due publicity and other preparations for your appearance in a *rôle* of legitimate characters would entail upon me. But I am quite sure you will pardon the slight hesitation which second thoughts (not always the best, although a poet has said they are) have induced. There are a few little matters upon which I desire some information; and if you could either pay a visit to B— yourself (which I humbly venture to suggest would be the best plan), or get some prudent friend—a man who understands business—to come down and see me on your behalf, I think there is no doubt an arrangement mutually satisfactory could be effected.

“Be kind enough to let me hear from you further on this subject by return of post, as I was on the point of making other engagements when your letter of yesterday reached me; and if from any

cause we should not come to an arrangement, it will be necessary for me to conclude these other engagements at once.

“I am, Madam, your very obedient servant,
“W— J—

“*Miss Ellen Wilkinson.*”

This letter was a source of delight to Miss Ellen Wilkinson and her friends. They saw that the engagement was already practically made.

Miss Wilkinson was, in some respects, a decidedly strong-minded woman. It was resolved by herself and friends in council that she should run down from London to B—, and finish the negotiations. She found this no difficulty. Within half an hour after her arrival in the town she had settled with the manager all she cared to arrange. She was to play a *rôle* without fee or reward. The manager tried to get a consideration for allowing her to appear upon his stage. He suggested that he ought to have £50 towards his outlay (which, in fact, did not exceed £10), and he made a stand for a few minutes upon £20 or £25; but the lady assured him that her friends had expended so much upon her wardrobe that she knew it would be impossible to get anything further out of them, and she could not, indeed, ask them. She added, in tones of emphatic sincerity, that if her gratuitous services would not justify the risk of his outlay in advertisements and printing, she must abandon, for the present, the hope of appearing at the Theatre Royal, B—. The manager saw the danger of breaking off a negotiation by which at all events he could not lose more than a trifle, if anything, and might realize a tolerable sum of money. The interview had not led this shrewd and experienced man to expect in Miss Ellen Wilkinson another Miss O’Neill, a Kemble, or a Tree; but his confidence that she would prove a star of the third or fourth magnitude, or, as he expressed it, “a perfect godsend” to him in his emergency, was strengthened. He made a few inquiries—some of which had reference to the wardrobe and the jewels—and in a round of platitudes about the delight it gave him to aid the development of young ambition, and bring out hidden genius, he consented to accept the gratuitous services of the lady.

The reader will not, I hope, expect me to describe the sort or announcements which Mr. W. J— inserted in the journals of B—, and placarded on the walls of that town. This manager believed himself a genius in this line, and I am bound to say, in his favour, that Mr. Vincent Crummies could not have done his work on such an occasion better than Mr. W. J.—did. It is, therefore, enough to add, that the new *tragedienne*’s first appearance on any stage was announced in the most effective style.

The first appearance of Miss Ellen Wilkinson took place under favourable circumstances. No rival attractions were in B— that night. A panorama of the Holy Land intended to exhibit itself in the town that week, but the sight of the Theatre Royal’s big posters alarmed either the sanctity or the financial wisdom of its proprietor, who “moved on” to the next town, where the good picture had no counter-attraction, and did a large stroke of business. The opening night of the engagement was a decided success. The house was in reality half full, which permitted the lively imagination of the manager to advertise a crowded house, and to apologise for the apparent

discourtesy of refusing money at his doors. In other respects the engagement was not a failure, and assuredly paid the manager, if not the lady and her friends— about whom, and which financial part of our story, I crave the reader's patience.

I must not forget to generally describe Miss Ellen Wilkinson's appearance and her wardrobe. She was about twenty-six years of age, of rather slender form, round but pale features, betraying the signs of extinguished hues, dark eyes set a little back in, or slightly more overarched by a forehead than is usual with ladies. That forehead was a little broader, and perhaps a little higher—but it was certainly broader—than is customary with her sex. She was rather above the middle height, not tall, imposing, or of a commanding mien. She had received what, for a woman, must be considered a liberal education; but it embraced no remarkable or peculiar width of tuition or development. To sum up her intellectual attainments and powers, and put their description in a familiar phrase, she may be described as "a clever woman," but a woman without genius, or even a high order of talent. Patience and perseverance were, however, qualities belonging to her, although not conspicuous, for she did not in fact exhibit one decidedly prominent trait, or what in Carlylese, is called individuality. The local critics, who did not violently praise, or at all censure the lady's performances, severally declared them "creditable, ladylike, careful, well-studied, polished, and appreciative." One censor encroached near enough upon the offensive to say that the lady was "a respectable sample of the mediocrity common in our day," but this was the hardest thing said about her. The audiences were tolerably well pleased with her; and her wardrobe, to which gentle reference was made, or rather hinted, in the playbill, was admired in boxes, pit, and gallery, as it deserved to be.

Time, the destroyer of illusions, the great maker and unmaker of reputations, quickly broke the charm which a manager's advertising skill had invested this lady with. It became evident in less than a week that Miss Ellen Wilkinson would not make him a fortune, or indeed retrieve the bad luck of a season. She had answered pretty well, but had not realised his expectations. How far she dropped below the anticipations he had created, I would rather not say. So he resolved to get rid of her as soon as the first engagement had run out. But a crisis and a rupture took place before this natural termination of the contract. A week only had elapsed from the first appearance when some little misunderstanding occurred between a female member of the company and our heroine, who appealed to the manager, and found in him not the partisan she hoped to find. This led to a remonstrance, and the remonstrance to a cancelling of the engagement. And here, in justice to both parties, be it said, a degree of seemliness, if not of moral dignity, was shown on both sides, which actors and managers do not always display, as the records of a Vice-Chancellor's Court have, not long ago, testified. Miss Ellen Wilkinson and Mr. W. J—, in the most ladylike and most gentlemanly fashion, agreed to part, and did part. No angry word was uttered on either side. The last sentences were despatched from the hotel of the lady to the greenroom of the manager, and were complimentary. The retreat of the tragedy queen was neatly covered by managerial tact. She had fortunately not stirred up his vengeance, which might have led him to adopt a course, with the view of injuring her professional character and hopes, which might have had an injurious recoil upon him. As it was, being able to reason coolly on the subject, the manager saw that his interest, no less than the lady's, lay in the maintenance of a show of success. He, therefore, gave out that her engagement at his theatre was only an experiment, and that her brilliant triumph in B— would be shortly followed by her appearance in the great metropolis, unless some of her friends (for she was highly connected), who objected to

the course of her ambition, prevailed on her to abandon the stage—which he, the manager, thought would be a national calamity.

The mention of the hotel leads to an explanation that the lady hired apartments—a sitting and sleeping room—in one of the best hotels in the town, and no other town in England can put to shame the two hostelryes of B—, in one of which the actress took up her quarters. The incidents of her arrival, and the scene she produced among the ladies and servants of both sexes in the establishment, have not been described. That was not necessary; but the reader will be good enough to understand that her departure was an event.

“Mary,” she said, to the upper chambermaid, the night before her departure, “remember that I go to London by the express train tomorrow, and I have a great deal to do, as you see, in arranging and packing my things. Don’t let me lie later than eight o’clock in the morning—and can I get anybody who is trustworthy to help me?”

“I will assist you, miss, if you please,” replied the servant.

“Oh, thank you, I am much obliged; but I should not like to trouble you so much alone. I will accept your offer, but can’t you get another person—one of the under servants—also to assist?”

“No, miss, I’m afraid I can’t spare Susan, the under chambermaid, and the housemaid has so much to do that I am afraid master would blame me if I asked her to help us. But the laundress is a very honest woman, although poor; shall I get her to stay tomorrow morning when she comes?”

“Certainly; a very good thought of yours. And who will see my boxes safely to the station when they are packed? Dear me!” with a sigh, “I wish I had asked one of my cousins to come down and see to these things for me.”

“Well, as for that, miss, our head boots is as honest as the day. You may trust him. Lor’ bless you, miss, why the commercials trust him with ever so many hundreds of pounds every night. You know when a commercial writes his letters, he wants to send home to the house all the money he’s got, and he counts up his sovereigns at night, and he says to our head boots, ‘John, here’s two hundred pound; get me notes for it.’ And our head boots says, ‘Yes, sir;’ and he gets banknotes sometimes from one place, and sometimes from another. And it isn’t one commercial as does this, nor two either, but many of them does it reg’lar, you know. You may trust our head boots, miss. He wouldn’t, I assure you, steal one of your rings, if they was diamonds—which, I dare say, for the matter of that, they is—and worth a thousand pounds.”

Perhaps the reader has begun to think that the eloquent head chambermaid had a tenderness for the head boots. Perhaps she had; but as that point had nothing to do with the mystery of the loss of the wardrobe, I didn’t stop to investigate it, and can afford no information.

It was finally arranged that the actress should have the united assistance of the head chambermaid and the honest laundress to pack the jewels and wardrobe—head boots, who was

to see the precious packages afterwards conveyed to the station, being also engaged, through the agency of his eulogist, to lend a hand, if need be, in the preliminary work.

The head chambermaid took leave of the lady after these arrangements had been settled, and of course related all that had passed, with perhaps an air of importance, to the other servants of the hotel. Some little jealousy was produced by the thought that all the credit, and all the expected profit, of the event were to be monopolized by one upper servant. An intense curiosity was also aroused by the extraordinary account of the richness and brilliancy of the clothes and the gems belonging to the actress, which curiosity was not mitigated by a night's refreshing slumber.

Next morning, the packing of jewels and wardrobe began about nine o'clock. The two female servitors and the actress set about the work, and head boots kept himself (anticipating a liberal compliment) entirely at the lady's disposal. A housemaid, too, found herself at leisure, and tendered her additional services. These were not thought requisite by the head chambermaid; but Miss Wilkinson's anxiety to render the task as light as possible induced her to insist upon the other women availing themselves of this further assistance.

At length gems, not so rare or so extensive as a peeress high in the table of precedence would feel satisfied with, but far more costly than an actress usually possesses, and about the genuineness of which, I have ascertained there could be no doubt, with satins, and silks, and laces, were safely deposited in several boxes. These were each carefully directed, and then handed over to head boots, who followed the truck drawn by under boots from the hotel to the railway station. The trusted agent of the commercial room also saw the precious luggage put into a van under the eye of the guard, and he—that is, head boots—never left the station or took his eyes off from the van until the train had started. Nothing is plainer, or less open to be challenged, than the fact that the boxes contained the jewels and wardrobe, and that the guard's van contained the boxes, when the iron horse darted off at express speed to the metropolis, with the property and its owner, along with other persons, at its tail.

A word here about the actress on the morning of her departure.

“Poor soul,” afterwards observed the chambermaid to her fellow servants, “she was flurried, though. She couldn't eat no breakfast, and if I hadn't positively made her, she wouldn't have taken a mouthful of anything with her; but, as I said, you can't get anything until you reach London. The train only stops once, at R—, and you won't get nothing that's nice there. So I went to our barmaid and says, ‘Cut me a few nice sandwiches for Miss Wilkinson, for she ain't had anything for breakfast, and she'll want something before she gets to London.’ So I got her some sandwiches, and I put 'em in her reticule, and I says to her then, ‘Miss, you must take a mouthful of something to eat with you.’”

As no accident occurred on the road, the train arrived in due course in the London Station. The breakfastless lady having, it must be presumed, not eaten her sandwiches, began to experience a faintness as she approached the metropolis. Immediately the train stopped she therefore went direct to the refreshment rooms for a bum, and in a few minutes she returned to get her luggage.

It could not be found; somehow or other these valuable boxes had disappeared! How could that

have happened? The lady was distracted; short of losing a husband—and supposing him to be a good one—or a well-beloved child, nothing could wring a woman’s heart so violently as the sudden and total bereavement of wardrobe and jewels in this fashion. She clasped her hands, she paced rapidly up and down the station, exclaiming, “Where are my boxes?—where are they?” and would not be consoled. The few passengers left behind, and the officials, offered various opinions of more or less sagacity; but all agreed that it was a strange matter, and ought to be inquired into.

At length the distracted actress, whose performance in that railway station had been fine enough to have taken captive the town of B—, got into a cab, and tearfully went home.

Consultation with friends led to consultation with an attorney. He saw what somebody else had seen before him,—that the railway company’s liability was clear, and that the evidence was almost perfect. The value of the wardrobe and the jewels could, in a general way, be shown; precise evidence of value was all he had to procure. The delivery of the boxes to the guard at B— could also be established by a most independent witness, whose honesty scores of commercials knew. The contents of the boxes could be shown by other equally independent testimony. The legal practitioner said he never had a better case. It was for the company to show what had become of the property so distinctly traced to the hands of their agent. How would they do this? The lawyer repeated his question in a kind of soliloquy, and gave it as his very distinct advice that Miss Wilkinson had a remedy against the company, and that nothing short of a miracle could prevent his obtaining her legal rights—full and ample compensation for the lost wardrobe and the costly *et ceteras*.

The attorney wrote the usual letter, which not being answered by a cheque upon the company’s bankers for the sum demanded, he issued a writ, and carried an action to trial in the Court of Queen’s Bench at Westminster.

The upper chambermaid, the head boots, the honest laundress, the housemaid, and the under boots, related their parts of this tale. Other evidence as to the value of the articles was given, and the company had really no answer to make. They could not dispute the fact that the luggage had been given to their servants, or the value of the contents of the boxes. To have done this would have been to charge with perjury a number of disinterested witnesses whose characters were unimpeachable. All the learned gentlemen who held the defendants’ briefs could do was to cross-examine the witnesses; which only made the evidence stronger, and in a speech say in effect, that it was a strange and mysterious affair. Yes, there was another topic of commentary. Mr. Lynx, Q. C., the leading counsel for the defendants, did also say, that he was bound to admit the witnesses exhibited all the signs of being honest, truthful witnesses, and he had no complaint as to the witnesses who had been produced, but he thought it remarkable, and very unfair to his clients—not to say a suspicious circumstance—that the fair plaintiff had not been put into the box. His learned friend, Mr. Serjeant Birdlime, had said that this lady could give no evidence in the case. “The jury would see,” continued Mr. Lynx, “that she was not requisite as a witness on her own side—that was got up complete without her—but he thought a cross-examination by him might have been useful to the defendants, that most respectable railway company he had the honour to represent.”

One or two of the jury seemed inclined to resent this attack upon the plaintiff, and appeared to regard it as an attempt to prejudice their judgment. Mr. Serjeant Birdlime was longing for the chance, or lamenting that, as the company called no witnesses, he had not the opportunity of retorting upon what he would have called a most wanton and unscrupulous attack upon a lady of unblemished reputation.

The Judge summed up the evidence, the jury turned round, had two minutes' conference in their box, and then gave a verdict for the fair plaintiff in the sum of £250, the amount of the value of the lost wardrobe and jewels.

The company's solicitor was anything but satisfied, although, as he said, he did not see how the jury could have returned any other verdict. He roundly asserted that his clients had been defrauded, and he suspected Miss Ellen Wilkinson to be one of a body of conspirators. He said in an audible whisper to Mr. Lynx, as that learned gentleman returned his brief endorsed with the result of the trial: — "It's the work of that gang, sir, depend on it."

The railway company did not pay the money. They succeeded in making out a case upon affidavits sufficiently strong to induce the judges to grant a *rule nisi*, calling upon the plaintiff to show cause why a new trial should not be had in the cause. That argument would come on in the form of another motion to make that rule for a new trial absolute, and the defendants thus got about three weeks to pursue their investigations.

All the detective agencies of the company were set in motion, but without success. I was then employed, and had no doubt, in my own mind, that I should be able to clear up the mystery, of what I also at once saw was a fraud, but I did not, anticipate so easy a task as I had. I did, however, save the exchequer of the company from the legal extortion of conspirators, and cleared up a mystery, although the wrenches who perpetrated the crime escaped.

Women have been correctly described as the marplots of conspiracy. This true enough in a direct sense, but additionally true in the indirect one. The action of jealousy frustrated several of the schemes of the gang to which this histrionic impostor belonged, as we are now at liberty to confess. To this cause, on another occasion, the discovery and punishment of several of its principal members must be attributed. To this cause society is indebted for the ultimate destruction, about three years ago, of the abominable confederacy.

Miss Wilkinson had two admirers in the conspiracy, both privy to this fraud. One of them, smarting under a repulse, had conceived the design of betraying his rival and unkind lady-love, when he ascertained that I had got the matter in hand, and he made my acquaintance. Upon being promised his own safety, he disclosed the scheme to me. He related, circumstantially, how money had been advanced by the capitalist of the conspirators to buy the jewels and the wardrobe; how the scheme had been "put up;" and how executed. He made it appear that the engagement at the B— theatre was a device to give a *bonâ fide* aspect to the initiation of the fraud, how apartments had been hired at the hotel in order to secure independent testimony, how the fuss about packing up was but a dexterous little manœuvre to enlist other honest witnesses in the scheme; how every detail, even to the departure, breakfastless, was but a phase of trickery, in the last instance an excuse to account for leaving the platform and going into the refreshment

room—all the while keeping an eye upon the guard's van that beheld the apparent triumph of the *coup*, and was ready to cover a mishap if one had taken place.

Nothing is simpler than the *dénouement* of the plot. The moment when that always punctual express train would arrive was known. A cab drove into the station as the train arrived. A man, presenting the external appearance of a gentleman, alighted, and was merged in the crowd of passengers honestly seeking their own luggage.

He met another man who had entered the station on foot, and who, after hastily shaking hands with his associate, got into the same cab with him. The boxes containing the wardrobe and the jewels were claimed in the hurly-burly by one of the two thieves. The actress, who, of course, knew of the arrangement, saw all this. If the guard had by any chance known and remembered that the boxes had been confided to him by a lady, if by any favourable accident the officers of the company had been induced to challenge the man's right to the boxes, Miss Wilkinson would have stepped out of the refreshment room, explained that the gentleman was her husband, and have left with him and the property in the cab.

The plot would in such case have miscarried—a thing tantalizing and annoying enough to the thieves—but that would have been the extent of the mischief they would have had to deplore. Such a catastrophe did not ensue. The lady saw the boxes and her friends carried out of the station in the vehicle. She finished the consumption of her bun, and when she thought her associates beyond the immediate reach of policemen, she began to inquire for her luggage of the porters.

This narrative would, I think, terminate more satisfactorily than it does, if I could inform the reader that wretches concerned in the plot were punished as they deserved. Truth, however, does not warrant me in saying this. On the contrary, it somehow became known to the lady and her favored lover that there had been treachery in the gang, so they gave up the legal contest, and hid themselves for awhile. When a motion was made in the Court of Queen's Bench to make the rule absolute for a new trial, neither Mr. Serjeant Birdlime nor any other man, in silk gown or stuff, held a brief for the plaintiff. The company escaped the extortion of damages and costs; but public justice was defrauded of its title to submit Miss Wilkinson and a nameless paramour to penal servitude for a few years.

The Revelations of a Private Detective by Andrew Forrester, Jr. London: Ward and Lock, 1863. 65-86.