



Market Lavington

ELOPEMENT OF THE BRITISH LION QUEEN

An enquiry of rather a delicate nature touching the recent performances of the lady, who among travelling companies, is known by the above designation, (but whose real name is Mrs. King), was instituted before the magistrates in this town on Tuesday last, when a young man, named House, of Market Lavington (the latter portion of whose life has been passed in the employ of the famed Mr Wombwell, of wild beast notoriety), was brought up under Superintendent Wolfe's care, charged with having in his possession a quantity of wearing apparel and about £150 in money, belonging to Mrs K's lawful lord and master. It appeared that about a month since, in consequence of a misunderstanding with his employer Mr King relinquished his avocation and settled in private life at Newcastle-upon-Tyne; but, not to disappoint the public of the delights pictured in the handbills, he permitted his better half (at Mr Wombwell's request) to remain with the company a short time longer, at the expiration of which he looked forward to the domestic repose which the joint exertions of himself and his wife had promised to secure. Letter after letter, couched in the most affectionate terms of anxiety for her return, and at the same time conveying sincere respects to Mr House (who was one of the band) had been posted by the attached husband; all of which – as Mrs. K., unfortunately, could neither read nor write – were placed in the hands of House, who answered them as his feelings prompted him. At length the engagement with the company expired, but no Mrs. King appeared at Newcastle. Her husband began to grow uneasy; and, upon enquiry, discovered, with astonishment, that the faithless Mrs. K had left the establishment with his "friend" nearly a fortnight. Dismayed and bewildered, the thought suggested itself that the pair might contemplate a trip to America. Off he started to Liverpool, searched the whole of the packets bound for that wide land of adventure, but Mrs. King was nowhere to be found. Gloucester was next visited; then Chippenham; and subsequently Devizes, where such a clue was found as to induce Mr. King to place the facts of his situation in the possession of the police, through whose aid he was escorted to Lavington (where House has a mother and sisters living). Here the whole secret was soon unravelled; wearing apparel (belonging to both Mr. and Mrs. King), and £148 in gold and notes, were found, and subsequently the wife herself was compelled to face her much abused partner in a private house in the town. Upon this all parties were brought before the magistrates; and after a great deal of theatrical display, Mr. House (upon his refusal to give up the property) was handed over for a night's lodging in the police cell. The next morning found him with his determination unaltered, notwithstanding an offer of £20 by Mr. K. to settle the matter. A warrant of committal, however, soon turned the tide! House, in his cell, reflected upon the matter, accepted the £20; and taking with him the remainder of his property, Mr. K., (with his wife by his side) started in a carriage and a pair of mules for Chippenham, en route for the north – where change of climate and change of scene may, it is to be hoped, efface all unpleasant recollections of the past.

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