

ENGLAND.

The Boulton Masqueraders' Trial, &c.

[From the London Telegraph, June 8.]

The bill against Ernest Boulton, twenty-two, clerk, and Frederick William Park, twenty-three, clerk, who are charged with conspiring together, and with divers others, to commit a serious offence, and with "disguising themselves as women and frequenting places of public resort so disguised, and thereby openly and scandalously to outrage public decency and corrupt the public morals," &c., has not yet been returned by the Grand Jury; but it is expected that the witnesses will be taken before them this (Wednesday) morning.

The Attorney General, the Solicitor General, Mr. Poland, and Mr. Archbald, will prosecute on behalf of the Treasury.

The prisoner Boulton will be defended by Mr. Sergeant Ballantine and Mr. Besley; and Park by Mr. Sergeant Parry and Mr. Straight, and Mr. Montagu Williams will watch the case on behalf of Mr. Haxell, hotel proprietor, of the Strand.

The trial is expected to be commenced on Thursday morning.

The Indictment.

In London, June 8, afternoon, the Grand Jury, returned a true bill for misdemeanor against Lord Arthur Clinton, Cumming, Boulton, Park, Thomas and Louis Hurt; also a true bill for felony against Lord Arthur Clinton and Park, and against Boulton and Park, and an indictment for felony against Clinton and Boulton.

The trial is on the list for this (Thursday) morning.

Warrants have been granted for the apprehension of the persons not in custody.

The Trial On—Cash Aid From a Friend.

[From the Cork (Ireland) Reporter, June 10.]

At the Central Criminal Court, London, yesterday, before Mr. Justice Blackburn, Boulton and Park were placed in the dock on several charges of felony. The Attorney General, Solicitor General and Mr. Poland prosecuted. Sergeant Ballantine defended Boulton and Sergeant Parry defended Park.

Both prisoners pleaded not guilty to all the indictments.

Sergeant Parry applied for a postponement of the trial to next sessions, urging that the prisoners were ignorant of the several charges brought against them, and that they had had no opportunity of preparing their defence, and that other parties against whom warrants have been issued were included in the indictments.

The Attorney General, who announced his intention of pressing all the charges, did not oppose the application, which was granted.

It is stated that £5,000 have been sent *anonymously* for the benefit of Messrs. Boulton & Park.

The London *Globe* has "reason to believe that all the parties against whom fresh warrants were yesterday issued in the women personation case, so far from keeping out of reach, were, with the exception of Lord Arthur Clinton, who has been abroad for some time, among the crowd, in or about the court."

Public Opinion.

[From the Pall Mall Gazette, June 8.]

The trial of Boulton and Park is not a subject on which we wish to write more than can be helped. But there are things of greater importance than superficial propriety, and as it seems not unlikely that an effort will be made to induce the government to overlook this fact, it is well to assure them that in disregarding these persuasions they will have the support of all the really decent public. Some of our morning contemporaries have enough of virtue to dislike the self-imposed necessity under which they choose to labor of giving full reports of such cases, and we have already seen that this feeling

may lead them to counsel a degree of haste and compression in the conduct of the trial which would be highly prejudicial to public morality. It is quite possible that many fathers who dislike being obliged to keep their morning paper under lock and key will be disposed to take the same line. They will argue that the crimes charged against these men are at all events not committed in open day, whereas, unfortunately, the evidence adduced in support of the charge is invested with all the publicity that can be given it by a conspicuous place in the columns of the *Times* and *Telegraph*. Is it not better, they will say, that the guilty should be left in the enjoyment of virtual impunity than that the innocent should be exposed to the chance of having their minds polluted by half-understood hints of vices of which they had previously no conception? They will admit, perhaps, that justice alike to the community and to the accused may demand a full investigation of the allegations against the prisoners now in custody, but can it be needful to carry the inquiry further, or to put any new prisoners into the dock? Granting even that what has yet been done will only check the most flagrant forms of the mischief, may it not be better to rest satisfied with this qualified success than to go further in an inquiry, when the conditions under which it seems necessary to conduct it are attended with such serious drawbacks? Nor, we may be sure, will another sort of pressure be wanting. If the government is resolved to see this business out it must do so at the cost of much suffering to people in great position. *That Lord Arthur Clinton must be tried as soon as he is caught* is clear from what has already come to light, and it is understood that the evidence in possession of the government involves at least one person whose title is more than one of courtesy. A scandal of this magnitude is certain to enlist a variety of influence on the side of hushing it up, and when to direct entreaty is added the natural dislike of the government to disgrace England in the estimation of the world by exhibiting the highest classes of society infected with vices which in modern times, at any rate, have been conveniently assumed to be only found in combination with the most degraded and brutal ruffianism, it will easily be understood that it may need some resolution on the part of the government to stand by their righteous purpose.

For that it is a righteous purpose no man who will look at the question without bias can possibly doubt. We certainly do not wish to pass judgment on the particular cases which stand for trial this week. Boulton and Park may be, for anything that we or the public at large know to the contrary, unjustly accused. They may be mere reckless offenders against manly feeling; they may be the unwitting accomplices or scapegoats of other men's crimes. But, whatever character may be assigned to these two performers, it is impossible to doubt that the government have at last laid their finger upon a serious and extensive conspiracy against public morals. We call it a conspiracy because, when a number of men are found associated in a common practice of going about to public places in women's clothes, as to some of whom there is hardly any room for question that they make the disguise which this dress affords them a cloak for the vilest iniquity, their acts have precisely that character of organization and concert to which the term properly applies. Such a conspiracy will embrace various degrees of guilt, and it is essential for its continuance that it should go on enlisting fresh members. In this last fact, perhaps, lies its worst feature. It is of the very nature of such an organization that it should aim at extending its area. The pandur must necessarily act the part of a recruiting sergeant. In a lower rank of life this would have been too dangerous a game to play. It would have ended in placing those who had any position to lose at the mercy of those who had none. By choosing all the accomplices among nominal gentlemen this risk is immeasurably lessened, and to carry out this process of selection the arts of the seducer must take the place of more vulgar instruments. The existence of this conspiracy has been suspected for some time. It has looked on the universities as natural feeding ground, and it has not been the fault of some at least in authority there that so few obstacles have hitherto been offered to its development. The tardy prohibition at Oxford of theatrical performances in which women's parts were played by undergraduates might have come earlier if grounds of suspicion had been held, as they well might have been, a sufficient motive for precautions which to most people would no doubt have appeared motiveless. Under these circumstances we are justified in saying that there are considerations involved of more importance than superficial propriety. Indeed, whatever injury that can receive it has received already. There is comparatively little fear of the reports of any future trial being read by any one who has not a fairly accurate knowledge of the sort of entertainment which he or she is about to enjoy. Enough has been said and written on the subject to make every modest woman avoid, as by instinct, any reference to that part of the newspaper. The annoyance having been inflicted, and the antidote being already at work, any dislike of publicity which can at all interfere with the complete success of this and subsequent prosecutions is altogether out of place.