

*April 21* - Got a reply from Merton saying he was very busy and couldn't stretch to passes for the Italian Opera, Haymarket, Savoy, or Lyceum, but the best thing to see in London was Brown Bushes at the Tank Theatre, Islington. He enclosed tickets for four.

*April 23* - Mr and Mrs James came to meat tea and we left straight afterwards for the Tank Theatre. We got a bus that took us to King's Cross and then caught one that took us to the Angel. Both times Mr James insisted on paying for all, saying that I had paid for the tickets and that was quite enough.

We arrived at the theatre, where I walked ahead and presented the tickets. The man looked at them and called out: "Mr Willowly! Do you know anything about these?" holding up my tickets. The gentleman of that name came up and examined my tickets, then said: "Who gave you these?" I said, rather indignantly: "Mr Merton, of course." He said: "Merton? Who's he?" I answered, rather sharply: "You ought to know. His name's good in any theatre in London. He replied: "Oh, is it? Well, it ain't any good here. These tickets, which are not dated, were issued under Mr Swinstead's management, which has since changed hands."

While I was having some very unpleasant words with this man, Mr James, who had gone upstairs with the ladies, called out: "Come on!" I went up after them, and a very civil attendant said: "This way, please, box H." I said to Mr James: "Why, how on earth did you manage that?" and to my horror he replied: "Why, by paying for it, of course." This was humiliating enough, and I could scarcely follow the play, but I was doomed to still further humiliation. I was leaning out of the box when my tie - a little black bow one which fastened onto the stud by means of a new kind of listener - fell into the pit below. A clumsy man, not noticing it, had his foot on it for ever so long before he discovered it. He then picked it up and eventually flung it under the next seat in disgust. What with the box incident and the tie, I felt quite miserable. Mr James was very good. He said: "Don't worry - no one will notice it, with your beard. That is the only advantage of growing one that I can see." There was no call for such a remark, for Carrie is very proud of my beard. To hide the absence of the tie I had to keep my chin down for the rest of the evening, which caused a pain at the back of my neck.

*April 24* - Could scarcely sleep a wink through thinking of having brought Mr and Mrs James up from the country to go to the theatre last night, and having paid for a private box because our booking was not honoured - and for such a poor play, too! I wrote a very satirical letter to Merton, who gave us the pass, and said, "Considering we had to pay for our seats, we did our best to appreciate the performance." I thought this line rather cutting, and I asked Carrie how many 'p's there were in appreciate, and she said, "One." After I sent off the letter I looked at the dictionary and found there are two. Awfully vexed at this.