

Mary Barton in America:
Dion Boucicault's *The Long Strike* (1866) in
Transatlantic Theatre

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“...Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Mrs. Gaskell shaped the idea of England in such a way as to give it identity, presence, ways of reusable articulation” (Said 72).

I. Introduction

Exploring the manner in which English novels were embedded within the cultural exchange across the Atlantic, scholars in transatlantic literary criticism suggest a niche that has remained unutilized by the critique of cultural imperialism. These scholars thus shed light on the contrasting consequences of 19th-century technologies for the transportation of goods and ideas. Technological progress led to an unprecedented homogenization of literary culture: the absence of international copyright treaties in the 19th century subjected literary works to unauthorized reprinting across national borders (McGill). However, this homogenization went hand in hand with another aspect of technological progress—at least, in the transatlantic sphere—as it took on a plural modernization in which similitude was tied with the perceptions of commonality in respective localities. It was in this concatenation that literary works lent themselves to the “articulation” of seemingly familiar but mutually incommensurate subjective experiences.

In Gaskell's career, we find exemplary support for this assertion. In the 1860s, her works appeared in America and the UK almost simultaneously. In parallel to the synchronic circulation of texts, in 1866, the dramatization of *Mary Barton* (1848) by Dion Boucicault was staged in New York at the same time as the

London production appeared. A faithful reproduction of an authentic English drama in America, *The Long Strike* (1866) followed the colonial paradigm at work in the US theatre industry. However, we find evidence of the lasting influence of the transatlantic transaction not in the similitude of the drama production but in the different receptions the production received in the two nations: it was in the US that the play became a long-lasting hit throughout the late 19th century and beyond.

What are the implications of this duality? Although the reception of a literary work remains to be discussed in terms of readers' response, the vantage point of a dramatic adaptation suggests the influence of multiple cultural factors at work. Given the dominant position of English literature across the Atlantic, a hasty generalization must be avoided. As Grivil shows, literature enjoyed its social locale in the US, and those who appropriated the literary culture of England should be discussed as a separate social segment from theatre goers. Despite this limitation, a focus on the adaptation indicates the transmutation of a literary text into another form of cultural production in which to couch the pervasive national ideology. Acknowledging that English playwrights, actors, and stage designers dominated the American theatre until the 1870s, Wilmeth and Bigsby argue that little is known about the "cultural, social, and even political uses to which such influences were put" for creating an American identity (3-4). This article claims that the inquiry into this unexplored question via the study of reception in the transatlantic context is not merely part of an episodic interest in the history of theatre; it constitutes a critical theme in the post-imperialist critique of English novels.

The Long Strike received good critical attention, but few have analyzed the play as a form of literary reception in the late 19th-century economy of textual fluidity across the Atlantic. However, it is a promising case study for exploring the way in which the cultural dynamism across the Atlantic became manifest. This article aims to shed light on the play from this analytic perspective.

The article begins with a short sketch of the theatre in America in the second half of the 19th century. It serves to illuminate the way in which plays were seen in a social context that differed from that in the UK and to provide an objective basis

for subsequent discussions. Based on this overview, it will situate the reception of the play in a transatlantic context.

II. The Theatre in America

Throughout the early part of the 19th century, the US theatre drew on English expatriates to enact primarily English dramas. Puritanism had led to the denigrated status of entertainment in public since the colonial era, and the theatre in New York depended on British performers and English-born personnel until the mid-1860s. As late as the 1840s and the 1850s, all but one of five New York theatres were run by managers from England (Burge 174). Actor Joseph Jefferson said that domestic works seldom appeared outside the Bowery Theatre (183). Theatre was “alien”, and was viewed as a cultural institution for the privileged and considered to reflect the implementation of British values. Aside from the transatlantic stars, the theatre of the era was dominated by figures—so far little studied—who were active in the transatlantic sphere.

It was not until after the Civil War that the American theatre industry came to be run by American managers and actors. In New York, the theatre industry itself was turned into a syndicate (Poggi 1-11). As the city grew, the first theatrical district around Union Square was called the “Rialto”, which included business-class theatres, luxurious hotels, and shopping centers (Morris 182). English visitors often considered Americans vulgar, but the reality was very different. American actress Olive Logan said,

It seems to me during my different visits to London, and in course of conversation about theatres with English people, that an idea prevailed that, in American theatres, were invariably presented entertainments of a low order, and that American audiences were composed in great part of Pike’s Peak miners sitting in the best boxes in their shirt-sleeves and with their legs up. To visit one of those American theatres, and to observe the elegance of the ladies’ toilets, the ‘stunning’ get-up of the *jeunesse* greenbacked of New York, the wild extravagance of outlay in both sexes, is to correct this idea at once. As for the

entertainment itself, it is usually as near the European model as three times the money expended on it there can make it (23).

In New York Broadway theatre, the “opulent middle class” was dominant. Boxes were for families, but it was considered too flashy and bad taste to take one (Frick 66). In the London Lyceum, the most expensive seat cost 84 times the cheapest seat (Matsuura 176). Aristocrats such as the theater’s financial backer Baroness Bourdette-Cotts and the Prince of Wales were often present, as were literary celebrities (“Lyceum”). In the New York Olympic theatre, a theatre ticket for *The Long Strike* in 1866 sold for 50 cents, an affordable price for a laborer.

After the 1860s, the theatre in America was no longer a case of colonial mimicry of the metropolis. John Hollingshead, an English theatre manager and drama critic for the *Times*, observed when visiting New York in 1867 that the audience in New York theatres, including the Olympic and Wallacks, where *The Long Strike* was performed, consisted of an affluent middle class that embodied social equality. With no royal members or aristocrats to attend, there were no seats for distinguished audiences; the theatre was built for commoners, who sat in regular seats. The cheapest gallery consisted of what were called family seats, and there were no boxes for royal guests or a pit for the poor.

In the New York theatres, with the exception of the Opera, there is no full dress; small bonnets or hats are everywhere worn by the ladies, and the assembly generally presents the uniform aspect of an opulent, highly respectably body, none rising to the brilliancy of our showy occupants of the stalls, none descending to the dinginess of the frequenters of our modern pit. Let me add that the private boxes are too few in number to vary the general character of the scene. If any person desired to find a picture of perfect social equality, he would have his desire gratified by the audience of an ordinary New York theatre. But it should be understood that this equality is on a middle-class basis, and is totally unlike the dreams of an universal levelling system that enter the minds of Red Republicans. The mass of operatives and

humble persons, who are regarded with complacency by the aristocrats of a London audience, and who frequently afford amusement by their mirthful demonstrations on holiday occasions, are carefully kept out of view in the Empire City.... However, the equality, as I have observed, is, so far as it goes, perfect (An English Play Goer).

Unlike in the UK, the audience behaved and gracefully preserved the silence manner. It could be said that the theatre in the US was a public sphere in which respectable citizens followed the expected norms of citizenry.

III. Labor

The Long Strike is an adaptation of the second half of the original. It de-emphasizes the political aspects of the story, transmuted into a family drama. The original novel, *Mary Barton*, capitalizes on 19th-century novelistic realism to enhance the reader's interest in the contemporary lives of the working class in Manchester. Boucicault appropriated the novel's meticulous attention to detail in the vivid pictorial reproduction of the scenes on stage. The dramatic reproduction of the social setting in the original was authentic, evidently designed to appeal to the Victorian obsession with photographic realism. For the "reputed aristocratic character" of the theatre, where the audience was supplied with lace-trimmed scented playbills, the issue of labor was suitably toned down ("Drama" 17 Sept 1866). Maunder points out that the labor issue in Manchester is trivialized, encapsulated by a picture of the satanic mills as objects made "almost of beauty, rather than malevolence" ("Mary" 14).

What attracted the audience in the Lyceum was a telegram scene, a characteristic of Boucicault's adaptations in which particular scenes were endowed with potent visual effects. For the dramatic rendition of the plot in *Mary Barton*, the playwright reduced Mary's trip to Liverpool to a short visit to a lawyer's office and then to a telegram office in Manchester with the kind lawyer. Here, Boucicault appropriated Gaskell's literary experiment with the telegram in *Disappearances* (1851) (*Gothic* 6) and *North and South* (1855) (268) to call back a wanted person. A witness aboard

a ship bound for America that day is thus called back by telegram.

The story in the telegram office is one of suspense; the very life of Jem depends on the functionality of a telegram wire. It is after nine o'clock at night, but the office is alive with several clerks and telegraphers, and telegram boys are bringing in and leaving with messages. Over a long counter, the news is sent, received, and sold. It costs twenty pounds to send a message to Chicago and a shilling to send one to Portland Terrace. News of a raging fire in Glasgow is dispatched to the newspaper offices. As the clerks leave one by one, the spotlight is on the one machine left, which is at work under a burning lamplight. Jane (Mary Barton) and the lawyer enter the office, but all except the main lines are closed. A telegrapher feels pity for Jane after hearing her story and tries sending the message, knowing the other end will be dead. No reply comes. Jane prays, grows hysterical, and faints. When all hope seems to have gone, a reply comes from the other end. The pilot boat that carries the message to the ship refuses to go unless a substantial deposit is paid. The lawyer splashes money, "There's ten! There's twenty pounds! (*taking notes from pocket book*) Say you have any amount" (Boucicault 35). With the money paid by the lawyer, the message is sent. The scene ends with Jane on her knees kissing the lawyer's right hand.

In London, the scene was considered a type of new realism. On stage is a telegram office realized to almost "photography" ("Theatrical Lounger"). The review noted, "the public hears the clapping of the mimic telegraphs and claps with delight in answer to their clapping. It is the new bit of realism, and is pronounced therefore to be the great scene of the play" ("Theatrical Examiner").

As a European correspondent for an American paper predicted, "the play is certain to be performed on your side..." ("European"); the play was swiftly brought to New York. *The Long Strike* was one of the examples of the drama of the old English school. The Olympic in 1866 was considered a first-class theatre in artistic terms, run by female managers from England. Upon leaving for England, Mrs. Wood handed the theatre for the first time to an American manager. A critic for *American Art Journal* noted there was a "manifest want of proper rehearsals" that was "a fault that many of our managers are though their over

earnestness to produce novelty, apt to fall into..." (Shugge 36). The association with English actors from theatre families continued. The protagonist of the play, Noah Learoyd (John Barton), was played by Charles Wheatleigh (1823-95) in the 1866 performance and Charles Fisher (1816-91) in 1871-72. The sailor in 1866 was Mackee Rankin (1844-1914), an American educated in London. The lawyer was Yorkshire-born James Henry Stoddart (1827-1907) in 1866 and afterwards. Stoddart came to America in 1854 to join the Wallack's Theatre in New York, where English comedy predominated, as per Wallacks, an Englishman. *The Long Strike* was revived in 1869, 1871, and 1872 in the Wallack's, with such Englishness that it was considered "a London company, transported to New York" (Burge 199). Stoddart, an actor of the Drama of Old School, acted in the play over 1,000 times across America by 1875, and he continued to make it his staple for the rest of his career (Advertisement. Corinthian).

Manager Leonard Grover used the background based on a sketch of Manchester. He also employed laborers from the city to check the language and clothes (Advertisement. Olympic). However, at least for the New York audience in 1866, the plight of the workers in the original lacked a sociological reference in the US. In New England, Lowell employed young unmarried women to work on the latest cotton-weaving machines, and this organization was considered an ideal model of a contemporary factory. The labor issue in the drama appeared to be an old social problem to the audiences in the new world, where similar problems were considered non-existent. An advertisement for the play found the realistic representation of the working poor is rather amusing: "It seems singular to an American audience to see the Manchester factory girls and factory men scuffling about in wooden clogs and clad in homely garb—so different from the substantial and comfortable manner in which our working people appear" (Advertisement. New York Olympic). A critic wrote in *American Art Journal* in 1866 that the plight of the laborers in the UK did not interest the audience (Shugge 36-37).

There were few literary works in 19th century America that addressed labor and poverty (Hapke 67), and Boucicault's play became one of its substitutes. As the gap between rich and poor widened, the late 19th century witnessed frequent labor

strikes and subsequent suppressions by the militia (Brecher). By the 1870s, the line between reality and drama was blurred, turning the play's allusion to the labor problem into a reflexive commentary. After the early production phase, subtitles such as "working men's play" were frequently attached. The association of the play with labor issues began in 1869, when the actors in the play went on strike during the performance. A review predicted, "The interest which 'strikes' are exciting in real life just at the present time will naturally intensify that of the drama" ("Musical and Theatrical" 8 June 1872). In 1883, a reviewer said, "The current of contemporary events has keyed the popular mind at a pitch to fully appreciate the striking scenes and episodes which the piece pictures with lifelike fidelity" ("Park"). When it was revived at the Windsor, "the 'splendid production' was followed by a short strike, on the part of the public, at the Union Square" ("Spirit").

The New York stage after 1872 (1876, 1890, 1896) showcased Stoddart's acting, discarding the labor scenes. The 1869 actor's strike at the Wallack's was ridiculed by New York newspapers, which sided with management's rejection of the strikers' demands ("Musical and Theatrical Notes"). In 1872, after a sympathetic review of the workers demands, the *New York Tribune* admitted that the entire matter of the strike was an "unmitigated nuisance." It also added that the local feeling on the subject "is evidently not of the kind that impels people toward theaters" ("Drama" 17 June 1872). Although these allusions to the labor movement led to some antipathy from the middle-class audiences, the connection with the unions continued. The play was known so well as a dramatization of a strike that the *New York Times* discussed Boucicault's *The Long Strike* together with Galsworthy's *Strife* almost in equal terms ("Strife"). In 1904, the play was advertised as "a play of the people, by the people, and for the people, the drama of capital and labor, *The Long Strike* by Dion Boucicault" (Advertisement. Howard). The play was turned into a film on the labor problem in 1911 (Ross 74). The stage was changed from Manchester to Chicago, thereby showing the complete assimilation of the play as part of the trajectory of the workers' movement.

It extends beyond the scope of this article to discuss in detail the reception of workers, who appeared to have observed in the play what critics missed. Even if the

play cut the tie between romance and labor by making murder a personal issue, it is certainly not difficult to see an “inevitable” link between the murder of the mill owner and his exploitation. In the play, not knowing the real murderer, the strikers and a trade-union man make a causal link between the murder and the strike.

The distribution of funds by the union (changed in the US to United Workingmen) also was of interest to workers in the US. In 1883, one of the most powerful mid-19th-century labor unions, the Knights of Labor, used the play for strikers in San Francisco “with several strikers on the cast” (“Striking”). Over 3,000 dollars’ worth of tickets were sold to sustain the operators during the strike. The Coast Seamen’s Union used the play for the benefit of organized labor in 1891 San Francisco, and again, the Central Trade unions used the play for the unemployed in 1893 in Minneapolis (“Theatrical Notes”; “For”).

The play approached the labor issue from a different angle—philanthropy—an ideological trend in America noted by de Tocqueville; it continued to serve as a paradigm to authenticate (and justify) large-scale industrial capital.

IV. Philanthropy and Technological Sublime

As Claybaugh discusses, 19th-century realist novels aimed at social reform, and their activity was transatlantic in scope. This influence might be in the author’s pseudonym for *Mary Barton*, “Cotton Mather Mills.” As Bremner says, today, Mather is known more for his association with witch trials, but his *Essays to Do Good* constituted a standard text of philanthropy (12). Mather closed the book with a statement about the “ravishing satisfaction” in “relieving the distresses of a poor miserable neighbour” (214). Although critics commonly assume that the penname was a word play, or that it invokes witchcraft, it would be safe to assume that her husband, the Unitarian minister William Gaskell, chose the title for the early version (Uglow 172) after the philanthropic text known across the Atlantic.

Considering the sensational scene of the play purely as entertainment, critics (Flaunders 91; Maunder “Sensation” 63; Recchio 40-41) rarely associate it with an act of charity. However, I argue that the notion of philanthropy is of crucial importance to articulate the difference in the reception of the dramatic

adaptation of *Mary Barton* in America. Though commonly thought of as frivolous entertainment, many of Boucicault's plays center on the oppressed.

Contemporary reviews stressed that the play links moral importance with feeling. *The New York Tribune* said in 1872, "The effect of the piece is to touch the heart, keep the mind interested, and leave the spectator more charitable toward human weakness and more thoughtful as to the duty of the intelligence and wealth toward ignorance and poverty" ("Drama" 4 June 1872). The paper went on to declare that the "heart" is paramount:

...it stimulates thought upon the old antagonism of labor and capital, and teaches the paramount necessity of conducting the business of life upon a basis of justice, kindness, mutual forbearance, and thoughtful consideration of human weakness. Men are not machines, and those who take no account of the heart, in this world, are perpetually butting against stone walls of hatred and difficulty. ("Drama" 24 June 1871)

The play was staged in 1893 for charity. With the support of the mayor and the business elites, union men, police and firemen distributed tickets for the play for the "unemployed" ("For"). In London, despite Dickens' assurance of the lawyer's character that it "ought to make the whole house cry" (*His* 606), the contemporary reviews and later critics made but a passing reference to it. In America, the point of emphasis shifted to the lawyer and Jane. *The Chicago Tribune* found that the central characters of the play are Moneypenny and Jane ("Adelphi"). The New York audience in 1866 felt so contented by the scene that they felt they had no need to remain in the theatre ("Theatres and Things").

Gaskell used philanthropy to promote female activism (Elliott 135-58); Boucicault created a male model for benevolent citizenship in the figure of the sentimental lawyer. *The New York Clipper* notes that the lawyer character is new: "Heretofore all dramatists have made a lawyer the biggest, hard hearted scoundrel in the play, but Boucicault changes the order of things, and gives a noble hearted one in the person of Moneypenny" ("Theatrical Record"). Mary invites tears when

she cries, “Oh, sir, then ain’t there no hope ?...My poor lad! my poor lad! oh, what can I do for thee ?” (Boucicault 31). The lawyer, just as the audience did, sheds tears despite himself: “How can I tell ? —There, don’t cry.—I hate to see a women cry. I don’t allow it.” (*Door R. Crying himself*) (Boucicault 31). By presenting a conflict between selfish motives and reflective self-criticism for a moral synthesis, just as Adam Smith locates in his *Theory of Moral Sentiment*, the lawyer is depicted as being torn between self-interest and benevolence toward others. While he is determined to behave in a “professional way”, “without any feeling whatsoever”, he allows himself to be conducted by his heart (Boucicault 32). The whole business is out of monetary returns, and he moans that, “I am a poor man, and can’t afford to have any such damn folly” (Boucicault 32). The play’s potential was heightened by the Stoddart’s emphasis on emotion. He employed a “mobile face” that changed during each emotion he felt during the interview with Jane (“John”). These emotions and physical moves exhibited an excessive susceptibility for feeling. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* noted that his “quick, nervous walk, and the peculiarity of his dress” were thought to be “evidences of his irritability” consummate with his “various emotions to which Moneypenny is subject” during his interview with his servant maid and Jane (“Amusements” 9 Aug 1871). The image of a wealthy and powerful lawyer who took it upon himself to help the weak in society (the poor and women) was that of the benevolent capitalist, the predominant elite in society at the time.

The audience reaction suggested that a highly localized reception of the novel via a dramatic adaptation established itself as a shared modality of moral feeling. The practice of philanthropy in the drama, acted out by a skilled actor, epitomized the conflict between the Protestant spirit (discipline) and communal collectivity as the basis of morality (comradery). The actor made the entire house “spellbound”—“from the moment that he entered upon the scene until the fall of the curtain, which was the signal for round after round of deafening applause from delighted auditors...” (“Amusements” 27 July 1869).

Moneypenny was full of humor and pathos. The audience was moved to tears by the sentimental and moralistic story. “The two fine scenes in the third act—in

which *Jane* seeks out *Money Penny*, and the two visit the telegraph office—were seen by many of the spectators through a mist of tears...” (“Drama” 24 June 1871). The actress who played Jane, Miss Germon, was praised for “her command of tears” in an 1871 York production (“Amusements” 22 June 1871).

Stoddart, who played *Money Penny*, fit in the role so perfectly that he soon rose to fame and was known as “*Money Penny Stoddart*” (“*Most*”). On November 25, 1890, Stoddart acted with Boucicault's wife, Agnes Robertson, in the play for the Fifth Avenue Theatre (“*Agnes*”). The success of the play enabled him to purchase the American rights to the play from Boucicault in 1873 (“*Dramatic*”), and he held those rights until 1886 (Advertisement. Notice). Stoddart's tour along the main railroad line from New England all the way to the deeps of California made the play known over a vast geographical distance. He visited Chicago in 1874, 1877, and 1899, and by 1877, the play was “well known to Chicago, having frequently been done by all the houses in town” (“*Adelphi*”). The play was also popular in the two theatre centers of America, New York and Boston. Stoddart commenced the first tour from Haynes' theatre in Springfield, Massachusetts. Subsequently, he toured New England long and successfully throughout the winter of 1866 (Stoddart 146). Shortly after, two Boston theatres, Howard in 1867 and the Boston Museum in 1868, housed the production. Stoddart started a New England tour in July 1872 to visit all New England towns. In Brooklyn, where wealthy Wall Street merchants lived, Stoddart was well received; he acted there in 1867, 1870, 1871, 1874, 1883, 1893, and in 1898, when the “house was filled to overflowing” (“*The Park*”).

As in the UK, the audiences' receptions came from the telegram scene, but it is important to recognize that this scene alone is insufficient to explain the peculiar longevity of the play in America. Some of the most famous self-images of the era, John Gust's *American Progress* (1872), depict a goddess of progress holding telegram wires in her left hand and the Bible in the right, representing the identification of wisdom with the national progress as a form of predestination. There was a prevailing sense of a new horizon emanating from the uniquely American appropriation of technology as the engine of nation building (Miller

269-313; Kasson; Nye; Hughes).

The telegram scene transmuted the structure of the time and space inherent in the original novel into an emerging form of social collectivity by communications that nullified spatial distance. *Wilkes's Spirit of the Times* reported that in England, the “‘awake’ answer (or ‘I hear you, go ahead’) was given by the tinkling of a bell—here [in the US] (by the Morse instrument), it was the clicking sound of the writing lever—a dozen or so meaningless dots; but the effect was emphatically electrical” (“Theatres and Things”). Other critics also recognized that this was the crucial aspect of the show’s popularity. The same paper commented, “It seems difficult to account for the wonderful effect of this scene because there is no more novelty in sending a dispatch than in dropping a letter into one of the lamp postboxes; but it is one of the most exciting scenes ever experienced” (“Theatres and Things”). To the contemporary audiences in the US, the experience of the technological sublime resembled an emanation of intangible messages “without words” (“Theaters and Music”). It was real in subjective terms, but the message and the emotional elation therein relied on the non-human language of mechanical codes. A critic reported, “...the auditors are worked to a high tension of excitement, and when the measured clicking of the wire, almost inaudible, makes the announcement _... - ... -... - ... -.. _____ . ____.. (The ship has not sailed,) the outburst of applause is overwhelming, although perhaps not ten men in the house can read the first word of the message” (“Theatres and Things”).

The play was praised as a classic and one of “the best” among old melodramas (“The Long”). As late as 1893, the play maintained its prestige. The president of the societies at the Brooklyn Academy of Music attended the play, paying homage to the unique status that the play had achieved (“The Amatanth”).

The play outstripped its production in the UK in popularity, which was then brought back across the Atlantic. As Claybaugh notes, London led culturally, but America’s size and strong publishing industry made the two countries equals in this regard (19). One of the factors that contributed to the play’s popularity in America was its print culture. The production was hampered in the UK because of

the playwright's copyright litigation over piracy. This made it difficult for managers to produce the play for free in the UK. The play did not acquire the status of a classic in the UK, where the audience was exposed to numerous sensational plays.¹ By contrast, in the absence of international copyright, in America the play was available for all because the play was published and available in 1871 ("Amusements" 22 June 1871),² which was ahead of the UK.

V. Conclusion

The dramatic adaptation of the original took the shape of entertainment in the popular theatre, but its social background differed from that of in England. There was firstly the uniquely American mobilization of technology for achieving progress and nation building. The dramatist unexpectedly found in a tool for the telecommunications in the British Empire a confirmation of the national narrative. The telegram scene in the drama was in this sense a doubly charged message, i.e., a tool for the modernization of the nation and the moral sub-plot of this progress stemming from the fellowship of citizenry. The social background that generated this second aspect of the appropriation was again uniquely American. Although the viewers in the theatre realized that this secondary element would be increasingly fictive in reality, the drama set forth a new social vision to the audience as a lasting collective ethos for imagining the nation that might be.

Notes

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 27th annual meeting of the Gaskell Society of Japan held in Shizuoka on June 6, 2015.

1. In London, the initial reception was caused by the "electric" excitement. The production of the play coincided with the completion of the transatlantic telegraph, which shortened the requisite two weeks to obtain news from the US to an almost instantaneous transmission and reception. However, when it was staged in London

in 1869, the popularity of the play had much subsided. The patriotic feeling from the previous production was prompted by the British-led project of the laying of transatlantic cable and the story of the Great Eastern in laying it, which was reported widely in the press in 1866. After three years, the telegram scene seemed out of touch with changes in reality. In 1869, the service was nationalized and no longer a “private enterprise”, “maintained for profit” (Boucicault 33). The playwright added a railway scene in the 1869 revision for the London production, indicating the shift in audience preference. Authorized production listed on the cover page of the promptbook were the Lyceum in 1866, Edinburgh Theatre Royal in 1866, and the Grecian Theatre in 1867 (Boucicault). Additionally, in 1871 in Manchester, the playwright himself acted the part of the lawyer in the revision of the play under a different title, *A Struggle for Life*. The author held the UK rights to the play until 1889.

2. The earliest print of the play issued by Samuel French, 122 Nassau Street, New York, is in the New York Public Library (Baucicault (sic)).

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