

# CORSET TRADE MYSTERIES.

## WEST-END COSTUMIERS' QUARREL

### AMUSING INCIDENTS.

To-day, in the King's Bench Division, before the Lord Chief Justice and a special jury, Mrs. Charlotte Jane Connah, known in the corset trade and to West-end costumiers as "Madame Lottie," brought an action for alleged libel against Victor Silberberg and Augusta Silberberg, trading at 64, 67, and 68, New Bond-street as "Madame Hayward."

The libel complained of was characterised by Mr. Hugo Young, K.C., who represented the plaintiff, as one due to trade jealousy. The plaintiff had been employed by the defendants for many years in the corset department, and became known to customers, mostly ladies of title, as "Lottie," having, as she alleged, all but complete control of the department. She subsequently started business as a corset-maker on her own account. A circular issued by her in connection with her new venture brought about a counter-circular from the defendants, which formed the subject of the libel complained of. In it the defendants said:—

A short time ago a saleswoman in the corset department left us and established herself, circularising our customers, and no doubt you also. We wish to point out in your interests, as well as in ours, that to make corsets which will fulfil all the requirements of perfect fit, ease, shape, and good wear, is not an easy matter, "though attempted by many." Now, this person who has left us, and may be soliciting your custom, has been merely a machine, an instrument for carrying out Mdme. Hayward's instructions, and has no master hand behind her to control, direct, or advise.

This, plaintiff said, was an unjustifiable reflection on her in the way of her business, while the defendants pleaded that the statement was true, and counter-claimed in respect to patterns and addresses of customers, which, it was alleged, the plaintiff had taken away.

During the examination of the plaintiff by Mr. M'Cardie as to the mysteries of the corset-trade in the West-end, the Lord Chief Justice suggested that the questions were irrelevant, as counsel must, he supposed, "know all about it."

Mr. M'Cardie remarked that "he was not married," a confession which brought about roars of laughter, in which his Lordship joined.

The Lord Chief Justice then suggested that the matter should be left to Mr. Hugo Young as an old and experienced hand, and that learned gentleman admitted the soft impeachment.

The plaintiff indignantly resented being called a "person," and Mr. Hugo Young, amid laughter, assured the jury that no young lady engaged in the West End corset and dressmaking world could tolerate such a description.

Mr. Duke, K.C., for the defendant, contended that his client was justified in issuing the circular complained of, and called Mrs. Silberberg to show that the mysteries of corset making for the West-end aristocracy remained with her, and the patterns taken away by the plaintiff were of a unique character.

The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, awarding £100 damages, and found for the defendant on the counter-claim.