

# A Glance at New York



**Arthur Reel**

Adapted from the play by Benjamin A. Baker (1848)  
Cover illustration by Jacob A. Riis from his book *How the Other Half Lives*

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*“Is it possible that such men  
exist in the very heart  
of New York?”*

*—George*

## *A Glance At New York*

**COMEDY WITH SONG.** A hit in its day, *A Glance at New York* (1848) was one of the first plays to portray working-class life and speech, providing a snapshot of what life was like for those living in New York's gritty Bowery district. George, a naïve country bumpkin, arrives in New York and is escorted about town by his cousin, Harry. Upon his arrival and throughout his visit, George is humorously swindled out of his watch and most of his money by fast-talking street hustlers. Along the way, George and Harry hook up with Mose, a hulking volunteer fireman and butcher, who loves nothing more than getting into street scuffles: "Dere ain't one in dat crowd can floor me." The mischievous three cross-dress to gain access to an all-women's bowling saloon; make a stop at Loafer's Paradise, a grimy bar; and manage to get into a street scuffle.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 60-75 minutes.

### *About the Story*

Benjamin A. Baker worked as a volunteer firefighter with Old Engine Co. #15 and as an actor and prompter at the Olympic Theatre. The character of Mose the fireman was based on real-life volunteer firefighter, Moses Humphrey, who worked as a printer at The New York Sun. Mose was a favorite among Bowery audiences, who cheered him on when he trounced his rivals and heroically rescued women and children from fires.

## *CHARACTERS*

(14 m, 7 w, 2 flexible, extras)

**GEORGE PARSELLS:** Greenhorn from the country visiting New York.

**HARRY GORDON:** Lives in New York; George's friend who shows him around town.

**MOSE:** Fireman and brawler; Harry's old schoolmate.

**JAKE:** Swindler.

**MIKE:** Swindler.

**MAJOR GATES:** Drunkard who begs for money to buy grog.

**BILL SYKES "SYKESY":** Fireman.

**ELIZA "LIZE" STEBBINS:** Mose's sweetheart.

**JANE:** George's cousin from the country who is visiting New York.

**MRS. MORTON:** Escorts Jane around New York.

**MR. MORTON:** Mrs. Morton's husband.

**MARY MORTON:** Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Morton and Jane's friend.

**JENNY BOGERT:** Sykesy's date.

**NEWSBOY:** Sells outdated newspapers to unsuspecting out-of-towners.

**WOMAN:** Poor, wears a shawl and carries a basket.

**GIRL:** Sells pocket combs.

**BOOKKEEPER**

**WAITER**

**STREET SWEEPER**

**LOAFERS 1, 2, 3, 4:** Patrons of Loafer's Paradise bar.

**EXTRAS:** Lady bowlers, bar patrons, street sweepers, auction bidders, etc.

**NOTE:** Doubling is possible to accommodate a smaller cast.

## *SETTING*

New York, 1848.

## *SYNOPSIS OF SCENES*

### **ACT I**

**Scene 1:** View of Steamboat Pier, foot of Barclay Street.

**Scene 2:** Front Street, Broadway.

**Scene 3:** Front Street, Broadway.

**Scene 4:** Front Street.

**Scene 5:** Loafer's Paradise, a dirty barroom.

**Scene 6:** Street outside of Loafer's Paradise.

### **ACT II**

**Scene 1:** Front Street.

**Scene 2:** New Street.

**Scene 3:** Front Street, St. Paul's Church.

**Scene 4:** Mock auction store.

**Scene 5:** Front Street.

**Scene 6:** Vauxhall Garden.

## *PROPS*

Silver watch	Covered basket
Gold watch	Book
Money	Fire hose
Man's pocketbook	Knives
Pocket combs	Plates of food
Newspapers	Table of refreshments
Cigars	Box of jewelry
Benches	Pair of pistols
Tables	Piece of cloth
Baby doll	

## *SOUND EFFECTS*

Dog barking	"Lovely Mae" or another suitable song
Baby crying	
Fire bell	"Oh Lud, Gals" or another duet suitable for time period
"Canadian Boat Song" or another suitable song	

*ACT 1*  
*SCENE 1*

*(AT RISE: View of Steamboat Pier, foot of Barclay Street. Harry is showing George the sights of New York.)*

HARRY: Well, George, here we are, in the great metropolis of the Western world, where you can purchase amusements of all kinds, from the Astor Place Opera to the far-famed "Hall of Novelty." Five minutes walk will take you from the extreme of wealth to the extreme of poverty. How much better it is to live here than in your stupid village in the back woods with no society but that of bumpkins and old women. Oh, there are a few pretty girls there. Your cousin, Jane, for instance. But what are your country girls compared to our dashing New York belles. During the two months I have spent with you there, I have grown as verdant as yourself.

GEORGE: Well, Harry, you must admit that your visit to our village has surely improved your health. Poor Dad. It was a long time before he'd give his consent for me to visit New York. I believe nothing but your promise to look after me and keep me clean in my morals induced him to let me come.

HARRY: George, you have not only his consent but his dollars in the bargain. Now we have to find our way to the Astor House. Stay here while I go look for a carriage to take us there.

*(Harry exits, leaving George alone. Enter Jake and Mike.)*

MIKE: I say, Jake, there's a greenhorn. I knew it the minute I saw him come ashore. I've been keeping an eye on him ever since. Let's try 'im.

JAKE: I'll take the first shot. (*Approaches George.*) I beg your pardon, sir. I believe you're from the country?

GEORGE: Yes, sir, I am.

JAKE: So am I. Came here about two months ago in hope of getting a job. Spent all the money my father gave me and have nothing left but this gold watch. (*Shows watch.*) Wouldn't part with it if I could help it, but I've been turned out of my boarding house and had nothing to eat these past two days. Would you like to buy it?

GEORGE: I don't know if I can afford a gold one. Besides, I have a pretty good silver one. (*Shows watch.*)

JAKE: I'll sell it to you cheap. It almost breaks my heart to do it but I'm starved. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll trade you if you give me ten dollars to boot.

GEORGE: I'll do it being you're starved and with no place to sleep. Is it really of gold?

JAKE: If you have any doubts you can go with me to the jeweler's and ask him.

GEORGE: No, my friend, I'll take your word.

*(They exchange watches and George hands Jake ten dollars.)*

JAKE: Thank you, sir. You've got a real bargain. (*Jake exits and goes to the other side of the stake where Mike is.*) I've done it, Mike. Here's your five. (*They divide money.*) Meet you later after I sell this silver one.

*(Jake and Mike exit. Harry comes back.)*

HARRY: Had to go two blocks before I could find a coach. Now I'll get my valise from the Captain's office and we'll get started.

GEORGE: Wait, Harry, I want to show you what a glorious bargain I obtained. (*Shows the watch.*) What do you think of that?

HARRY: Don't tell me you just bought that.

GEORGE: I got it dirt cheap. For my silver watch and ten dollars to boot!

HARRY: George, you've been victimized. This watch is not worth ten cents.

GEORGE: Nonsense! Don't you see it's gold?

HARRY: Learn something. All is not gold that glitters. You've been the dupe of a big scoundrel!

GEORGE: The poor fellow who sold it to me was from the country and almost starving.

HARRY: An old stereotyped con job. But you're not the first greenhorn who's been taken in by that maneuver. There's about as much gold in that watch that you can place in your eyeball.

GEORGE: Then let's go find that dirty individual and have him arrested.

HARRY: May as well look for a needle in a haystack. Besides, you have no proof. Just accept it and learn a lesson. Wait here. I'll return from the boat.

*(Harry exits. George is left alone muttering, "Experience the name of the game. I'd like to see him try it again." Jake and Mike re-enter. Mike drops a pocketbook between George's legs, then picks it up.)*

MIKE: Mmmm...no doubt belongs to some gentleman who arrived on the Albany boat.

JAKE: Maybe it belongs to one of the cart men around here.

MIKE: Mmmm...full of papers. *(To George.)* Sir, I just picked this up. Must be yours.

GEORGE: You're mistaken, friend. It doesn't belong to me.

MIKE: Mmmm, I coulda sworn it did. Look, full of paper and...bank bills! Here, you'd better take it and keep it till a reward is offered, which, I dare say, may be a handsome 50 dollars or more. Then we can go halves. You can find me at 300 Robinson Street.

GEORGE: Yes, my friend, I'll take it...by all means.

MIKE: But wait. I'm trusting you with a fortune, so as I don't know you, the fairest deal is to give me ten dollars and when you get the remainder, you'll call the boarding house and let me have the balance of my share.

GEORGE: Well, that's fair.

*(George hands Mike a ten dollar bill.)*

MIKE: And here's the pocketbook. Good day.

*(George nods as Mike and Jake exit.)*

GEORGE: This will make up for the money I lost with my watch. *(Looks in pocketbook.)* What's this? Invoice of boots and shoes? Invoice of hardware. A number of bills. Berman Bank. Globe Bank. Atlas Bank. Jasper Bank. Samson Bank. Whooo, wait! I'm in luck. *(Enter Harry.)* I've reached a high point in my life.

HARRY: Let's be off, George.

GEORGE: Wait! Hold! Not yet, Harry! I'm a fortunate man! *(Shows him the pocketbook.)* This will make up for my loss.

HARRY: Where did you get that?

GEORGE: A man found it and placed it in my hands. There's to be a huge reward for what's in this. I advanced him ten dollars.

HARRY: Duped again. They've initiated you into the drop business. *(Laughs.)*

GEORGE: Don't laugh. Look at the bills here. Globe Bank—

HARRY: Globe Bank... *(Laughs.)* Worthless, George. So are all the others. *(Looks them over.)* Come. Let's go. If you stay here much longer by yourself, you won't have a cent left.

*(Harry takes George's arm and assists him out. Enter Girl and Newsboy, who crowd around George as he is leaving.)*

GIRL: Pocket-combs-cent a pair!

NEWSBOY: Extra, sir! The "Sun," sir...with a full account of  
the great meeting in the park to regulate the price of putty!  
*(The two pursue George as he leaves in a hurry calling out about the  
pocket combs and the newspaper. Stage fades to black amidst the  
shouting.)*

*SCENE 2*

(AT RISE: *Front Street, Broadway. Enter Mrs. Morton, Mary, and Jane.*)

MRS. MORTON: My dear girls, it's time to go home. Past five o'clock and dinner is waiting

JANE: My dear aunt, how quickly time passes. I have never had such delight in my life! Such wonderful displays of silk, shawls, and...jewelry! My head is still spinning! (*Walks about in a circle.*)

MARY: If the windows of the stores put you in such ecstasies, what will a visit to the inferior accomplish?

JANE: Oh, dear Mary, don't mention it or I will go... (*More circling.*) ...wild!

MRS. MORTON: Careful, Jane, careful! (*Grabs Jane's arm.*)

JANE: Oh, excuse me—excuse me—everything I have seen here is so superior to everything in our village.

MARY: Oh, it's great...ever so great! (*Also in a circular walk.*)

JANE: I don't know whether New York belongs to this world or not!

MARY: I don't know whether I have seen it or dreamt it!

JANE: It is so much beyond our village.

MARY: It has made our village disappear into a fog!

MRS. MORTON: Talking of your village, how nicely you contrived to give your cousin, George, the slip and arrive here a day before him.

JANE: Yes, George, poor thing, he was so delighted with the prospect of his visit to New York that it induced me to write to you that I would visit you. How surprised he will be to find me here before him.

MRS. MORTON: No doubt he will meet you at our house where, of course, he will call with his friend, Harry Gordon.

JANE: (*Confused.*) Harry Gordon?

MARY: Why, Jane, why so shocked? Is there something terrible—

JANE: No! Nothing!

MARY: The way you said his name...is there a bit of scandal afloat with him? *(Jane turns away as if still in shock.)* Harmless, I assure you. It's been said a certain gentleman paid much attention to a pretty village lass for the double purpose of seeing his relations and recruiting his health.

MRS. MORTON: And you think he lost no time in recruiting his heart? *(Jane leaves the scene quickly as Mrs. Morton starts out too.)* Come now -

MARY: *(Exiting.)* Ma, I hope you will take Jane with us to our bowling saloon.

MRS. MORTON: How can I deny it? I intend to show her every place of amusement!

*(They exit. A Newsboy rushes on.)*

NEWSBOY: The Extra Herald! It's here! Just arrived on the ferry boat Jamaica! *(Rushes after them, then rushes back in. George and Jake enter.)* Grand bargain! Only four days late from Brooklyn!

*(Jake and George move away from the Newsboy who sees someone else and runs off shouting about the bargain.)*

GEORGE: Our apartments are secured, everything taken care of. Harry has gone to do a little business of his own. Meantime my new-found friend will show me the Elephant. He looks like an honest fellow.

JAKE: If you want, sir, I have an hour to spare, and I will be happy to serve you.

GEORGE: Do you find many customers?

JAKE: I'm a city pilot and my line of business hasn't been long established, and I'm sorry to say it's been sadly cut into by outsiders.

GEORGE: Outsiders?

JAKE: Fellows who live on other people's ideas. You see, myself and a few others have come upon the idea to offer our services to gentlemen unacquainted with the city to show them the Elephant. So far we've had many patrons and earned a very good name for our honesty and fine service. I do hope you will enjoy what I give you and recommend me to your friends.

GEORGE: What are your terms?

JAKE: One dollar an hour, payable in advance.

GEORGE: I suppose you want me to pay before we say anymore?

JAKE: Correct. And you are to pay the entrance fee for any place we may visit.

GEORGE: Accepted. *(Hands Jake a bill.)* Now, what open space is that over there...with the large building in the center?

JAKE: That's a park. Admission is 50 cents apiece.

GEORGE: Some people seem to be walking in free.

JAKE: That's because they're regular subscribers.

GEORGE: Oh ! *(Hands him another dollar.)* That will pay for both my friend and myself.

JAKE: I'll give it to the gatekeeper myself, and then...well, you'll want to visit the Battery afterward, so give me another dollar. I'll have it ready to give when we get there.

GEORGE: I have nothing less than a ten dollar bill.

JAKE: I'll run to the corner and get the change. *(Takes bill from George's hand.)* Just wait here.

*(George nods as Jake runs off with the bill.)*

GEORGE: Seems like an honest fellow. Hard worker too. I like that. Egad, here comes Harry, earlier than I thought.

*(Harry enters.)*

HARRY: Finished my business for the day. But how come you're not waiting for me at the Astor where we said we'd meet?

GEORGE: I met this chap who informed me that his business is to show the Elephant to country people – also to take them about town to show them the sights.

HARRY: Did you pay him?

GEORGE: Yes, I paid him one dollar an hour for his services. Also paid for two tickets to the park. And he just left with my ten dollar bill to get change, so I can pay him for two Battery tickets.

HARRY: You innocent child. You'll never see him and your money again. And as for the park and Battery, they're public grounds and open to all. (*Shakes head and laughs.*)

GEORGE: Don't laugh, Harry. He seemed very honest.

HARRY: They know how to take visitors, George. (*Mose enters.*) As I live and crawl! One of the b'hoys! An old schoolfellow of mine! Mose, where is the mind? You seem to be talking to yourself.

MOSE: Made up my mind about somethin'. Not gonna run wid de machine no more. (*Mose spits and continues to talk to himself.*) Dat Corneel Anderson don't give de boys a chance. Jest 'cause he's chief ingineer, he thinks he kin do as he likes. Last night wid de fire down on Front Street it was me who had hold of de butt. So he says to Bill Sykes, "Take de butt from Mose der." Ol' Sykes says, "What for?" and he says, "Ne'er you mind what for – jus' take de butt!" Make me feel bad, so I goes down de street a little and stood on 40's hose. So he comes along and sees me and says, "Git off de hose!" And I says, "I'm not gettin' off de hose!" (*Spits.*) And he says, "If you don't git off de hose, I'll hit you over de head wid my trumpet!" (*Spits.*) And I yells back, "I ain't gettin' off de hose!" And wham! De down rotten man hit me over de head! (*Mose swings his arm and falls to the ground. Harry advances and taps Mose on the shoulder. Mose jumps up.*) Hey, why yea touchin'? Whad yer mean by dat?

HARRY: Why, Mose, don't you remember me? (*Mose stares at Harry.*) You don't remember Harry Gordon who used to go to Evans' School with you on Bayard Street?

MOSE: Oh, yeah. Well, well, well. How are you? You been okay des past ten years?

HARRY: How come I find you in this part of town. I heard you held Broadway in such contempt you couldn't be persuaded even to cross it.

MOSE: Oh, I got over dat. Fact is I'm goin' to give up runnin' to fires. I ain't been used in a good way, so I'm lookin' for somethin' new.

HARRY: I'm glad. It means we can renew our old acquaintance. You used to fight all my battles for me in school. We were firm friends! Oh, allow me to introduce you to my friend, George Parsells, from the country.

MOSE: How are ye, ol' hoss? Miss the farm life?

GEORGE: Happy to know you, city guy.

*(George and Mose shake hands.)*

HARRY: Mose, we want to take a little spree tonight. Will you accompany us?

MOSE: I'm open for jes dat. I spree for the good time to be. Where to fust?

HARRY: I have a great idea. I visited some lady friends of mine awhile back, and I obtained tickets to a ladies' bowling saloon. Now, if we can go there and disguise ourselves in the kind of uniforms they wear there, we can master a hot time of fun. What do you say? (*He looks at George and Mose for response.*)

MOSE: Sounds good to me. But where do we gon git the dresses?

HARRY: A five dollar tip to the wardrobe keeper will procure them.

*(George and Mose jump up and down crying, "Let's be off a once!"  
"Let's do er up pretty!" as scene fades out.)*

*SCENE 3*

*(AT RISE: Ladies bowling saloon. Number of ladies playing at ten-pins. There is a game room off to one side. Mrs. Morton, Jane, and Mary are all smoking cigars.)*

CHORUS: For pleasure there's no denying:  
Who can boast such a city as this?  
We've no cause at our lot to be sighing—  
So come, take a game with me, Miss:  
I am sure, I am sure, you cannot resist.

*(All laugh at the end of chorus.)*

JANE: Really, dear aunt, your New York ladies are at a loss for amusements.

MRS. MORTON: An exercise. What do you think about our saloon? All to ourselves—no men admitted.

JANE: Excellent! A gift from the Lord. *(Laughs.)*

MRS. MORTON: Yes, I found that theatres, card playing, dancing, were bores. Exercise was the key to a healthy life. So I determined a bowling alley. With the help of a few lady friends we carried it into effect. Our club now numbers 50 ladies—of the first families of New York! *(Applauds.)*

JANE: Capital fun!

MARY: Come, Mamma, let's play a game with me!

*(The women move off to one side to bowl as Harry, George, and Mose enter. They appear as women and are dressed in appropriate bowling dresses. Mose has a cheek full of chewing tobacco.)*

HARRY: Mind, Mose, no ecstasies or you'll betray us.

MOSE: Don't worry much. I can shuffle through.

HARRY: *(To George, who is gaping at the women.)* Do you think the ladies deserve great credit for their desire to promote good health?

GEORGE: *(Gaping wider.)* Oooo...aaaa...well—

HARRY: Enjoying the sights, George?

GEORGE: I think...maybe...it's best if we leave.

HARRY: We'll stick it out, come what may, George. Some friends of mine are here— *(Mose spits. Harry pulls at his dress. To Mose.)* Dispense with your tobacco for the present or you'll betray us.

MOSE: Them is hard words, but if I must I must. *(Spits out tobacco.)* I say, I'm lookin' ahead for some fightin'.

HARRY: No fighting here, Mose. Go pick out a partner and take a game of ten-pins.

*(They enter the game room as Mrs. Morton, Jane, and Mary re-enter.)*

MRS. MORTON: Girls, you saw the last three persons who entered? *(They nod.)* I have a secret to tell you. But promise not to scream or give the alarm in any way. *(Both girls reply with "We promise.")* Well, we have men in our fold. All three of them. And one of them is no other that Harry Gordon.

MARY: How did they ever get in?

MRS. MORTON: I can't tell for the life of me.

JANE: Dear Lord, one of them is cousin George!

MARY: Let's bring a bit of a storm on them. *(Jane and Mrs. Morton both nod.)* And let's make sure they don't admit their real sex.

*(More nodding as they approach the three men.)*

JANE: *(To Harry.)* Excuse me, miss. I'd like to challenge you to play a game with me.

HARRY: (*Aside, quickly.*) How like a little girl I used to court to in the country. (*Aloud.*) Of course. But may I ask you one question? Have you any relations living in the country?

JANE: Oh, yes! My sister, Jane, lives in a small village just out of Newburgh.

MARY: (*To George.*) You seem a stranger in this saloon. May I ask if you're a member of this club?

GEORGE: (*Aside.*) Hang me if I know what to say. (*Aloud.*) No, miss, I have just joined it...my first visit here today.

MARY: We'll soon make you acquainted. When once within these walls were secure from the intrusion of horrid men.

GEORGE: (*Aside.*) Pretty...darn, she's so pretty.

MARY: Come, we'll play.

GEORGE: (*Aside.*) Oh, dear God, I'd love to play with her.

MARY: You said—?

GEORGE: Nothing. Just a thought of good feeling.

*(They all start to leave.)*

MRS. MORTON: (*To Mose.*) Have you ever played bowls before?

MOSE: You can bet your life I have.

MRS. MORTON: You appear to be a stranger in our saloon. I had no idea there were others as well.

MOSE: There's lots of 'em on de Bowery, an a big load on Broadway. (*Aside.*) Almos' let de cat outta de bag.

MRS. MORTON: What sort of a game do you play?

MOSE: Why, a fair game, of course. Just watch me!

*(Mose grabs her around the waist and kisses her.)*

MRS. MORTON: (*Screams.*) "It's a man!"

*(George and Harry rush forth. Other ladies scream.)*

MOSE: Yessiree, I'm man and no mistake. One of de b'hoys at dat!

*(Women continue to scream as the men run offstage. Fade to black amidst screams and hurried music.)*

*SCENE 4*

*(AT RISE: Front Street. Enter Jake and Mike.)*

MIKE: Well, Jake, how about the greenhorn? Have you bled him since we joined in the deal with the pocketbook and watch?

JAKE: He's too good a game to let it slip away so easily.

MIKE: You got him cookin' for more?

JAKE: Bled him to the tune of 12 dollars.

MIKE: I'm amazed!

JAKE: I got one dollar for my services, and one dollar for two park tickets. Then what else do you think he was green enough to allow?

MIKE: I can't imagine.

JAKE: He sent me to get change for a ten dollar bill.

MIKE: *(Laughingly.)* You brought the change back, of course.

JAKE: Oh, yes, I sure did.

*(Both laugh.)*

MIKE: Then I did a little bit more...in the dog line.

JAKE: In the dog line? What do you mean?

MIKE: Well, I was walking on the Battery, and I saw a fine large dog. There was a man of wealth walking ahead, and I was sure it was his dog. Then, as I was walking along and whistling, the dog came up along side of me. As I walked off the Battery, the dog followed. Must've liked my friendly whistling and an occasional little pat on the head. So what do you suppose the dog did? Left the wealthy gentleman and went with me. I took him to my cellar and am going to keep him there until a reward is offered. Ha, ha!

JAKE: *(Laughs.)* Why, Mike, I ashamed of you. How can you condescend to the dog line when the legit business pays so well?

MIKE: If there's a chance of making more money, then why shouldn't I do it?

JAKE: It's better to starve than to make money in the low way. Stuff watches, drop pocketbooks, or do anything in a genteel way, but never condescend to dogs. Keep up your respectability. But...if you do get a nice reward for the dog, and seeing it's you, I'll take half.

MIKE: (*Aside as lights fade.*) Forget it, pal. That money'll be mine.

JAKE: (*Sings.*) Bow-wow-wow...

Bow-wow-wow...

I'm sure the world can't blame a man,

For getting an honest living, sirs.

The game of life is catch what you can—

Each for himself is striving, sirs.

That's life, that's life, in a world—

Where some parade in fancy clothes—

And others starve with food to eat.

Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow. (*Real bark. Jake exits singing.*)

(*Enter Harry, George, and Mose, laughing.*)

HARRY: We escaped just in time to save our bacon!

MOSE: Well, I sure stuck my foot in it!

GEORGE: (*Annoyed.*) I think you might have refrained from rudeness.

MOSE: Now, looka here—I don't know what you mean by rudeness. (*Stands ready to fight.*) Go on, if you think ye'll teach me some kinda lesson here.

HARRY: Mose, you misunderstand him. He's not looking to teach you any kind of "lesson" here.

MOSE: Oh, I though he did. But if he does wanna make a muss— (*Rolls fists.*)

HARRY: Now look, I'll have no quarreling. (*Steps between them.*) We're out on a little spree and we all must bear good feelings.

GEORGE: I got it, Harry. I sure didn't mean to hurt the good feelings of our friend in any way.

HARRY: I knew it, George, so shake hands with him, Mose—

MOSE: *(To George.)* Then you did'n mean ta make a muss?  
*(George shakes his head no.)* Put it there.

*(Mose offers George his hand. They shake.)*

HARRY: Where to nexr for the happy spree?

MOSE: What about de t'eatre?

HARRY: Which theatre?

MOSE: De Bowery T'eatre. Looka-here, did ye ever see old Jack Scott take dat sword and come down to de front and say something dat'll make a good fight? *(Illustrates sword play.)* Ain't dat high?

HARRY: It's too late for theatre. Where else can we go?

MOSE: I'm pleadin' up der for a rousin' good fight with somebody somewhere. Whad do you say for Loafer's Paradise?

HARRY Where's that, Mose?

MOSE: It's a good smash-in place for a fight. I'll be a perfect brick for a regular knock down and drag-out fight. Come on now? *(Harry starts off with Mose, but George remains in the same place. To George.)* Why don't yer come along? You'll learn about de streets of New York.

*(Mose takes George's arm and yanks it. George, hesitantly, follows Harry and Mose. Blackout.)*

*SCENE 5*

*(Low light on Loafer's Paradise, a dirty bar room. Men are seated at the bar and at tables with benches.)*

ALL: Here we are, a precious crew, that's always on hand...

For a theft or a frolic, at any man's command...  
And a poor deserted lot, too, of late we have been...  
Cos we cannot get a visitor that is at all green...  
For the green-uns pay the score  
That's kept behind the door—  
When once rubbed off, we can get trust for  
Just as much more. *(Black stage.)*

JAKE: *(In black.)* Come, you Johnny Stokes and Billy Waters, time's up. Move yourselves...come!

MIKE: *(From outside.)* Three insiders!

*(Stage in lights as Mose enters, followed by George and Harry.)*

HARRY: Mose, is this Loafer's Paradise?

MOSE: Taint nuthin' else. Now, if yer want ter fight, say the word.

HARRY: Not yet, Mose. Let's take a drink first.

MOSE: I'm a'goin' to have a fight in dis crib—I am.

*(They all go up to the bar.)*

JAKE: *(From a corner.)* I say, Mike, do you know his knibbs?

MIKE: No, who is he?

JAKE: Don't you remember the chap we did at the foot of Barclay Street?

MIKE: My eye, so it is. Do you think he knows us?

JAKE: No matter if he does. We're at home here.

MIKE: What's more important here, Jake, is that's fightin' Mose along with 'em. I'm rather afraid of him.

JAKE: Foof! Forget Mose. It's that greenhorn...we must make somethin' more of him before he leaves here.

MIKE: I'm down. You goin' to speechify tonight?

JAKE: Pays well when we have genteel visitors. So when I speechify, you pick their pockets.

*(They both nod at one another and retire to a far corner.)*

HARRY: This, George, is the renowned Loafer's Paradise, the abode of many of those who would not be at home in any other place. Late in the evening it fills up with those who never think of the past or care for the future. They who never miss an opportunity of committing a small theft but never keeping the proceeds till the next day. As long as they can raise a few pennies for a warm time sleep by a stove and a glass of poisonous liquor...they are happy. *(Laughs.)*

GEORGE: Is it possible that such men exist in the very heart of New York?

HARRY: Not only possible, but, alas, a complete truth of the city. Mose! Where did you go?

MOSE: Lookin' fer some crum' to throw off a seat and kick 'im good you-know-where. *(Swings, kicks.)*

HARRY: Those here right now all seem peaceable. Why bother 'em?

JAKE: *(At far end.)* Come, Bill Waters and Johnny Stokes, I told you once before, time's up.

*(Loafers 1, 2 exit on the order.)*

MOSE: Them' s just two foo-foos.

GEORGE: What's foo-foos?

MOSE: A foo-foo's an outsider – dis chap who can't come wid de big figure.

GEORGE: What's the big figure?

MOSE: Three cents for a glass of grog and a night's lodging.

GEORGE: Do you mean on those benches I saw coming in?  
(*Mose nods.*) What a queer bed they must make.

(*Jake enters with Major Gates who advances toward Mose, Harry, and George.*)

JAKE: Now, remember, Major, the rules are strict. Time's up soon, and you better toddle.

MAJOR: Just permit me a few minutes, Mr. Jake. I shall slope when the word to exit is given. (*Jake turns away and leaves the scene. To George and Harry.*) Allow me to remark that I believe you to be strangers here, and, consequently, not au fait in the rules and regulations. Hence, I must evacuate these premises unless I can lay myself under a deep and lasting obligation to someone.

GEORGE: For what, Major?

MAJOR: Alexander sighed for a second world to conquer. Solomon for the wings of a dove. But Major Gates would be as happy as either of them if he could only mortgage his boots, or otherwise, to quote the profane, "Raise the wind for a snifter."

(*Mose knocks Major's hat over his eyes.*)

MOSE: Come out. You don't come over this crowd, though we are a little raw.

HARRY: Hold on, Mose. The poor fellow seems hard up. (*To Major.*) Here's a sixpence for you.

(*Harry gives it to Major who walks to the bar, looking scornfully at Mose.*)

MOSE: Well, if de greenhorn had done dat, I coulda looked over it. But you!

HARRY: Have you no pity for the unfortunate?

MOSE: Yes, I feel as much for a poor fellow as anybody livin'.  
But not for a laze one. There's plenny of work around here  
for everybody, if they got a mind for it. But some others,  
like this one, helpin' such fellows is only encouragin' them.

HARRY: Well, what you say is true, Mose.

MOSE: True! I believe you can bet high on it.

HARRY: Come, let's be off. *(Starts away.)*

MOSE: What! Without a fight? No siree! I'm going to have a  
speech from the landlord—den for a knock-down and drag-  
out—den I retires like a gentleman.

HARRY: Well, I suppose we must oblige you this time.

MAJOR: Gentlemen, allow me to propose a speech from our  
worthy landlord.

MOSE: Now, landlord, if you're game, let's hear you cackle.

*(Jake mounts a bench.)*

JAKE: Fellow citizens of everywhere in particular and  
nowhere in general...I appear before you to say what I shall  
say and so I say, to begin with I am opposed to all  
governments! And I am opposed to all laws!

MOSE: Louder, old puddin'-head! Louder!

JAKE: I goes for the first-come-first-served principle! I goes  
for human nature, fellow citizens! Up with no work! Up  
with no watch house! Up with lashing of grog and insiders!  
Any man be blowed who can't raise three cents for an  
insider. Them as will snooze in the market when such an  
establishment as this is open, is no gentleman!

MOSE: Oh, gas!

JAKE Who said "gas"?

MOSE: I did. D'ye want t'take it up?

JAKE: I don't want to take any such liberties.

MOSE: Then I'll take it up.

*(Mose hits Jake. Fight breaks out. Stage fades to black amidst  
struggle.)*

*SCENE 6*

*(AT RISE: Street outside Loafer's Paradise. George fights off Loafer 1. Harry rushes in and attacks Loafer 2. Stage fades to black amidst the struggle. Lights up on another area of the stage where Mose is fighting Loafer 3 and Loafer 4. Mose knocks them down and they begin to fight one another as Mose runs off. Loafer 3 and Loafer 4 continue to fight until they discover their mistake. Then they run offstage. Blackout. Intermission.)*

*ACT II*  
*SCENE 1*

*(AT RISE: Front Street. George and Mose are recovering from the fight. George's clothes are ripped and torn and he has a black eye.)*

HARRY: *(Indicating Mose.)* There he goes. I hope he's had enough to last him for some time.

GEORGE: I hope so, too. For my part, I'm beginning to get sick of this "fun." I've gotten to know New York.

HARRY: Nonsense! You haven't seen half of it.

GEORGE: No...nor do I intend to see it. I'm off by the first boat tomorrow. My visit to New York has cost me over 50 dollars and a black eye.

HARRY: Your eye has gone into mourning. *(Looks at the eye.)* Come, we'll go over to the druggist. He'll take it away.

GEORGE: What! My eye!

HARRY: No, no. The black of it.

*(Mose enters.)*

MOSE: Any of 'em aroun'? When them fellers come mussin' roun' me, I'll lam 'em.

HARRY: Easy, Mose. No problems. Coast is clear.

MOSE: I escaped by the skin of my teeth this time. I wouldn't like to have slept in the station house. Always managed to escape that business, and I ain't begin to be tuck up now. *(Looks closely at George's black eye.)* Hey, that's a blinker.

GEORGE: Yes, I have something to make me remember it.

MOSE: You wasn't quick enough. Gotta hit out real strong!

*(Mose demonstrates by trying to box with George, who backs off with fear.)*

HARRY: Easy, Mose...you'll hurt him.

MOSE: I wouldn't hurt him for the world.

*(Enter Woman with covered basket.)*

WOMAN: *(To George.)* I beg your pardon, sir. Can you tell me whereabouts Henry Street is?

GEORGE: I cannot, my good woman. Maybe this gentleman can. *(Points to Mose.)*

MOSE: You're a long way off Henry Street, ma'am.

WOMAN: Oh, dear! I've carried this basket a long way and am so tired. Will you hold it for me till I fix my shawl a bit?

MOSE: Sure will, ma'am.

*(Woman gives Mose the basket and runs off.)*

HARRY: What the deuce ails that woman?

MOSE: I don't know. She can't mean to leave the basket with me.

*(Baby cries in basket.)*

GEORGE: What's that?

MOSE: It sounds like a baby crying. *(Uncovers the basket and discovers a baby. To Harry.)* Here, hold this for me, will yer?

HARRY Oh, no! No, no, no!

MOSE: What yo afraid of? *(To George.)* Here, you take hold.

GEORGE: No way! Look in there...something green.

*(George laughs. So does Harry who also puts finger to nose. Mose gets angry and shakes the basket. Baby cries louder.)*

MOSE: *(To baby.)* Shut up, ye little varment! Order! *(Harry and George both bid goodnight to Mose and begin to exit.)* Saaaay, looka here...you ain't a-goin' leave me with this young one?

HARRY: Why not? You have another friend now...you don't want us anymore. Goodnight.

*(Harry and George laugh as they exit.)*

MOSE: *(Looking after them.)* I'd like to give you one! *(Shakes his fists as he sets the basket down.)* I got nuttin' to do wid a baby. *(Walks away from basket and returns.)* It ain't de little baby's fault. *(Picks up the basket.)* Ah, whadd'll I do now? *(Pause. Mose sits down on the street with the new baby.)* Dis baby puts me in mind when de fire was down on Spruce Street. Der was a lotta shanties burnin'. I had de pipe—'cos I rolled de ingine dat night—and I saw a woman cryin' and den she was herrin.' Seys I, "What's de matter, good woman?" Seys she, "My baby is in de house and it's burnin'!" Seys I, "What!" I turned my cap hind side afore and buttoned my old fire coat, and I went in and fetched out dat baby. I never forgot dat woman's countenance when I handed de baby to her. She fell down on her knees and did a big blessin' on me. Blessed me so much. *(Wipes tears from his eyes.)* Ever since dat time I had a great partiality for little babies. De fire b'hoys may be a little rough outside, but they is all right here. *(Touches heart.)* It never will be said dat one of de New York b'hoys deserted a baby in distress.

*(Mose exits carrying the basket. Enter Jake and Mike.)*

MIKE: Well, Jake, was there much broke?

JAKE: Nothing to hurt. Everything was put right again. Got greenhorn's ticker. It wasn't worth much, but better than nothing. He made a dive for his pocketbook, but couldn't get it out.

MIKE: So much the better. We might have got the one I dropped on him this morning. So be it he couldn't get it.

JAKE: Why, in a case like that, turn virtuous and return the gentleman his property. *(Both laugh. Major Gates enters.)*  
Well, Major, how have you fared?

MAJOR: Not in a happy mind, Mr. Jake. I've been badly used.

JAKE: Serves you right, Major. If you had conformed with the rules of the cellar, and walked your trotters when the word was given, you would have escaped a good drubbing. But I can't stand here talking. I've got some work to do.

MAJOR: Stay, most potent sir. Have you the price of a glass of refreshment to loan me till some remittances arrive from my uncle?

JAKE: Not from me. Go to your old bunk and maybe the clerk of the market will treat you for patronizing his market.

*(Exit Jake, singing "The Canadian Boat Song" or another suitable song.)*

*SCENE 2*

*(AT RISE: New Street. Street sweepers are hard at work. Enter Mose dressed as a butcher, carrying the basket and meat.)*

MOSE: *(To Sweeper.)* Say, looka here, if you kick up such a dust as that when I'm passin' to spike my beef...I'll lam you!

SWEEPER: We ain't kickin' up as much dust as you are.

MOSE: None of your lip. I can't give my customers gritty beef.

*(Mose starts off. Newsboy jumps in.)*

NEWSBOY: Here's the Dun, Herald, and Tribune—got the last telegraph news from Williamsburg! *(He gets in the way of Mose.)* Have a paper, sir?

MOSE: Outta my way. I'm delivin' beef.

NEWSBOY: Hey, butcher, who ye kill fer!

*(Newsboy runs off laughing. Mose starts off again when Lize enters with an open book.)*

LIZE: Hello, Mose. What's the matter?

MOSE: Is dat you, Lize? I was a-tryin' to plump one of dem saucy newsboys. What brings you out so early in de mornin'?

LIZE: Well, Mose, we're a little hurried down at the shop, so I turned out sooner than usual.

MOSE: What book have you got there?

LIZE: "Matilda the Disconsolate."

MOSE: How do you like it as far as you got?

LIZE: Oh, it's prime.

MOSE: Have you come to where Lucinda stabs the Cound yet?

LIZE: No, Mose, I ain't, and I just wish you wouldn't spile the story by tellin' me.

MOSE: Say, Lize, you're a gallus gal anyway.

LIZE: I ain't nothin' else.

MOSE: What do you say for Waxhall tonight?

LIZE: What's a happenin' there? Is de Wawdevilie plays there?

MOSE: No...there's a-goin' to be a first-rate shindig. Some of our b'hoys'll be there.

LIZE: Will Sykesy be on hand?

MOSE: S'posen he is...what den?

LIZE: Nothin'.

MOSE: Now, looka here, Lize, I go in fer Bill Sykesy 'cos he runs wid our merchaine...but he mustn't come foolin' round my gal or I'll give him fits!

LIZE: Now, Mose, don't get huffy 'cause I mentioned him. But I'd rather go to Christy's. Did you ever see George Christy play his bones? Ain't he one of 'em?

MOSE: Well, he ain't nothin' else.

LIZE: And that feller with the tambourine musn't be sneezed at neither.

MOSE: Yes, he's some.

LIZE: Do you know I've been learnin' one of their songs? And if it wasn't for bein' in the street, I'd sing it for you.

MOSE: It's too early in de mornin' for many folks to be out...so you're safe. Blow your horn.

*(Lize sings "Lovely Mae" or another suitable song.)*

MOSE: *(Affected.)* Well, I'm blowed if dat in't so... *(Whistles.)* Oh, Lize, you can sing a few!

LIZE: You ought to hear Jenny Bogert and I sing at the shop. We can lay out a few, I tell you. But I can't stand talking here. I must go to shop. Drive on with your meat, Moses.

MOSE: What time will I come up to your shanty?

LIZE: Anytime after tea.

MOSE: 'Nuff said...I'm der. (*Lize exits.*) She's a gallus gal, she is. I have strong suspicions I'll have to get slung to her one of these days. (*Calls offstage.*) Say, boy, get my butcher cart a-movin'! Drive 'er right up to de slaughterhouse. (*Voice from offstage.*) What?! You don' know where de house is yet? Well, drive up Christie Street till you smell blood and der you stop!

(*Mose waits for response and then exits in the other direction. As Mose is exiting, Mike enters with Major Gates.*)

MIKE: That was a thing...runnin' into you, Major! Where have you been?

MAJOR: In the market...ever since I evacuated the premises...I have had a most ardent desire to imbibe some of the elixir of life, but somehow my finances will not allow such extravagance. (*Enter Jake.*) Well, good morning, Mr. Jake. The eastern sun has scarcely lighted the hemisphere and there you are—already on the go—like the far-famed Achilles.

JAKE: Oh, stow your gab, Major. Mike, I have a plan to bleed the greenhorn a little more. I watched him go to his lodgings last night and from some interesting little circumstances found out that his "bank" is not broke yet. Suppose we enlist the Major in our cause. Would you like that, Major?

MAJOR: Sounds like the best thing for one in need of monetary requisition.

JAKE: (*To Mike.*) I wonder if the greenhorn has spotted the shark in the Park fountain yet? (*Mike laughs. Jakes joins.*) Come, Major, I will escort a cool approach. We'll take a drink. There's a crib open—

MAJOR: Ah, that will enlighten new spirits! I am in your hands for good—

JAKE: Oh, none of your nonsense! Cut your poetry and playacting stuff for a little while...or I'll change my mind.

*(They all exit. A bell rings. A cry of "fire" is heard. Mose appears pulling a hose. Others enter and cross. George enters, crashes into Mose, and falls. Blackout.)*

*SCENE 3*

*(AT RISE: Front Street. St. Paul's church. Enter Jake and Major.)*

JAKE: Now, Major, mind my instructions. Pitch it strong.  
Play it the right way, and I'll give you a share.

MAJOR: But do you think he'll recognize me?

JAKE: It was too dark in the cellar last night, and he's had too  
much since to think about, so I think you are pretty safe.  
Now he is sure to pass this way, so look out.

*(Exit Jake. Major takes a roll of bills and throws them down, then  
pretends to be looking for them. Enter George.)*

GEORGE: *(Aside.)* I'd give anything to find Harry. I've been  
knocked down in the dirt, had a fire engine almost run me  
over, then I'm told to get up as I was in the way. *(Stops and  
sees roll of bills.)* What's this? What a lot of money! *(Sees  
Major.)* What's the matter, my good man? What're you  
looking for?

MAJOR: I'm a ruined man, sir! I've just lost all my money I  
possessed in the world. I've been saving it for the past 12  
years, depriving myself of almost all the necessities of life  
for the sake of having a little for my family to live on. What  
do I do? What, oh, what? *(Staggers as if with great pain.)*

GEORGE: Easy, don't fall apart, my good man. Here's your  
money. I just found it. Please, take—

MAJOR: Bless! Oh, bless! *(Takes money.)* May I reward you  
for your decency, your honesty?

GEORGE: Oh, no, sir. It's of no consequence—

MAJOR: But I insist. You've saved me from the poorhouse in  
my old age. I can in justice do no more than present you  
with five dollars for your honesty.

GEORGE: Oh, well, if you insist, I'll take it.

*(Major opens roll of bills and hands George a \$10 bill.)*

MAJOR: Here you are. Oh, no, that's a ten. I'm sorry, I don't have a five dollar bill in this roll.

GEORGE: Oh, then never mind –

MAJOR: I insist upon doing you justice. If you have a five in your possession, give it to me, and take the ten. *(George gets out a \$5 bill. They exchange bills.)* I wish you a very good day, sir.

GEORGE: And the same to you, sir. *(Major exits.)* City Trust Bank...that's all right.. *(Puts bill in his pocket.)* What a lucky thing it was for him that I found his money. Someone else would have kept it all without saying a word.

*(Newsboy enters loaded down with papers.)*

NEWSBOY: Here's the Sun, Herald, and Tribune! Got another battle in Mexico!

GEORGE: Here, boy, let me have a newspaper!

NEWSBOY: Yes sir! At your service!

*(Newsboy gives George a newspaper. George pays the Newsboy. George opens the paper and reads.)*

GEORGE: I say...this paper is dated August 3rd, 1847. A year ago! Hey, boy! 1847!

NEWSBOY: Is it, sir? *(Looks at paper.)* So it is. Must be a mistake of the printer. You'll find it to date in information. *(Exits quickly.)*

GEORGE: Well, if that's so and it's a printers error, then I'll read it later. *(Slips paper into his pocket.)* I have to take the time to get the real hang of this city.

*(George exits. Mose enters.)*

MOSE: A loafer fire. (*Shakes his head, referring to another firehouse.*) We gave 28's fellers fits! Dey won't undertake to race wid our machine anymore. We had dat rope manned good and strong, and de way de b'hoys laid out of de old bunkroom was sinful. I did think yesterday I'd leave de machine, but I can't do it. I love dat engine better than any dinner. Last time she was at de corporation yard, we plated de brakes and put in new condensil pipes. And de way she works is about right. She throws a three-inch stream de prettiest in town. I'd like to see any machine wash us now. I only wish dere'd come a good fire just to try. Hey, I'm t'be off to de market, or boss'll get cross-grained.

*(Mose starts to exit. Harry enters.)*

HARRY: Hello, Mose! Where are you going?

MOSE: Back to de market.

HARRY: Where was the fire?

MOSE: Der was none. It was only a false alarm.

HARRY: What became of the basket you had last night?

MOSE: I left de little baby in de Park Alms House.

HARRY: Have you seen anything of George this morning?

MOSE: What George? Oh, de greenhorn.

HARRY: Yes, have you seen him?

MOSE: Well, I have. I tumbled over him wid de butt. I haven't seen him since.

HARRY: Mose, if you have no objections, I'll walk down Chatham Street with you.

MOSE: Come along. But I tell ya, I seen Lizey when she was goin' to work dis mornin', and I'm bound to take her to Waxhall tonight. We're goin' to have a sore eye der. Will yer come?

HARRY: Well, Mose, I see nothing at present to prevent me. I presume that Lizey, as you call her, is your Dulcinea?

MOSE: I don't know what yer mean by dat, but she's one of de gals.

HARRY: Then she is, eh?

MOSE: Well, she ain't nothin' else. But, I say, if you want my company, you'll have to hurry up your cakes.

*(Harry laughs. They both exit in laughter. Blackout.)*

## SCENE 4

(AT RISE: A mock auction store with counter and rostrum. Jake stands behind the counter and acts as auctioneer. Mike and the others are present. A Bookkeeper is keeping the books. George looks on. Jake produces a card of knives to be auctioned.)

JAKE: And an off—and an off—shall I say five-eighths? (*Bid.*) Five-eighths—five-eighths—going—going. (*Bid.*) Thank ye, sir. Six-six-six-six—only six cents for that beautiful card of knives! It's really too great a sacrifice—going-going-going-gone! (*Knocks them down.*) Mr. Jacques! Mr. Jacques! One card of knives!

GEORGE: (*Aside.*) I wish I had bid on 'em.

(*Jake produces a box of jewelry, a pair of pistols, and a piece of cloth.*)

JAKE: Gentlemen, allow me to call your attention to this valuable lot. That box of jewelry belongs to the widow of an American officer who was killed in Mexico. What shall I say, gentlemen? Give me a bid.

(*All look at box.*)

GEORGE: (*To Jake.*) Are these real diamonds?

JAKE: Really, sir, I can't say. The lady appeared to be so overcome by her suffering, that she hadn't time to tell me. If they're real diamonds, think what a bargain you have gotten. And if they are not, you have surely got the worth of your money. Come, bid, gentlemen! Examine for yourselves, gentlemen! Here's a splendid pair of pistols, real London made! What do you say a piece for the lot, together with the remnant of superb broadcloth? Give me a bid!

MIKE: Twenty cents a piece!

JAKE: Twenty cents! Really, gentlemen, this is too bad. Here's jewelry as valuable as anywhere in New York, and I'm offered 20 cents a piece! Going...going...

GEORGE: Twenty-five! *(Keeps bidding against himself until the lot is knocked down at 50 cents a piece.)*

JAKE: What name shall I say, sir?

GEORGE: Mr. Parsells.

JAKE: Mr. Parsells, 50 cents a piece. Gentlemen, the next thing I have to offer you is a splendid gold watch. Makers...Tobias and Company, London. There's the name. Warranted 83 holes jeweled. How much will I have?

*(Mike examines the watch, then speaks loud enough for George to hear.)*

MIKE: That's a splended watch. Very special. I'll go in for it!

JAKE: *(To Mike.)* Well, Mr. Wilson, what is your honest opinion of this watch?

MIKE: Beyond good! Great! The height in quality!

JAKE: Gentlemen, here's Mr. Wilson who keeps a large jewelry store in Novagambia, and who has come down to purchase stock. He calls it great...the height in quality. I'll tell you the history of it. Smuggled into this country by a mate of one of our packet ships and was left here to be sold on account of his mother dying in Boston and his need for money to pay for her funeral expenses. How much for this watch?! *(Holds watch up.)* I have already advanced him 40 dollars on it. Make your bids! Don't be afraid. If you purchase and change your mind, you may bring it to me on Monday, and we will enter it again in our catalogue. So you are safe. Come! Don't waste time!

MIKE: Thirty dollars!

JAKE: Thirty dollars, gentlemen! Here is a jeweler who bids 30. Thirty-thirty-thirty – do I hear another amount?!

GEORGE: Thirty-five!

JAKE: Thank ye, sir! Thirty-five—the sacrifice is too great—literally throwing goods into the street! (*George continues to bid with Mike until 50 dollars.*) Mr. Parsells, 50 dollars! Really, sir, you have a bargain. (*To Others.*) Is it sold? (*Others nod.*) I'm sorry to inform you, gentlemen, that the sales are closed for the day. There will be a book auction here this evening to commence at seven o'clock. The regular sales tomorrow at ten, as usual. Mr. Parsells, if you will step up to the bookkeeper, he will hand you your bill.

BOOKKEEPER: Your bill, Mr. Parsells, is 400 dollars. One lot of jewelry, etc., 350! One gold watch, 50! Total, 400 dollars!

GEORGE: There must be some mistake.

JAKE: No, sir, there is no mistake here, sir.

GEORGE: There was just a dozen pieces of jewelry at 50 cents a piece.

JAKE: You're in error, sir. There were several hundred pieces at 50 cents a piece.

GEORGE: What will I do? I haven't got that amount of money on me.

JAKE: Well, sir, in such cases, a deposit is always left.

GEORGE: Here is a ten dollar bill.

JAKE: This bill is bad, sir.

GEORGE: Bad? What do you mean?

JAKE: I mean what I say, sir.

GEORGE: This bill was given to me in change a few minutes before I came in here.

JAKE: Have you no other money on you?

GEORGE: Yes, I have. But first I must go and see if you are telling me the truth about this bill.

JAKE: No—you don't leave here without a deposit. No swindling is going to take place here.

GEORGE: Do I understand this to be an insult to me, sir?

JAKE: However you look at it—that's your problem. But I want my dues.

*(Jake blocks George's way as Harry enters.)*

GEORGE: Oh, Harry, I'm glad you're here!

HARRY: What's the matter?

GEORGE: They are saying a ten dollar bill of mine is bad.

*(Harry examines the bill.)*

HARRY: So it is. Wait a minute. *(Goes to the door and calls out.)*

Mose!

*(Mose enters.)*

MOSE: Ey, what's up, buddy? What's onna stove?

GEORGE: I bought about a dozen pieces of jewelry and a gold watch, and I get a bill from them for 400 dollars.

MOSE: What! Say, which is de chap dat wanted to charge you 400 dollars?

GEORGE: The one behind the counter.

MOSE: I'll give him 400 dollars! *(Goes up to Jake.)* You want 400 dollars, do ya!

*(Mose is seized by one man. He throws him off and knocks Jake down. Big battle. General confusion as scene fades to black.)*

*SCENE 5*

*(AT RISE: Front Street. Enter Mose and George.)*

MOSE: Now looka here, greenhorn, if you keep runnin' your head in de noose so often, well, you know what'll happen to ya.

GEORGE: I'm really obliged to you, and I'm sorry if I caused you any trouble. You didn't get hurt, did you?

MOSE: What? Dere ain't one in dat crowd can floor me. I like a good fight, but not one wid a parcel of foo-foos like dem. Anyway, I gotta head home right now. I got to get ready for da ball tonight. Ye comin'?

GEORGE: Yes, if Harry will go too. I wonder where he is. I lost sight of him in the fight. Just disappeared.

MOSE: Oh, he's safe enough. Dey couldn' hurt him. Dere's no real pluck in dem auction chaps. Come up tonight. an' I'll show ye a gallus a piece of calico as any on de floor.

GEORGE: Show me what?

MOSE: I'll show you my prize lamb. She's one of 'em.

*(Exit Mose as stage begins to grow gradually dark.)*

GEORGE: Yes, I'll go to this place because I am a connoideur in cattle. They may trick me in almost anything in New York, but they can't beat me in judging of cattle. *(A bright light appears from the top.)* What's that? *(Studies light.)* A singular light! *(Light disappears.)* I wonder what it was. *(Light flashes again.)* There it is again! *(Mike enters from opposite side.)* I beg your pardon, sir, but can you tell me what that is?

MIKE: Oh, that's a comet.

GEORGE: A comet?

MIKE: Yes, sit. It's a great curiosity, only seen once in a lifetime. *(Light fades and returns brightly.)* The first time that

comet was seen was on the night Christopher Columbus discovered America.

GEORGE: Really?

MIKE: Fact, sir. Do you know how to see it to great advantage?

GEORGE: Yes, tell me.

MIKE: Well, you must put your hands up so. (*Puts up hands to show him.*) Then you must take out your watch and count every five minutes.

(*George puts up his hands.*)

GEORGE: There now. How can I look at my watch with both hands raised so high?

MIKE: The best way is for you to let me hold it while you look.

GEORGE: Oh, no you don't. I will not buy that.

MIKE: Very well. Suit yourself. (*Exits. George stands alone with a broad smile.*) I was too much for him that time. I'm beginning to comprehend their tricks. I'll go home tomorrow with satisfaction. However sharp a stranger may be to New York, he'll always find plenty of folks ready and willing to teach him. (*Harry enters.*) Why, Harry, where've you been? What has kept you away from me so long?

HARRY: To tell the truth, George, I saw your cousin, Jane, along with Mary and Mrs. Morton, and I worked hard to convince them to come up to Vauxhall tonight.

GEORGE: Well, I'd like to go. Mose promised to show me some fat cattle there tonight.

HARRY: Cattle? Why, it's a ball in the gardens.

GEORGE: Mose said he had a prize lamb to show me, and then he said something about a piece of gallus calico.

HARRY: (*Laughs.*) Why, you unsophisticated mortal. He means his sweetheart.

GEORGE: What a strange name for a sweetheart. I never heard one like that.

HARRY: Well, what's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

GEORGE: Calling his sweetheart a calico lamb! What a way of showing his love for her. *(He shakes his head then laughs.)*

HARRY: Well, let's be off— *(Lights flash again.)*

GEORGE: Stay, Harry. Let's look at the comet.

*(Harry laughs and drags George off.)*

HARRY: Let's be off!

*(They exit. Enter Lize and Jenny.)*

LIZE: Come, Jenny! Hurry up! I promised Mose to be ready for Waxhall soon after tea.

JENNY: Say, Lizzy, can't you wring me in?

LIZE: I s'pose I can, with hard squeezin', but that Mose of mine is such a dear fellow...he don't care for expense—not he. He thinks there's no gal like me in this whole village. You ought see him in de market once, I tell you—how killin' he looks. De way he takes hold of de cleaver and fetches it down is sinful. Dere's no mistake but he's one of de b'hoys!

JENNY: He is that! Someone told me that Bill Sykes was cuttin' round you.

LIZE: Sykesy tried, but I bluffed him off. He's gotta look a little more gallus, like my Mose, afore he can commence to shine. Do you know, ever since I've been to Christy's that duet has been haunting me.

JENNY: You mean that one you learnt me?

LIZE: Yes, let's run over it. No one's about. *(They sing the duet*

*"Oh Lud, Gals" or another suitable song.)*

"Here we are, as you diskiver,  
All the way from loaring river—  
My wife dies—I'll get another  
Pretty yaller gal—just like t'other.  
Oh Lud, gals, give me chew tobacco!"

JENNY: (*Sings.*) "Oh, dear, fotch along de whisky,  
My head swims when I get tipsy!"

(*Blackout.*)

**[End of Freeview]**