

Broadway Jones

FROM THE PLAY OF GEORGE M. COHAN BY EDWARD MARSHALL
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(Continued from last Issue.)

"I don't understand."
"Nobody understands Broadway," he answered. "People hate it, yet they don't know why. People love it, yet they don't know why. I don't it's just because it's Broadway."

"Is it a mystery?"
"That's what it is—a mystery." He shook his head in thought.

The subject had lost interest to her—because she did not know its fascinations. "I suppose you go to church every Sunday morning. Tomorrow's Sunday."

He was astonished. He had been thinking of Broadway. There are churches on that thoroughfare, but they are not so brightly lighted as some other of its structures. "What's that again?"

"I say I suppose you go to church every Sunday morning."

"Well—I've been going to Church-ill's every Sunday night." He laughed a little, then exclaimed, not loudly: "Broadway!"

"What are you thinking of?"
"Oh, I was just thinking what a great thing it would be if I made a success of this business."

"Why, you're going to," she said confidently.

"Do you think so?"
"I'm sure of it if you will make up your mind to work—to keep busy."

"Yes; that's it. I've got to work." He laughed. For a few moments they had been rather serious. "Work! Now, tomorrow, I'm going to plant a lot of vegetables, and then I'm going to cut the grass; I'm going to milk the cow, and I am going to—er—paint the house. Work! Oh, I'm going to be the busiest little fellow you ever saw. You know what I hope? I hope that butler of mine never comes back. I want to do all the work myself!"

"Your butler?"
"Yes; I sent him to New York yesterday on an errand."

"You sent him back for something?"

He wished to laugh, but did not. "No; I sent him back with something."

"Something valuable?"

He hesitated. Was Mrs. Gerard valuable? She had lost enormously in value in his eyes of late. "Well, it's worth a lot of money," he assured her, feeling certain that this speech was accurate.

"Perhaps he's lost it and is afraid to return," she suggested.

He smiled, remembering the instructions he had given Rankin. "If he's lost it he'll return all right—to claim the reward."

"For losing it? How funny?"

"Yes; isn't it?" He laughed. "But it wouldn't be so funny if he hadn't, would it?"

Heavens! Suppose Rankin should find it really impossible to get rid of Mrs. Gerard!

But of course Josie could not understand. The conversation puzzled

her. It did not hold her as had the talk which had preceded it.

She rose, as Clara came back, almost running. This charming country maiden very evidently had satisfied her curiosity as to the looks of Robert's father; she now was plainly somewhat displeased because the son remained away so long.

"Well!" she exclaimed. "Those two men are holding the longest conversation I ever heard of! They're standing on Kennedy's corner, their tongues going a mile a minute."

"What are they talking about?" asked Jackson anxiously. He very much hoped his friend was not in really serious trouble as the reward for having been his friend.

"I didn't get close enough to hear what they said, but they're both waving their hands in the air and talking—to beat the band!"

This worried Josie. "There goes our advertising!" Her voice was wholly gloomy.

Broadway nodded, quite as gloomily. "Looks like it."

Clara, by no means having lost her interest, remained peering down the street, into the evening shadows after her companions had turned away discouraged. "Here comes someone, anyway," she presently informed them.

"By Jove! It's Rankin!" Broadway's voice indicated his relief as he observed that Rankin was alone. Evidently he had followed orders and "lost" Mrs. Gerard.

There had come into the butler's appearance an indefinable change. He had not ceased to be a butler, but he had ceased to be the very perfect butler which he always had been in the past. It was as if he stood upon the threshold of a new and startling freedom, but thus far had hesitated to step definitely into it. Broadway regarded him almost with affection. No, certainly; Mrs. Gerard was not with him.

"Well, here I am," the erstwhile perfect serving man announced. "I suppose you thought you were never going to see me again."

"Hello, Rankin. When did you get in?"

"Just now. I've a great deal to tell you, Mr. Jones."

"What detained you?"

Rankin, looking at the young ladies, did not at once reply in detail. It was evident that there were some particulars to be divulged which he wished Broadway's ears alone to hear. "'Twas necessary."

"Why didn't you send me some word?"

"I can explain all that."

"Girls, will you excuse us?" Broadway asked, and as they nodded went slowly down upon the lawn with Rankin toward a clump of cedars. It had been planted in a circle, a favorite and funereal form of lawn decoration in those latitudes, and in solemn garden seat. "Just a few

moments," Broadway pleaded as he went with Rankin toward this deep seclusion. "Then I'll walk home with you."

"All right." Curiosity consumed the maidens. All this seemed exceedingly exciting to them. But, after all, they were not sorry for an opportunity to talk alone for a moment.

Broadway was very anxious, but Rankin said no word until they were within the leafy chamber. Even after they had reached its solitude Broadway had to urge:

"Well, come on; what's the news?"
"Surprising news, sir," Rankin answered hesitantly.

Broadway was all the more impatient. "Well, tell me tell me! What did she say? How did you get rid of her?"

"I—I didn't get rid of her, sir."
"What? Where did you leave her then?"

"I—didn't leave her, sir. I've been with her ever since."

"Where is she now?" asked Broadway timorously, his voice weakening.

"She's here, sir."

This was terrifically shocking. The worst had come to pass then—those fears which were so bad that they had been put aside as utterly unthinkable. "She came back with you?" There was a look of horror on the face of Jackson Jones.

"Yes, sir."
"Mis master's wrath rose. "You

idiot. What did you let her do that for?"

Rankin spoke slowly and reluctantly. "She insisted that she must see you and talk with you, sir."

Now rose a soul in wild revolt. "I won't see her! I won't talk to her!"
"But she's right outside the hedge, sir. You must see her!"

"—"
"Oh, she's perfectly reconciled, sir; believe me—"

Here was a shock as pleasant as the other had been terrible. It was almost too good to be true. "Reconciled! You mean she understands that I—"

"Oh, yes, sir. She's already sent out a denial of her engagement to you."

His hearer could have rent the air with shouts of joy, but did not. He only asked inately: "Has she?"

"Yes, sir." Now Rankin once more hesitated. "In the form, sir, of—er—another announcement."

This nearly stunned his master. "You mean she's engaged to someone else?"

"Yes, sir; she's going to marry the earl of Cortland."

The recently harassed youth brightened. Was life to be entirely smooth and joyous after all, instead of only partly merry, with the balance turned into a tragedy by his ancient "Sweetheart, dearie?" "The earl of Cortland!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir will you see her, sir? I



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