

Broadway Jones

From the Play of
George M. Cohan

By
EDWARD MARSHALL

With Photographs from Scenes in the Play

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Jackson Jones, nicknamed "Broadway" because of his continual glorification of New York's great thoroughfare, is anxious to get away from his home town of Jonesville. Abner Jones, his uncle, is very angry because Broadway refuses to settle down and take a place in the gum factory in which he succeeded to his father's interest.

CHAPTER II—Judge Spottedwood informs Broadway that \$250,000 left him by his father is at his disposal. Broadway makes record time in heading for his favorite street in New York.

CHAPTER III—With his New York friend, Robert Wallace, Broadway creates a sensation by his extravagance on the White Way. Four years pass and Broadway suddenly discovers that he is not only broke, but heavily in debt. He applies to his uncle for a loan and receives a package of chewing gum with the advice to chew it and forget his troubles. He quietly seeks work without success.

Rankin, puzzled, withdrew carefully. He had learned to step with catlike tread when he discovered that his master was in serious mood. He had no wish to anger him. No butler in the history of butling had ever had a place so utterly ideal. Pickings plentiful; work trivial; all life had



Josie and Broadway Jones.

been congenial for Rankin since he had encountered Broadway Jones.

The day of the bank's letter was the first after he had reached New York when Broadway did not go about his gay and simple routine of up Broadway in the afternoon and down Broadway at night, with movements so timed that they made long pauses near the Circle and near Forty-second street seem natural. He went home before five.

When Rankin ventured to express surprise at his return to the apartment at that hour, he snarled at him "Go to the devil, Rankin!" he suggested when he lingered.

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir," said Rankin and withdrew.

He reached the kitchen with a face so troubled that the Japanese boy, who had sought domestic service here with (judging from his wages) the commendable intention of patriotically sending home, each year, enough American money to build a warship for his nation's navy, showed interest "W'at iss matturr, Ranekeen?" the sympathetic Oriental queried.

"I know men," said Rankin, "and if I didn't know that Mr. Jones is really a millionaire—made it out of chewing gum, his family, I'm told—I should say he was hard up."

The Japanese boy stared politely; he did not understand at all.

"Of course he's not hard up," Rankin continued. "No hard-up man could have sworn at me as he did just now. It can't be money, so it must be women."

"Limmin," said the Japanese, who had not mastered w's.

"Lemons," Rankin granted. "You're almost right. I never saw a man more popular. He spends his money like he didn't care for it, and does it well because that is the fact. He doesn't care for it. I never saw a human being who cared less. Why he never counts the money on his dresser in the morning. Just throws it there when he gets into bed, and—"

The Japanese laughed merrily. "You gettin' litch!"

"No; you little heathen; I only know he does it, that is all. I stack it up for him. Sometimes he throws it all about—that and his clothes and furniture. He's often merry that way. He threw me about one night. A fine strong youth! I thought it better not to say much till he went to sleep, and then, as I crawled out from under the bed, I had a chance to see his arm. Quite muscular it is—just as it felt when he was joking with me."

The next day, by chance, while visiting the kitchen, Rankin had a sudden

inspiration. "I wonder if he is in love?" he pondered. "That Mr. Henriot that I attended just before he married that grass widow was an absent-minded—oh, quite absent-minded, quite! Now, which one—"

Rankin suddenly came to a stand in horror. Even to the small and very yellow cook it was plain that tragic thoughts had flashed into his mind. "I wonder," he soliloquized if it could possibly be that terrible Gerard old woman. She's had her eye on him ever since the first night that she got a glimpse of him."

As he spoke his master, as requested, was talking with the first vice-president of the bank. The man seemed rather serious-minded, although on that previous occasion when he had marked the beginning of their acquaintance, when Broadway had gone to open his account with just two hundred thousand dollars, he had been geniality itself.

"I merely wished to have a little talk with you—Mr. Jones," said he. "You know your balance is—er—running rather low."

"Is what?" said Broadway, in amazement.

"Is running rather low."

"You don't mean that I've—"

"You've drawn rather heavily against it."

"But it was strong enough to stand a terrible strain."

"Not quite strong enough to stand without a protest the strain to which you have subjected it. Mr. Jones. It's not exhausted, but it's—"

"Getting tired?" Broadway himself supplied the words.

"About that. You have not been having it written up, you know; I thought perhaps you didn't realize the figures. I've had them all made out for you."

Broadway took one swift look at them, then sank back in his chair and took a longer look at them. "Well, I'll be—!" he ventured.

"I was afraid you'd feel that way. I only thought you ought to have a hint of just how things are running. Young men lose track of things sometimes. I've known it to occur before."

Jackson scarcely saw Broadway when he went out of the gray building, and it was the first time he had ever trodden Broadway without seeing and admiring it.

"Hello, Broadway!" cried a merry voice from just beyond the curb. It was a blonde voice, and issued from a natty little motor car with a sedan-chair top. Broadway had bought that motor car and given it to the blonde voice. "Let me put you down somewhere?"

"I'm not feeling very fit. You might take me to the morgue."

"Jump in; we'll make it the Knickerbocker."

But the Knickerbocker had no charms for Broadway at that moment. He made his stay as brief as possible in the bright restaurant.

"Dollie, darling," he said gloomily. "I don't need a restaurant, today; I need a hospital. How would you like me, Dollie, honestly, if I was broke?"

"You? Broke?" She laughed.

"No; seriously. How would you like me?"

"It's nonsense; but you know what Shanley does to broken dishes."

"The ash can. Eh?"

"It wouldn't be, for you, of course; but—what's the use of being Mr. Grump? Brace up! Come on up to Churchill's and we'll drinky-drink it out-of-you."

But Broadway would have none of such a plan as that. He went to his apartment, and, rummaging in every drawer and pocket, collected every bill which he could find. There were a hundred of them, ranging in all sorts of figures and for all sorts of articles, from diamonds to gasoline, from charity to fare. The arrival of the sympathetic Rankin, who believed his master had a headache, with a note from Mrs. Gerard, interrupted the bookkeeping which, for the first time in his life, Broadway had begun. It had not been encouraging, as far as he had gone.

He read the note and found it to be an invitation. Deciding to accept it, he decided, also, that it must be the last one of the sort he must accept. It had become intensely plain to him that now had come the time when he must cease his gaudies and find more money.

He was a gloomy figure at the feast that night, and his gloom grew with every aged smile which Mrs. Gerard cast in his direction. It was plain enough to him, to everyone, that this exceedingly rich lady, of uncertain age, regarded him with very friendly eyes. She even sometimes called him "Jackson."

After the dinner he took Robert Wallace downtown with him in his sixty horsepower touring car.

"Mrs. Gerard," he ventured, "seems a well-preserved old—er—I mean that she seems well preserved."

"Well, she's a friend of mine," Broadway defended rather hotly. An idea, so terrible that it was fascinating, had occurred to him.

"She might have gone to school with your grandmother. It makes me sick to see her ogle you. I think she wants to marry you."

Broadway burst into a laugh which he was well aware was quite too loud, too cackly and too hollow; he feared acutely that his friend would recognize its falseness.

"To marry me! Ho, ho!" Instantly his manner changed. "But I don't like the way you speak about her, Bob. Remember—we have just enjoyed her hospitality!"

"Enjoyed it! Speak for yourself, old

man! If I had known where you were going, do you suppose I would have gone with you? I can meet grandmother's schoolmates at the Old Ladies' home. I don't have to go to dinner with them."

"Now, Bob!"

Wallace burst into a laugh. "I believe it is pure charity," he guessed. "You are trying to make others happy. You smile on her as you would throw a dollar into a Salvation Army cash pot around Christmas time."

"Bob, I'm thinking about getting married."

His friend sat straight and looked at him in dumb amazement for a second. "Married? And is grandma in some way related to the bride who may be?"

"Bob, I need—"

He stopped. Almost he had told his friend he needed money; but he had not the courage. To confess poverty on Broadway is like confessing murder in a church.

"Need what?"

"A rest. I'm going to—er—take some sort of a vacation. Don't know what. Maybe back to the old home. Anyway, you won't see me around for quite a little while."

"Never mind, old chap! I'll tell them all that you have had to go away on business. Go somewhere and get straightened out. You need it. There's something wrong with you, or you would never have gone to that dinner where that ancient marines could ogle you the way she did."

"Well, you won't see me for a week or two."

"Drop me a line if you want anything."

Jackson Jones went away early on the following morning. As ignorant of business and of business methods as a baby, yet he tried to scheme some way by means of which he might recoup his staggering finances. Wild ideas, all unpractical, whirled through his brain.

He must have money, that was certain. He had not the least idea of just how he had accomplished it, but he had spent his patrimony—spent it all and more than all of it. If he had paid up the debts he owed—which all the world seemed glad to have him owe—that was the hard part of it; everyone seemed anxious to have him go in debt to them—he would have far less than nothing left.

For days he stewed above his figures in a room of which he kept close guard upon the key. He told Rankin, who was curious, that he planned to write a book.

"Indeed, sir? Fiction, sir?"

"Fiction? Gad, no! Fact."

"A book of travel, sir? I've traveled quite a bit. Perhaps—"

"No. Or yes. Of travel up and down Broadway."

"Splendid, sir, if I may be excused for taking such a liberty. I'm sure no gentleman in all New York is more familiar with the subject, sir. I shall be glad to read it, sir. I'm sure it will be quite a revelation!"

"Rankin," said Broadway earnestly, "if I wrote what I really know about Broadway it would be a revelation."

He grew very serious, for him. "It

would put some men on pedestals, and they would not be those who now stand highest. It would put some men behind the bars, and among them are some men who now are free to come and go, with welcomes when they come and invitations when they leave, in every place where people gather in this town."

He burst into a sudden laugh. "Great stuff, eh, Rankin? When you say 'Broadway' you stir me up. I love it, I hate it; it always fascinates me. There's no street like it in the world."

"If your book is like that, sir, it will be a big success," commented Rankin, spellbound. "It's going to be a fine book, Mr. Jones."

"It won't interest Broadway. There's only one kind of book that Broadway cares about."

"And what is that, sir?"

"Check books, Rankin. Now I'm going into—into—" He did not know just what to call the room which he kept locked.

"Your study, sir?"

"Thanks, Rankin. Yes; I'm going to my study. Don't let me be disturbed."

"I'll not, sir."

When he left that "study" he avoided Rankin. His fingers were tingled from calculations, his hair was quite disheveled, his eyes were wide and rolling. He could see no hope ahead.

He wrote a letter to his uncle explaining that investments had gone wrong and that he needed a small loan of fifty thousand dollars for three months. He was sure that if he got this he would be enabled to find some way out. By return of mail he had an answer in an envelope which strangely bulged. He opened it with trembling fingers and a package of Jones' Pepsin Gum fell out.

"Chew this and forget it," said the cheerful note which Uncle Abner had wrapped round it. It said further: "I'm going to Europe for five years. Don't bother me again. You've made your bed, now lie on it."

That was the last straw. Without the least idea of what he wished to do, the frantic Broadway started out to find some work by which, at least, he could earn honestly his board and keep.

Wall street offered nothing, for when he went down to see his friends there his courage failed entirely and instead of asking them to find a place for him he bought them, one by one, expensive luncheons.

He went to neighboring cities, hoping there to find some means of getting food to eat without getting it on credit, and there he had some strange experiences which lasted several days. But, while he just escaped the uniform of the Salvation Army, he did not find work and wandered back to Broadway, the apartment and more debt.

He had no profession, knew no trade. Half crazed with the obsession that he must no longer run in debt, he decided to sell out the flat, discharge the servants and do menial labor. Running through the list of his abilities he decided, with frank self-contempt, that about the best which he could do was help in a hotel as bellboy. He knew too little about mathematics to keep books; he never would succeed as desk-clerk. But he could not bring himself to try to get a job of that sort—it would too often bring him into contact with the folk he knew.

One afternoon, while wandering in an aimless funk upon a side street, he saw a card in front of an apartment house announcing that an elevator boy was wanted. He rushed in with alacrity and determination—and at the very threshold met Mrs. Gerard, who had been calling on a friend there. Instead of asking for the job he took a drive with her.

It was while this drive progressed that the sordid, vicious tempter definitely seized him in his toils. The ancient but vivacious dame was very affable—most agreeable indeed. She was not motherly; she was flirtatious. And she accompanied her coquetry by a shrewd exposition of the magnitude of her unquestionably enormous wealth. It staggered him.

If he had not at the moment had a simple little Josie Richards' letter in his pocket he might have been swept under. A thousand times he had discovered the necessity of assuring himself, as he traveled up and down Broadway, that he did not care for Josie Richards. She was not the sort of girl who captivated one who knew life as he knew it; she was dear, but she was simple, unsophisticated and what he most admired was wide sophistication; he thought as little of her as he could, but now she popped into his mind and made him edge away from the aged, wealthy widow.

When he went back to the flat he found awaiting him new sheafs of bills, none pressing him—mere statements. The rumor had not started that he was not good pay. Broadway still delighted in him, still endeavored to induce him to accept its credit. This gave him new distress; he knew himself—he knew he would go out that night and run more debts.

Suddenly he knew what to do. It came to him without an effort of the brain. It was a tragic inspiration.

Without a word to Rankin, stealthily and secretly, he went forth into the afternoon in his smart runabout, still driven by the taxi-cabman, who now regarded him with something akin to worship, and sought a gunshop and a chemist's.

In the former he made purchase of a large, grim, blue-steeled automatic pistol of the largest caliber they had in stock, and secured one box of cartridges. It seemed a waste of money, which by rights was definitely the property of creditors, to buy so many cartridges, for he should need but one! However, he feared that to ask for one would pin attention to him and frustrate what he had in mind, so he put the heavy box into his pocket. It made it sag outrageously, which very much annoyed him. No man on Broadway was more careful of his clothes. But what, after all, did a sagged pocket matter now?

At the chemist's he secured an ounce of bichloride of mercury, which had been fashionable of late among smart suicides. He had no difficulty in obtaining it. This eased him and a further satisfaction grew out of the fact that though it held potentialities as deadly as the automatic gun and cartridges could hold it made a little package, not heavy in the least, and so did not sag the other pocket, where he placed it very carefully.

As he whirled uptown in the runabout he frequently felt the deadly things.

He liked the feel of neither of them. The revolver was so hard and business-like, the pill bottle was so slippery, so cold and heartless! What an end was this for Broadway Jones!

Again seated in the little study, he solemnly reviewed his life. He saw no points at which he had made very great mistakes, save the important one

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of thinking that a quarter of a million is a lot of money in New York.

"I've been nothing but a piker," he reflected, "and I've acted like the trade-marked article. I ought to get it in the neck and I am going to get it in the neck."

This unpleasantly reminded him and he caressed the neck wherein he was to get it. Never, in the past, when he had used that slang expression had it really suggested his own neck to him or any other actual neck. Now it made his flesh creep and his blood run cold behind his collar.

"Well, here goes!" he whispered, and took out a pill, afterwards arranging the revolver, which was already loaded.

He held the pill between the fingers of a tremulous left hand; gripped in his faltering right he held the weapon. "Here goes!" he said again—and Rankin rapped upon the door.

Hastily he hid the dreadful evidences of his dire intention. "Come in!" he feebly called.

Rankin brought him a pink envelope upon a little silver tray. Rankin was most careful to bring everything upon a tray. Broadway steadfastly maintained that if a drowning man asked Rankin to bring help he would first go to get a tray to take it to him on.

The pink envelope was marked with an elaborate monogram, of which the dominant letter was a "G." It was from her whom he had left so short a time before. Mrs. Gerard, by means of it, implored him to become a member of a theater and supper party for that evening. The note almost was affectionate.

The theater and supper parties were to both occur in Broadway! Ah, Broadway! It would be hard to leave it by the chilly by-path, death, which leads out of the light into the shadows!

It occurred to Broadway Jones that he might decently accept this invitation, even if the crowd which she would have would probably be not quite to his liking. Ah, there were crowds upon the thoroughfare he loved which were so fully to his liking!

And then another plan flashed into his mind. Why not give a farewell supper? No one but himself would know it was a farewell supper—all the rest would think it just the best affair of many fine affairs which Broadway Jones had given. The restaurant which gave it would be paid undoubtedly out of the residue of his estate, and if there wasn't any residue the restaurant could well afford to lose it. He had many thousands of his money.

He would make this dinner—no; it would be better to make it a supper—the finest little supper which had yet electrified Broadway. It should sparkle, it should fizz, it should resound with joyful chords and merry laughter; in short that supper should achieve the limit and surpass it. Then would he be more content to go.

He locked the poison and the firearm carefully in a desk drawer. He called Rankin, and, to that staid servant's great delight, made out the list of invitations to the wildest supper he had ever planned; he telephoned to his good friend, the restaurateur. Returning to the study he took the poison and the pistol from the drawer and put them in another. The second drawer had two locks, while the first drawer had but one. He refused again to think about them until after he had given the extraordinary supper.

(To be Continued)

CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

The United States Civil Service Commission has announced open competitive examinations to be held as indicated below. The places of examination in Nebraska are Alliance, Grand Island, Lincoln, Nebraska City, Norfolk, North Platte and Omaha. Application blanks may be obtained of the local secretary of the U. S. Civil Service Board at the post office in either of the cities named. These blanks should be applied for at an early date as possible by persons wishing to take either of the examinations, as they must be filled out some time in advance of the dates set for the examinations.

February 4. Veterinarian (male), salary \$1200 to \$1400.

February 18. Assistant in paper-plant investigations (male), salary \$1380. Nautical expert (male), salary \$1000 to \$1800. Assistant in road economics (male), salary \$1500.

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The indefinite postponement of examination for immigrant inspector is announced. It was to have been held on February 18.

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