

9.

LOCKED OUT

A COMIC SCENE

ILLUSTRATIVE OF WHAT MAY OCCUR AFTER DARK
IN A GREAT METROPOLIS.

BY

HOWARD PAUL,

AUTHOR OF

"Opposite Neighbours;" "The Mob Cap;" "Thrice Married;"
"A Lucky Hit;" and the greatly successful Entertainment,
"Patch Work;" etc. etc.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND,
LONDON.

909667

First performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, March 22, 1855.

CHARACTERS.

OSCAR MAYNARD - - - - - MR. HOWARD PAUL.
LOTTIE LEE - - - - - MRS. HOWARD PAUL.

UNIMPORTANT PERSONAGES.

KITTY BUDGEONS (*the landlady of 24, King Street, who, though merely visible through a window, is seen quite enough of, as the audience will amply testify.*) -

MRS. GRIFFITH.

MR. AND MRS. BROWN,

MR. AND MRS. GREEN,

MR. SMITH,

MR. JONES,

MRS. ROBINSON,

} (*Disgusted Neighbours.*)

Voices and no end of Sounds, from a fearful shriek to a light whisper, all of which have been pressed into this production, to catch, if possible, the public ear.

SCENE.—London.

TIME.—Present.

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LOCKED OUT.

SCENE.—*The scene represents a moonlight street with houses on R. and L. H. sides, with practicable upstairs windows. A house on R. side, (1st groove) bears the number 24, and a sign—“BABY LINEN WAREHOUSE;” and one on the left the number 4. Before the one on the R. is a doorstep. A similar doorstep is at the one L. H. A gas lamp near door of R. H. house. The stage is half dark.*

Enter LOTTIE, at back, R. H., she seems agitated and looks back hurriedly.

LOTTIE. Thank the fates, I am home at last, or, almost as good, opposite my own door. I do verily believe there has been a man pursuing me; at least, if he was not, he looked very like it, for he has been treading in my footsteps the last half hour. The wretch! All I saw of him was a white neck-tie, and an umbrella. He is some jackanapes of a fellow, who, I dare say, fancies himself irresistible, and supposes other people will join him in the conviction. It is a pity that this class of the community can't be exterminated by Act of Parliament, or transported to some desolate island, where they could indulge their peculiar views without annoying unprotected females. Bleas me, here I stand, jabbering to myself, in the cold, and it's after twelve o'clock. How imprudent of me, to be sure, to stay at the theatre until it was out. I ought to have been content with the first six pieces, and got home in good season. But then the last piece was so beautiful. Only to think of thirty fairies, with such loves of white wings, dancing around a lady, all silver and gold, and then suddenly disappearing through a great black rock, which I, poor innocent, thought was solid. (*knocks at door L. H.*) They do such wonderful things at the theatres now-a-days, it quite seems like conjuring. (*knocks again.*) No answer! I hope to goodness Betsy will hear me! There is no one at home but her. (*knocks again.*) She sleeps as if she had taken thirty drops of laudanum before retiring. (*knocks.*) How very

foolish of me to have waited to see the black rock and the fairies. (*knocks.*) I can't lay on the door-step, like a mat, all night. (*knocks.*) I wonder, now, if she hears me, and is too lazy to get up. She threatened, yesterday, to serve me out, because I scolded her for putting lard in the bread and butter pudding, and perhaps she is taking this opportunity of carrying her threat into execution. If it is so, I'll bread and butter pudding her in a manner she won't admire.

OSCAR. (*without R. H., sings.*)

There's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream,
With the single exception of—
Et cetera, et cetera.

LOTTIE. (*listening.*) Who can that be? It's a man's stupid voice. It may be a robber! good gracious! and here I am, at midnight, alone, unprotected, almost heart-broken, and locked out. (*knocks at the door rapidly.*) Betsy! Betsy! I am pursued, chased, hunted, followed, run after, almost knocked down, and robbed! (*knocks loudly, and sinks exhausted at the door-step.*)

Enter OSCAR at back R. H., his hat on one side of his head, a flower in the button-hole of his coat, and swinging his cane about in a dramatic style, singing.

OSCAR. There's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream.

Of course there is not. I wonder if love ever has old dreams as well as young ones. I am inclined to the opinion that the brandy I took at the public-house in the next street has got into my head, for I notice I'm rarely musical but I'm indebted to ardent spirits for the melody. (*looking around.*) Ah! Home, as I'm a creature of impulse! Good! it's time. It must be after twelve, and I remember, at an early period of my life, being told that an hour's sleep before midnight is as good as three after. I'll trust to luck, and take the three after, seeing I can't have the one before. (*goes to the door on R. H., and feels in his pocket.*) Eh?—the devil!—where is my latch key? (*looks in his hat.*) How foolish! I don't keep anything in my hat but my head, and what I keep in my head is scarcely worth having. (*strides about, examining his pockets, and sees LOTTIE.*) Halloa! What's that? I beg your pardon, have you got my latch key?

LOTTIE. (*aside.*) It's the white neck-tie, and the umbrella who was behind me.

OSCAR. (*examining closer.*) Do my eyes deceive me, as they say in the play? No, it is a woman. I do beg your pardon, of course you havn't got my latch key? How could you have it,

unless I had dropped it and you had been behind me and picked it up?

LOTTIE. (*with agitation.*) But, but, sir, indeed I didn't pick it up—I—I—I'm only a woman.

OSCAR. Only a woman! you couldn't be anything better if you were to try. Are you sure you are not a man in disguise?

LOTTIE. (*aside.*) I'm sure he's one of the swell mob, by his manners and his neck tie. (*aloud.*) I beg your pardon, sir, but are you a robber?

OSCAR. A robber! Ha! ha! I'm the mildest, most harmless creature in the world! compared with a dove would be desperate! a lamb ferocious! fancy a robber with a white neck-tie.

LOTTIE. (*with alarm.*) But perhaps you are a gentlemanly robber.

OSCAR. I see what you mean; a knave with nice manners, a thief of the perfumed Claude Duval school; a sweet scented rascal who would take snuff with one hand, and pick your pocket with the other; no, I must disappoint you—I'm nothing of the sort.

LOTTIE. (*aside.*) I'm confident he is here to annoy me. (*aloud.*) I'm not disappointed, but you don't know where you are.

OSCAR. (*aside.*) She sees I've been drinking. (*aloud.*) Don't know where I am—yes, I do—in King-street.

LOTTIE. You must have lost your way.

OSCAR. (*aside.*) Perhaps she has been drinking as well as myself. How curious now if we had both been drinking.

LOTTIE. Yes, sir; you are making a great mistake.

OSCAR. In what way?

LOTTIE. You have no business here.

OSCAR. (*aside.*) Come, that's cool, ha, ha!

LOTTIE. For I live in this street.

OSCAR. Suppose you do, that don't prevent other people from living here. It is not customary generally to occupy the whole of a street. I also live in this street.

LOTTIE. Are you sure?

OSCAR. In this world it's not well to be sure of anything, but if you live in this street, why don't you go home, and not stay here in the cold?

LOTTIE. I am at home.

OSCAR. I see, you live *in* the street. I take you at your word.

LOTTIE. I mean this is where I live, in this house, number four, but unfortunately, I'm locked out.

OSCAR. Have you knocked?

LOTTIE. Until my wrist aches.

OSCAR. And I live here, at twenty-four, almost opposite.

LOTTIE. (*aside.*) This may be a mere ruse. (*aloud.*) If you live then as you say at twenty-four, why don't you go in doors, and not remain in the street.

OSCAR. Like you, I'm almost locked out; at least I've lost my latch key, which is something towards it.

LOTTIE. (*sneezing.*) I shall get my death of cold.

OSCAR. I'm not to be sneezed at in that way, I can tell you. Perhaps you don't believe that this is my domicile. I'll prove it thus—(*knocks.*)—thus—(*knocks.*)—thus—(*knocks.*)—I hope old Kitty will hear me, but she is as deaf as a post, so my chances are not favourable. Besides being rheumatic, she has a mortal aversion to getting up in the night—(*knocks.*)—unless Morpheus squeezes her tighter in his arms than I should like to, she ought to hear that. (*to LOTTIE.*) I'm afraid we are both doomed to share the street together. Never mind, it's wide enough for two.

LOTTIE. It's all very fine for you to be so easily reconciled, but I consider it a dreadful affair.

OSCAR. (*aside.*) Poor thing. It's bad enough for a man to be locked out, but for one of the gentler sex, it is too bad. (*aloud.*) If I were to knock at your door and you at mine—I wonder if that would answer any better.

LOTTIE. I don't see the philosophy of your proposition.

OSCAR. I have still a better plan, we will both knock together. Perhaps the mutual noise will produce its effect. Now, then. (*they knock at their respective doors at the same time.*

DUET.—OSCAR AND LOTTIE.*

AIR,—*From "Leonie."*

OSCAR. Why don't she come? I wonder now,
I'm out, which she should know,
I must kick up a dreadful row,
If she is thus so slow.
I will knock the door quite down,
And wake up half the town,
Now what can make her thus so slow,
But from the door I must not go.

(last two lines repeated.)

LOTTIE. To be locked out all night I vow,
And to walk here to and fro,
And watch the moon, or count the stars,
Is shameful—that I know!
But very much I fear,
My knocks she will not hear,

* This Duet can be omitted without disturbing the current of the story

How cruel 'tis to serve me so,
But from the door I must not go.

(last two lines repeated.)

OSCAR. Must I stay in the street all night?

(knocks to music.)

LOTTIE. Must I remain till broad daylight?

(knocks to music.)

No, I'll knock until she hears,
These sounds must reach her ears.

Now what can make her thus so slow?
But from the door I must not go.

(last two lines repeated.)

ENSEMBLE.

BOTH. But from the door I must not go,
But from the door I must not go.

O what can make her thus so slow?
But from the door I must not go.

(at the end of the duet, they both knock loudly.)

OSCAR. It's bad enough to be locked in, but being locked out is even worse. I give it up as a bad job. If they were not dead and buried they would have heard that.

LOTTIE. I fancy the servant hears, but, owing me a grudge, will not get up.

OSCAR. *(aside.)* I wouldn't be her in the morning for something.

LOTTIE. *(half apart.)* How very silly of me to stay out so late—I'm shivering with cold.

OSCAR. As you say, it is late. But never mind, the moon, silvery pet, shines beautifully over head, and I never saw so many stars out at once—did you?

LOTTIE. I don't feel like star-gazing, and as for the moon, if there were a dozen of them shining all at once I wouldn't look at them.

OSCAR. *(aside.)* Poor creature—she's cold, and that makes her cross. *(aloud.)* Now, if I ask you something, don't think it rude. Where have you been?

LOTTIE. Not that it concerns you at all—but I was at the theatre.

OSCAR. I was there also. You didn't happen to see me, did you—that's rather remarkable, is it not?

LOTTIE. There were a great many others there besides us, so I confess I don't recognise anything very remarkable.

OSCAR. As we can't get in let us talk and be sociable. I'll ask you questions and you answer them, or you ask me questions and I'll answer them, or we'll both ask each other ques-

tions and both answer them, whichever way you like. Now, then I'll commence. Are you fond of a play?

LOTTIE. Now and then.

OSCAR. I'm fond of a play, too, now and then. Now that is remarkable. You and I are excessively similar.

LOTTIE. In what respect?

OSCAR. In respect to having been to the play and liking it now and then.

LOTTIE. There, I fancy, the resemblance stops.

OSCAR. I hope it does not. It is a great mistake for anything to stop. The world was made to go on, or go round, which is much the same—progress, advancement is the order of the day—of the night too, I may add. Rest assured, miss, nothing should stop.

LOTTIE. Except your terrible tongue. The sooner that stops the better.

OSCAR. (*aside.*) It's rather odd, but I've been told that before.

LOTTIE. (*coughing.*) I shall be laid up—I know I shall.

OSCAR. You'll get your death of cold if you stand still. Suppose you accept my arm and we'll take a stroll to Liverpool and back; by that time it will be daybreak.

LOTTIE. (*ironically.*) You are very kind, but I prefer to be alone. Good thought! I have a friend in the next street. It's rather an awkward hour of the night—

OSCAR. Of the morning. I beg your pardon.

LOTTIE. Well, of the morning, then, to claim a friend's hospitality, but I see nothing else left for me to do.

OSCAR. And I'll remain here and watch the moon. They say there is a man in it. I wish it was a female instead. (*bowing.*) Good morning, miss, I hope I may never have the pleasure of seeing you again—

LOTTIE. Sir!

OSCAR. In a similar situation—locked out!

LOTTIE. Good morning, sir. I trust you never may. I hope I shall be able to find a lodging at my friends'—I am almost perished with the cold. (*she says this as she goes off at back, L. H.*

OSCAR. It's not often I am positive, very positive at least, but I fancy I have heard that voice before, but where is the difficult point to determine. I mustn't get sentimental here in the cold. (*relapsing into a thoughtful attitude.*) I should like to have seen her face, though. One just defines sufficient by this light to see nothing at all clearly. (*changing his manner.*) Let me see, how shall I pass away the time? I wish I could make old Kitty hear me. (*knocks loudly.*) I'm all in a shiver. (*knocks again.*) What business has a woman to be deaf who takes

lodgers? I'll never lodge with a baby linen merchant again—I'll sing out "milk," perhaps that will stir her. (*cries "milk" in imitation.*) Mie-iaw! I wish I had a hand organ with "Billy Barlow" on it, I'd give her a dose of grinding she'd remember some time. (*imitates the crowing of a cock.*) She rises early, perhaps that will rouse her—no! (*knocks.*) Confound the old insect—it's no go! she must have fallen a prey to apoplexy or some dreadful malady. What shall I do to pass away the time? (*takes book from his pocket.*) I wonder if I can read! no, the moon is not bright enough to read this fine type. Oh, I know what I'll do—I'll smoke. (*replaces book, and takes out cigar case from his pocket.*) Just one left—Now where shall I get fire. (*looking at the gaslight.*) I wish they would bring lamp-posts nearer to the earth. (*twists a play-bill—tries to light it at lamp—fails.*) I can't do it, and without fire what use is all the cigars this side of Havanah? (*looking off, R. H.*) There goes a man smoking, I'll just borrow a little of his fire. I say, hi!

Exit at back, R. H., calling.

(KITTY opens the upstairs window of house R. H., and obtrudes her head on which is a large comic nightcap.)

KITTY. (*gruffly.*) Who's that knocking at the door? (*looking down.*) I don't see any one. It can't be Oscar, for he's got a latch key. I was so long finding my slippers, they must have gone away. I suppose it was some drunken wag playing tricks with the knocker. What a fool I was to get up. This night air will make my rheumatiz worse. If I catch anybody botherin' with the street door I'll empty this jug of water over them. (*shuts down window fiercely.*)

Re-enter LOTTIE, L. H.

LOTTIE. (*hearing the window shut down.*) What was that? I thought I heard a noise at the window. (*looking up at the window of house, L. H.*) No, all is dark and silent. How unfortunate, Mary Connor and her mamma gave up their apartments yesterday, and have gone to live at Putney. (*looking round.*) I wonder if that young man succeeded in making himself heard. I suppose so, he is not here. I wish I had the same good luck. I don't know why, but I fancy I recognise his voice, or one like it, but it's once I knew a long while ago. I'll knock one more. (*she knocks.*) It's no use, I suppose I may as well resign myself to fate and the door step. (*sits on the door step, and seems to grow drowsy.*) I don't know whether it's the walk, or the night air, or the hours, or the play, or what, but I feel so sleepy, my eyes seem to close in spite of all I can do. (*yawning and speaking slowly.*) I declare, I won't—I won't go

to sleep. (*nodding.*) And when—I say—I won't do a thing—I—(*falls off to sleep.*)

Enter OSCAR R. H. smoking.

OSCAR. What distinguished people one meets at night. The man who gave me a light was Louis Napoleon, at least if it wasn't he, it was somebody like the prints of him, which is all the same. (*walking about, stamping his feet.*) I wonder if my little neighbour succeeded in finding a lodging at her friends'. I suppose so. I wish I had a friend, to whom I could apply, How devilish cold it is to be sure, and I'm getting sleepy as well.

SONG.—OSCAR.

AIR, "On yonder rock reclining."

How I should like a snooze now,
I'd give the world for forty winks,
On this door step I'd repose,
But 'tis too cold methinks.
No warm snug cloak enfolds me,
The cheerless sky bend's o'er my head,
And the gas-lamp seems to say,
"Why don't you go to bed?"
(*shivering.*) Tremble!
Perhaps my brain is heated,
I fancy I hear repeated,
"Go to bed—Go to bed!" (yawning.)
"Go to bed!"

(during the last part of the song which he sings with a drowsy air, he sits on doorstep, and goes to sleep.)

(cries without of "Fire! Fire!" at back, R. H.)

LOTTIE. { (simultaneously.) Who's there? (they run up
OSCAR. { against each other.)

LOTTIE. { (yet half asleep.) Who is that?
OSCAR. {

OSCAR. Hallo! I believe I was asleep.

LOTTIE. How curious, so was I, and I was having such a pleasant dream about old times and my native home.

(VOICES without cry "Fire!" she screams and shows agitation.)

OSCAR. You had better stay near me, there may be danger. (fire at back, R. H.) I believe the whole neighbourhood is in flames. (she faints, he supports her.) Poor creature, the agitation has caused her to faint. What shall I do to revive her, I won-

der? (*fanning her with his hat.*) Fresh air and plenty of it is good in these cases, they say.

LOTTIE. (*reviving.*) Where am I?

OSCAR. In the old location, and still locked out.

LOTTIE. I do believe I fainted.

OSCAR. You did indeed.

LOTTIE. This being in the open air all night is dreadful, is it not?

OSCAR. It can't be helped now. Don't think me rude, don't think I presume on the fact of your being locked out, but to pass away the time suppose we amuse each other by relating each other's history. What do you say?

LOTTIE. My history is not a very entertaining one.

OSCAR. When it is to pass away such dull hours as these, anybody's history would afford some entertainment. Now, you said you were dreaming of your native home—where was that, pray?

LOTTIE. It seems very odd to exchange confidences with a stranger here in the street. Still I don't mind telling you—Windermere.

OSCAR. Is it possible? Why Windermere is my native place.

LOTTIE. Indeed! Perhaps you have heard of the Lee family.

OSCAR. The Lees? I should say I had, indeed. But I haven't seen any of them for years—not since I was quite a lad in fact. Little Lottie Lee—as we used to call her, was one of my village schoolmates.

LOTTIE. (*with surprise.*) And strange to say the little Lottie Lee you speak of—(*with a low curtsey.*) is your very humble servant.

OSCAR. Can it be possible? Lottie Lee! my old schoolmate! hurrah! hurrah! (*embracing her.*) Only to think of meeting you.

LOTTIE. (*repelling him with slight hauteur.*) I confess I have not the pleasure of remembering *you*.

OSCAR. Don't you remember Oscar Maynard?

LOTTIE. (*with a confused surprise.*) Oscar Maynard! why, so it is! Do you know I thought I had heard your voice before. It set me to thinking three or four times (*he embraces her.*)

OSCAR. Why, Lottie, how changed you are. You used to be a little fat dumpling of a thing—now you are tall and stately, and—Oh! I must have another embrace.

LOTTIE. And how *you* have altered. It has been so many years since I saw you. Then you were the picture of a nice country lad—

OSCAR. I know—a rosy young rascal with a colour like a peach.

LOTTIE. But now you look like a fast young man about town, and a slightly dissipated one, I fear.

OSCAR. Oh dear, no! I'm always in bed by ten o'clock, except to-night; but I'm locked out, you know. Well I can't help thinking that this is the oddest little adventure I ever hope to experience. Only think of our living in the same street, both being locked out, and discovering each other at this unusual hour of the morning.

LOTTIE. It is like an incident out of a novel.

OSCAR. (*looking up.*) Hallo! day is breaking at last, and I think I felt a big drop of rain. Now I'll lay you a wager that my door is open first.

LOTTIE. What shall the wager be?

OSCAR. A marriage licence fresh from Doctors' Commons against your heart and hand.

LOTTIE. (*after a moment's reflection.*) Done!

OSCAR. Done! (*VOICES without at back, sing "We won't go home till morning."*) It seems to me there are people in the world who so far forget themselves as never to go to bed.

LOTTIE. We had better not be seen.

(*they go to their respective doors and knock, the stage is seen to grow gradually light.*

OSCAR. I think I hear old Kitty moving.

LOTTIE. (*listening.*) Someone is stirring inside.

KITTY. (*opens the window, R. H.*) The noise still continues, it must be Oscar. Who's there?

OSCAR. So you have heard me at last. Pray don't be in a hurry, I've only been knocking about five hours.

KITTY. I thought it must be you. There is a latch key—let yourself in. (*throws it down and exits.*

OSCAR. Thank you.

(*Lottie's door is seen to open at the same moment.*

LOTTIE. My door is open, you have lost!

OSCAR. Won, you mean. Here's the key, so my door is as good as open.

(*several disgusted NEIGHBOURS, pop their heads from windows, all with night-caps on. Seeing OSCAR, who is in c. of the stage, one throws an old boot at him, another a candle-stick, another a slipper, &c. One of the NEIGHBOURS (a female) drops her night-cap from head, which has a wig in it, she shrieks and retires. KITTY returns to her window and shakes a warming-pan angrily at OSCAR, who acknowledges the presence of the NEIGHBOURS by a variety of mock bows.*

DISGUSTED NEIGHBOUR, No. 1. Who the devil has been making all that noise?

DISGUSTED NEIGHBOUR, No. 2. Where is the wretch. I've not had a wink of sleep all night.

DISGUSTED NEIGHBOUR, No. 3. Police! Police!

DISGUSTED NEIGHBOUR, No. 4. (*a female.*) Oh my beauty, I should like to be behind you.

DISGUSTED NEIGHBOUR, No. 1. (*calling across to No. 3.*) I say, Brown, aren't you ashamed to let your wife come to the window in that state?

(*another shower of boots and slippers, cries of police and shrieks, and they all retire from the windows.* OSCAR throws them back, and LOTTIE, to keep clear of the mêlée takes shelter at L. H. side in her doorway.)

OSCAR. (*throwing a remaining boot at the window.*) Accept my compliments and this to boot. Poor Lottie is frightened out of her wits I suppose. Where is she I wonder. (*seeing her.*

LOTTIE. (*emerging from doorway.*) Well, these are nice goings on I must say.

OSCAR. La! bless you, London life is full of vagaries. (*rain heard.*) By jove it's raining.

LOTTIE. Dear me, It'll ruin my bonnet.

OSCAR. (*raising umbrella.*) Never; I'll sacrifice my gingham first; do you know I shouldn't mind being locked out every night of the week if I could only meet with a similar adventure. What, though I did loose my latch key I have found what is still better, an old school mate, and I think everybody will admit—a deuced nice girl. (*advancing.*) Ladies and gentlemen—

LOTTIE. If you please I should like to speak the last word.

OSCAR. The last word—how like a woman. Certainly! (*leading her forward and presenting her with the flower in his coat.*) Do me the favour.

LOTTIE. Thank you. (*to AUDIENCE.*)

The author of this squib, (*a youngish stager,*)
This morning laid with me a curious wager,
A box of gloves, against some little token,
You'd hiss to-night what's set down to be spoken.

I have my doubts—so much the taste demands,
But then my gloves depend upon your hands.

And in these days of stupid prose and rhymes,
It's well to leave the beaten track, sometimes,
So if I win the gloves, I'll have no doubt,

That from your hearts I'm by no means "Locked Out."

(*He escorts her to the door, L. H., under the umbrella, kisses her hand, and runs into house, R. H.*

CURTAIN DESCENDS QUICKLY.

