

Race and Realism in Edward Harrigan's
Mulligan Guards Series

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York.

2009

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract
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In this dissertation I examine the written texts and performances of the original productions of Edward Harrigan's Mulligan Guard series as they intersected and embodied the presentation of race and Realism. My study considers the context of the period in which the plays premiered: 1879 – 1884, beginning with the first full-length piece from the series: *The Mulligan Guard Ball*. Using race performance theory and the theories and history of Realism, I show how Harrigan's work figured prominently at a key point in the history of American theatre, embodying a plethora of contradictions: racism and progressivism; Realism and melodrama.

The two key terms to my study are “race” and “realism.” Rather than imposing contemporary definitions onto these concepts, I examine the terms in their contemporaneous usages. I show how Edward Harrigan's work embodies the meeting point of Realism and the entertainments which held sway in America prior to the arrival of Realism. Harrigan, along with more “serious” dramatists, instilled an expectation for Realism on the stage, the ramifications of which are still felt in American theatre.

Harrigan's works enacted particular cross sections of New York life in very specific neighborhoods – replete with the various denizens of

these neighborhoods. Harrigan's Americans inhabit the poorer areas of working class New York and his portraits of these characters are extremely detailed in their wants, pursuits, peeves and drives. At the core of the Mulligan Guard series, and indeed most of Edward Harrigan's plays lies the depiction of the New York Irish community and, to a slightly lesser extent, the African American community. Surrounding these core groups stand a variety of ethnicities: German, Chinese, and Eastern European Jews.

Harrigan's approach to Realism is explored thoroughly through reportage of his productions, specifically that of the Mulligan Guard series, in light of Harrigan's own assertions as to his approach to his craft. I examine the use of Realism in regard to the depiction of race.

When considering the depiction of race, Harrigan's characters cannot literally be accepted as authentic because of the actors in the roles (White actors performing Black), but my study shows how authenticity of racial depiction was regarded in its own age.

Methodology

Because of the nature of this study, I combine research methods from a variety of scholars. I reconstruct the period in order to approach Harrigan's work historiographically. I examine not only the written text but the audience, demographics of New York City, other forms of entertainments at the time, critical writing, and illustrations.

Of chief importance to this study are the various collections and scrapbooks of Harrigan's work. The Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the New York Public Library has a vast collection of Harrigan's work, clippings, scripts, songs, and the like. Alicia Kae Koger's two-part exhaustive bibliography on Edward Harrigan is invaluable to this study.¹ In addition to the collection in New York, Harrigan materials exist at various public and private libraries, particularly the Library of Congress.

¹ Alicia Kae Koger, "An Edward Harrigan Biography: Part I. Playscripts," in *19th Century Theatre* 19, no. 1, (Summer, 1991): 29-44; Koger, "An Edward Harrigan Biography: Part II. Songs and Other Materials," in *19th Century Theatre* 19, no. 2, (Winter, 1991): 104-29.

To my husband
Michael Bush.

Acknowledgements

It's remarkable to look at the span of these past few years and mark the generosity of time, thoughts, suggestions, support, and encouragement from a great number of friends, colleagues, and mentors that have enabled me to pursue this study. I am deeply grateful to my cohorts at the John Jay College Interdisciplinary Studies Department, my family, my friends, my students, and a number of other people who have helped shaped my academic path.

I would like to thank my advisor, David Savran, for his direction in helping to shape this dissertation. His vast knowledge of theater and theory, and his insightful suggestions helped keep me on track toward developing my own theories.

I have been extremely fortunate to work with a remarkable theater department at the Graduate Center. In addition to working with David, I was fortunate to study with Judith Milhous, Pamela Sheingorn, Marvin Carlson, and Marvin McAllister, as well as the other two members of my dissertation committee Daniel Gerould and John Graziano.

Finally, I need to express my gratitude to my husband Michael Bush for his infinite patience as I pursued this degree.

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Introduction: Race and Realism in Edward Harrigan's Mulligan Guards series

On January 11, 1879 Edward Harrigan's *Mulligan Guards Ball*, which is essentially a series of comedic sketches, became the first of six full-length Mulligan Guard plays. The original "Mulligan Guards Ball" sketch was first performed in 1873 and ultimately served as the basis for the extended play in 1879. The Mulligan Guards plays were a series of six plays-with-music² which traced the family, friends and neighbors of Dan Mulligan, who was performed by the author. The characters of the Mulligan Guards series lived on for three more plays following the series: *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* (1881), *Cordelia's Aspirations* (1883), and *Dan's Tribulations* (1884). The music for all of these pieces was by David Braham and each play in the series co-starred Tony Hart in a variety of roles, most significantly Tommy Mulligan (Dan Mulligan's son) and Rebecca Allup (the African American neighbor to Dan Mulligan). The plays were remarkably successful and the name Mulligan was internationally well-known due in great part to the success of an early Braham/Harrigan song, "The Mulligan Guards Ball."

The Mulligan Guard plays were noted for their truthful portrayals of the diverse communities contained within them as well as for the attention to detail inherent in their productions. It was these portrayals that gave the series the reputation for Realism.³ The label of Realism was first pinned to the series by William Dean Howells, and later adopted by the author. What began as attention to detail in regard to his characterizations, stage settings, costumes and dialogue, developed into a reputation as a

² The plays are as follows: *Mulligan Guards Ball* (1879), *Mulligan Guards Chowder* (1879), *Mulligan Guards Christmas* (1879), *Mulligan Guards Surprise* (1880), *Mulligan Guard Picnic* (1880), and *Mulligan Guard Nominee* (1880).

³ I will be using the upper case "R" for the term Realism when it is used in reference to a theatrical style or movement.

forerunner in the field of American stage Realism. In my opinion, Harrigan's motivation in creating the series was not to attain the classification of Realism, but simply to develop entertainments that would turn a profit. His approach to his craft utilized attention to specifics as a matter of course, not as a matter of purposefully breaking new ground as a dramatist. As I discuss in greater depth in chapter two, Harrigan was acutely aware of the details of his productions from character construction to the acquisition of costumes and props; in fact this attention lay at the core of his dramaturgy. In 1889 Harrigan stated:

Though I use types and never individuals, I try to be as realistic as possible. Not only must the costuming and accessories be correct, but the speech or dialect, the personal "make-up," the vices and virtues, habits and customs must be equally accurate in their simplicity to the facts.⁴

This dissertation examines Harrigan's particular form of Realism and how his practice of Realism differed from his stated approach. I show that the labels of Realism imparted by Howells, Harrigan, and others do not mesh with Harrigan's practice. Rather, Harrigan's Realism developed through a contractual relationship of author's vision and audience's reception. The elements of Realism presented on stage were not imitative of real life, but rather an agreed upon version of the audience's experience of New York City, in particular the Ninth Ward. The locale, characters, dialogue, and stage details were an idealized reality that had components of imitation, but viewed in a polished sanitized fashion.

My examination of Realism pays particular focus on Harrigan's portrayal of race. Again, despite claims to the contrary, these depictions throughout the series were

⁴ Augustin Daly, et al., "American Playwrights on the American Drama," *Harper's Weekly* 33 (February 2, 1889): 97.

idealized amalgamations of theatre types such as evolved in American minstrelsy, and Harrigan's own supposed observations life in New York City. This dissertation shows how Harrigan's work figured prominently at a key point in the history of American theatre in the use and portrayal of Realism and through the presentation and perception of race.

Despite Harrigan's claims of accuracy in racial depictions, his plays are riddled with stereotypes and broad generalizations. Of particular significance, rather than casting racially accurate actors to portray the multi-racial spectrum of characters, Harrigan cast primarily Irish Americans in all of the roles: White, Black; Italian, Irish, Chinese, etc. The most famous cross-racial/cross gender performance in the series was Tony Hart's portrayal of the African American widow, Rebecca Allup. Critics continually extolled Hart for his portrayal and praised him for the nuance of his realization of the character.

Harrigan defended his choice in casting. As Richard Moody reports in *Modern Drama*, Harrigan's response to questions of why real Negroes were not used in his productions was:

No one could create more genuine fun than a New York or Southern Negro in his natural environment, but put him in the limelight and he begins to show off and spoil everything. The minstrel-show black-face Negro has ruined the real Negro for the stage: he tries to exaggerate the white man's impersonation of him.

Rebecca Allup and Palestine Puter are already grotesque types, embellish them and you've ruined them.⁵

Whether it was completely accurate or not, Harrigan's argument concerning cross-racial casting held validity in the late nineteenth century. Harrigan was aware of his audience's

⁵ Richard Moody, *Modern Drama*, 19 (1976): 323.

pre-existing knowledge of minstrel performance, indeed the nation's attitudes toward the art form. Harrigan had first-hand knowledge of minstrelsy and its reception. His choice to present Black characters using White actors maintained an illusion with the audience, not so much that who he was presenting was indeed Black, but supporting the audience's understanding of how Black was portrayed. The cross-racial casting is consistent with the Realism that is born of performer/audience understanding.

This attitude of disallowing Blacks from portraying black did not begin with Harrigan. In fact, in the early 1880s the African American performer/composer James Bland ("Carry Me Back to Old Virginy," "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers") was unable to make a career performing "black" in the United States, forcing him to pursue a career in England. Harrigan was merely following a tradition of Irish-as-black depictions on stage. His specific approach and definition of Realism are investigated and delineated in chapter two, but essentially his concept and approach to Realism stem from his perception of what would be accepted by his audiences. To a much lesser degree, though important nonetheless, Harrigan's Realism was imitative of observations made by the author and his intimate familiarity with the types of characters he creates based on people he knew, as well as the settings of his plays, both of which mirror his upbringing in the Corlear's Hook section of New York City. Thus, his dramaturgy grew out of his personal experience. Amy Kaplan states,

[Realism] also becomes a strategy for defining the social position of the author.

To call oneself a realist means to make a claim not only for the cognitive value of

fiction but for one's own cultural authority both to possess and to dispense access to the real.⁶

Harrigan's earliest claims to being a Realist came a decade after the Mulligan Guards series began; however, from the start, his plays acted as self-definition in that they revealed his upbringing and intimate knowledge of the neighborhoods depicted in his plays.

Self-definition, whether intentional or not, was common to Harrigan's age, a period in which immigrants teemed into the city (Harrigan was second generation Irish). The late nineteenth century is key in defining what it meant to be "American" as the various communities that made America represented themselves. Steven Belluscio explains the significance of the immigrant defining himself at the turning point from outsider status to "American" status.

In a time of racist pseudoscience, racial violence, and fervent anti-immigrant sentiment, American writers of Italian, Jewish, and African descent wrote in part of counter popular and official narratives of racial aptitude and to demonstrate the ability of their co-ethnics to participate fully in the fundamentals of American citizenship. Thus, the capable, competent, and ultimately moral free-willing agent of realism becomes a useful rhetorical tool for demonstrating this.⁷

Realism becomes a device for ascertaining the role of the immigrant. Harrigan's particular Realism offers a historical glimpse into a fundamental period in the transition

⁶ Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 13.

⁷ Steven J. Belluscio, *To Be Suddenly White: Literary Realism and Racial Passing* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 6.

of the Irishman from foreigner to native, not only in his creations on stage, but also through the understanding between performer and audience of a shared experience.

This dissertation explores the crossroads where race and Realism intersect. As Stanley Corkin pointedly asks, “What pieces of the historical puzzle did, and do, these texts constitute?”⁸ The following chapters show how the Mulligan Guards series offers an important piece of the puzzle where Realism meets racial presentation—offering a nineteenth-century understanding of these concepts. Harrigan’s multi-cultural worlds provide significant data concerning the middle-class interactions of the young nation.

Phillip Barrish states:

We still have much to learn about the fascinating intricacies of “internecine struggles within middle classes” over different modes of asserting cultural status. If the professional-managerial middle classes achieved cultural hegemony during the late nineteenth century, certainly it is crucial for us to understand how the literature most prominently identified with them helped them to define themselves, as a grouping, in relation to other groupings, such as working-class immigrants. Thus, studying the role that literary realism played in helping the new middle classes differentiate themselves from people of “lower” (and, to a certain extent, of “higher”) socioeconomic status has been one of recent scholarship’s most central concerns.⁹

The Mulligan Guards series offers a different form of literary realism. The plays indeed exist as text, but as with any performance medium, the productions offer a different type

⁸ Stanley Corkin, *Realism and the Birth of the Modern United States* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 2.

⁹ Phillip Barrish, *American Literary Realism, Critical Theory, and Intellectual Prestige, 1880-1995* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4.

of text in which the live performances combine written, visual, and audible Realism that is interactive with a live audience. A play can be read on the page, but unless it is a closet drama, plays are meant to be performed. A performance is read by the audience, thus the spoken words offer only a piece of the reading. The settings, costumes, intonations, staging, music and performance all contribute to the audience's reading. Thus, the written texts by themselves only offer a fraction of Harrigan's realization of literary Realism. Studying literary Realism in order to ascertain how the classes viewed themselves to include the investigation of audience perception and how the productions looked and received, takes Barrish's concept a step further—moving beyond the written page to the interactive meeting of literature (the play) and community (the audience).

In order to understand Harrigan's approach to Realism, it is necessary to delve into the period in which he was writing. This requires reconstruction of Harrigan's age from a theoretical perspective as well as his own application of his theories on Realism. To do this demands a combination of research methods. David Savran explains that study of musical theatre requires extensive interdisciplinarity.¹⁰ To that end, I examine not only the written text, but the audience, and demographics of New York City, other forms of entertainments at the time, critical writing, and illustrations. This echoes Robert Lawson-Peebles's pluralistic approach to historiography in which he creates a cultural musicology.¹¹ Diana Paulin's approach to text and historical context serves as another model of historiography. In his study of vaudeville, Robert Snyder shows how the

¹⁰ David Savran, "Toward a Historiography of the Popular," *Theatre Survey*, Volume 45, Number 2 (November, 2004): 211-218.

¹¹ Robert Lawson-Peebles, "Introduction: Cultural Musicology and the American Musical," *Approaches to the American Musical*, 1-18.

audience co-authored theatre through vociferous interaction with the performers.¹² I utilize his methods of audience study as well as those of Bruce McConachie¹³ and Rosemarie K. Bank¹⁴ to reconstruct Harrigan's audience and their participation in the creation of the plays. McConachie reconstructs historical audiences and, like Snyder, shows how the audience and performance are mutually constructive. Bank takes into account specific moments in time and the incidences that occurred at these moments in relationship to one another. Andrea Most studies the American Jew and how the musical served as a locale for the construction for American-ness.¹⁵ I apply her methods to show how Harrigan accomplishes a similar effect for the Irish American.

Harrigan's work is peppered with tropes, leitmotifs, and stereotypes, but broad generalizations and commonplace delineations of character are juxtaposed with the breaking down of stereotypes. Like Jeffrey Mason,¹⁶ I use these encapsulations to elucidate Harrigan's characters and illuminate Harrigan's world. In addition to examining the text and reviews to reconstruct Harrigan's audience, I utilize Dale Cockrell's methods of examining songsters, handbills, posters and articles. Likewise, I search Harrigan's work for symbols, the meanings of which may have dissolved over time and reconstruct their significance.¹⁷

¹² Robert W. Snyder, *Voice of the City: Vaudeville and Popular Culture in New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹³ Bruce McConachie, *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society 1820-1870* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992).

¹⁴ Rosemarie K. Bank, *Theatre Culture in America, 1825-1860* (Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁵ Andrea Most, *Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹⁶ Jeffrey D. Mason, *Melodrama and the Myth of America* (Indiana University Press, 1993).

¹⁷ Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Cockrell examines symbols such as the broom and the bell and places them in historical context, reinvigorating their meanings.

Of chief importance to my study are the various collections and scrapbooks of Harrigan's work. The Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the New York Public Library has a vast collection of Harrigan's work, clippings, scripts, songs, and the like. Alicia Kae Koger's two-part exhaustive bibliography on Edward Harrigan is invaluable to this study.¹⁸ In addition to the collection in New York, Harrigan materials exist at various public and private libraries, significantly the Library of Congress, which has the written forms of the Mulligan plays.

Definition of race/Perception of race in 1879—particularly on stage

The cover illustration for *Harper's Weekly* dated December 9, 1876 depicts a Thomas Nast cartoon of two grotesques facing each other from opposite sides of a scale: an Irishman and an African American. The African American is barefoot with a big grin on his face and wears a floppy hat reminiscent of what a plantation slave might wear. The Irishman is almost apelike in his appearance, and wears a dingy jacket and crushed hat. The caption reads: "The ignorant vote—honors are easy." The Irishman hangs from the scale marked "North" and the African American hangs from the scale marked "South." The illustration neatly embodies the equality that the two communities share at the bottom rung of the social ladder. In 1876 the Irish were not yet considered white. In fact, they were ostracized by the larger community of New York, relegated to the vilest of neighborhoods similar to that in which Harrigan himself was raised.

¹⁸ Alicia Kae Koger, "An Edward Harrigan Biography: Part I. Playscripts," *19th Century Theatre* 19:1 (Summer, 1991): 29-44. And "An Edward Harrigan Biography: Part II. Songs and Other Materials," *19th Century Theatre* 19:2 (Winter, 1991): 104-129.

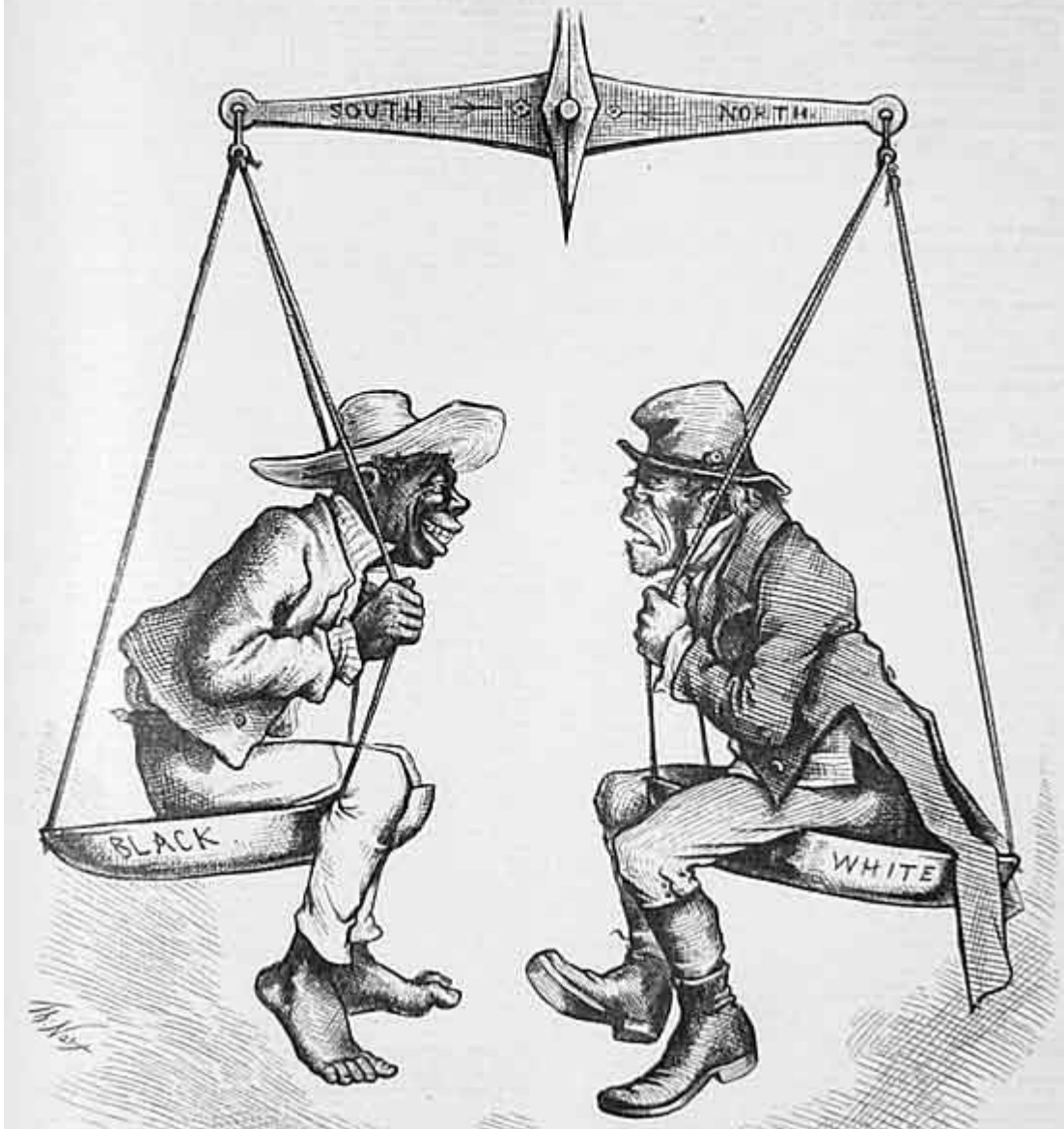


Figure I.1. “The ignorant vote-honors are easy”

¹⁹ *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. XX, no. 1011, 1876.

Although the illustration depicts a North/South dichotomy, the classification of Black and Irish as equals also applied to the slums of many New York neighborhoods in which the two communities lived side by side. It was these neighborhoods that Harrigan portrays in his Mulligan Guards series.

“Whiteness” was a label earned by immigrant populations. As seen in the illustration described above, the Irish immigrant of the north maintained an equal status with the southern Negro. W.T. Lhamon, Jr. states that the solidifying sense of whiteness depended on contrast with racial privilege:

Emerging splits within the working class (between artisans and proletarianized workers, for instance, or between “natives” and immigrant Irish) were often made manifest in terms of these groups’ differential relations to racial privilege, even as the formation of a northern working class depended on a common sense of whiteness.²⁰

The nineteenth-century American stage helped to define the “common sense of whiteness” within the confines of blackface minstrelsy. The contrast of color—significantly in the use of burnt cork—ultimately created an us/them contrast. I examine this distinction in the Harrigan plays to elucidate his meanings of race and possible hierarchy within them, particularly through Harrigan’s casting Black roles with White actors.

In American melodrama in the nineteenth century, nuanced characterization was less important than the presentation of story and spectacle. Villains were depicted as “others” set in contrast with innocents who were represented as wholesome, if poor. The

²⁰ W.T. Lhamon, Jr., *Raising Cain: Black Face Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 2000), 67.

characters lacked details, for the purpose of melodrama was not character elucidation, but story and spectacle, thus the characters were, for the most part, types. Harrigan's first foray into full-length stage work was melodrama. His first full-length play, *Iascaire* (1876), concerns an Irishman wrongly accused of political crimes and includes a sensational prison escape, and unlike his Mulligan series, lacks detail beyond broad characterizations.

Most racial presentation on the American stage was drawn in broad strokes prior to Harrigan's work. Blackface had evolved from a voice for an under-represented class (the predominantly Irish performers) in which the performance was initially a symbolic revolt against the upper classes. Blackface entered the American public consciousness in the 1820s and 30s with the earliest minstrels such as Dan Rice and Dan Emmett. Lhamon makes the argument that early minstrelsy provided a cultural outlet for previously unrepresented points of view, specifically those who occupied the lowest rungs of the social ladder. The chaos on stage, primarily embodied by the comic end men Tambo and Bones, was a staged outcry by the lower classes. The depression in 1839 spurred the middle class to seek itself on stage, spurring the rise in popularity of minstrel shows. By 1843 the character Mr. Interlocutor, who represented the upper class, had no control over the end men, thus the middle class sided with the end men. By the 1860s, minstrelsy had evolved into a cartoonish representation of Black²¹ as well as incorporating satires on societal trends and popular productions of plays and operas. This characterization of blackness continued throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.

²¹ Lhamon, *Raising Cain*, and William J. Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and the Antebellum American Popular Culture* (Cambridge, UK, Harvard University Press, 2000).

Within the representation of Black by White performers lies the complexity of race in America. The most frequent performers of blackface were working class Irish, who were themselves seeking definition in the American society. But race was not relegated to Black versus White. In his history of American vaudeville, Douglas Gilbert expresses the state of nineteenth-century variety acts stating that

most of the comedy of the early variety theatre was racial. What we are pleased to call American stock predominated, and to rib the Irish, German, or negro was but to thrust at a minority which generally took the jibes good-naturedly.²²

It is in comedy that the presentation of race found its most common expression, particularly in the development of racial tropes that delineated race with minimal effort, be it grammatical, behavioral, appearance, or even thematic. The three primary groups for racial fodder in comedy were the Negro, the Irish, and the Dutch (or German). Beyond blackface, the specific vocabularies developed in the form of dialect for each of the groups being represented were probably the most readily apparent tropes for specifying a particular community. Harrigan capitalized on these tropes in development of his own characters.

Thus, race was not a color issue, but a measure of assimilation in the American hodgepodge. The various “others” who tended to occupy the poorest neighborhoods were slowly integrated into the mainstream acceptance at various speeds. Blackness and race should not be considered synonymous; both were (and are) fluid terms. The Italian immigrant might be considered the outsider—of a different race than the integrated American—as a first generation American in the nineteenth century, but his children could very well be accepted as American. Blackness was likewise built and decided upon by

²² Douglas Gilbert, *American Vaudeville: Its Life and Times* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1940), 61.

society. It was less a determinant of color than of social rank, for as Lhamon states: “‘Blackness,’ then, is not innate but produced, a cultural construction.”²³ But as the Irish, Jewish, and Italian immigrants were subsumed into the American ethos, the African American remained an outsider.

Harrigan helped to transform the “others” into Americans, or more specifically, New Yorkers. More than any of the other communities, however, Harrigan gave the Irish a dimensionality. Harrigan, along with only a few others, including Dion Boucicault and Barney Williams, contributed to the trend of portraying Irish as more than simply a caricature, but whereas other playwrights concentrated on characters born and raised in Ireland, Harrigan depicted the Irish American. Robert Toll explains that Harrigan’s contributions to the Irish partial emancipation from solely stereotyped caricature occurred during the same time frame in which Harrigan began performing Irish.

Beginning in the 1850’s when large numbers of Irishmen became minstrels, the minstrel show began to modify these negative images, but it was not until Harrigan traded his blackface make-up for his own face, his negro dialect for his Irish brogue, that show business portrayed the Irish as real people.²⁴ Performance was a locale for definition. When Harrigan performed “Irish,” he helped to define his heritage through his depiction, particularly in giving his characters nuances beyond the typical stereotypes. Thus, his performance helped to define Irish as American.

²³ Lhamon, *Raising Cain*, 36.

²⁴ Robert C. Toll, *On With the Show: The First Century of Show Business in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 186.

Jeffrey Mason reveals how in American melodramas, Americans are defined on stage by those who are not American.²⁵ The presence of an “other” provides the contrast by which “American-ness” can be measured. The characters of “other” are usually alien in accent, nationality, dress, socio-economic status or any combination of these. Harrigan’s works expand on the melodramatic tradition of “other” in that his characters, while of different nationalities and backgrounds, and not equally assimilated, are all American. This is revealed not by the presentation of an “other” by which to contrast the American, but through a mutual contrast, which displays the American (Black, Irish, Chinese, etc.)—in all his diversity—side by side with other Americans. Irish juxtaposed with Black juxtaposed with German provided the contrast through which the various incarnations of what it meant to be an American in New York in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This pre-figures Israel Zangwill’s *The Melting Pot* (1908), but incorporates the concepts of the cultural stew that America had come to represent in the late nineteenth century.

The concurrence of the many types of “others” creates the portrait of Harrigan’s American in that the characters present “American” and define themselves as American. Harrigan displays this amalgamation of peoples to a degree never before realized on the American stage outside of the sketch comedy of minstrelsy. The “others” do not simply stand in contrast to the main characters, but are fully-realized characters in their own right having lives as depicted in plot points and character arcs, each with his/her own wants and methods in pursuing these wants. Despite Harrigan’s Irish ancestry, this definition takes place with all of the characters, not just those of Irish decent. The Black

²⁵ Jeffrey D. Mason, *Melodrama and the Myth of America* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1993).

and Dutch characters of the Mulligan Guard series equally consider themselves to be American by definition. As Lauren Onkey asserts, “Primrose and Puter [African American and German American] see themselves as the real Americans and the Irish as the outsiders.”²⁶ It is the very quantity of “others” who are so individualized that the “melting pot” of America is brought to life in the various communities of Harrigan’s works.

The Irish and African American populations shared comparable career opportunities, parallel socio-economic planes, as well as neighborhoods in New York City. Harrigan’s portrayal of these blue-collar sects highlights their shared qualities. The comedy in the Mulligan Guards series depends in large part on an implied parity between the factions. This fictionalized portrayal mirrored the actual state of these two “races” in New York, with the lines between the two groups often blurred. David Roediger focuses on the boundaries between the two divergent populations:

Such words as coon, buck and Mose had more than ambiguous or multiple meanings: they had trajectories that led from white to black. More than that, each of them went from describing particular kinds of whites who had not internalized capitalist work discipline and whose places in the new world of wage labor were problematic to stereotyping Blacks.²⁷

Harrigan capitalizes on the shared commonality of the communities using their mutual footing as a primary source for plot and comic situations. The comedic centerpiece around which *The Mulligan Guards Ball* revolves requires a communal parity between

²⁶ Lauren Onkey, “A Melee and a Curtain: Black-Irish Relations in Ned Harrigan’s ‘The Mulligan Guards Ball,’” *Jouvert*, Vol. 4 No. 1, 1999: 10.

²⁷ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 100.

the Irish and Black factions: the Mulligan Guards (Irish) and the Skidmore Guards (African American), are both paramilitary “target” companies, essentially men’s social groups that ostensibly convened for target practice. These clubs were common in New York City throughout much of the nineteenth century, originally formed because the military refused to allow immigrants to enlist. In the play, both groups rent the same hall for the same night, and it is through an attempted compromise that the chaotic climax of Act II depends. Were the two communities not equal in footing, had the Irish, for instance, the power to oust the (Black) Skidmore Guards, the collapse of the ceiling at the hall could not be justified, for the tension that resulted in the Skidmores using the upstairs space would not have existed. In this situation and throughout the series the races are clearly delineated, but there is a shared bond that links the groups together. Writing in 1929 for *The American Mercury*, Isaac Goldberg recognizes the connections between the denizens of Harrigan’s world.

Essentially, the Mulligan cycle chronicles the racial antipathies that divided the Irish, the German and the Negro; but the antipathies are not so deeply rooted that they may not blossom into understanding and cooperation.²⁸

Conflict lies at the core of much of the humor of the plays, but the conflicts are born in a setting of mutual respect. The respect might be grudging, but the various factions are all in the same economic situation. From a modern perspective this mutual respect might appear to be a sign that race was less of an issue than in subsequent eras, but I suggest that the respect, as it was, grew from the fact that all of the communities shared outsider status.

²⁸ Isaac Goldberg, “Harrigan and Hart—And Braham” *The American Mercury* Vol. 16, No. 62, February, 1929:206.

As the Nast illustration in *Harper's Weekly* implies, race in the late nineteenth century was a shifting term that was concerned less about background than about socio-economic position. The Irish and Blacks of Harrigan's plays, while not necessarily of the same race, were certainly not equals to the more affluent Whites. The anonymous sentiments quoted by Richard Bentley in 1839 regarding the newly-arrived Irish still held true in the 1870s and 80s. Bentley writes in his *Aristocracy in America*:

"That's the reason I dislike the Irish so much," resumed the New-Yorker. "They are scarcely a year in the country before they pretend to be equal to our *born* citizens. I should have no objection to their coming here, provided they would be contented to remain servants—the only condition, by the bye they are fit for; but then they come without a cent in their pockets, pretending to enjoy the same privileges as our oldest and most respectable citizens, my blood boils with rage; and I would rather live among the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope, than in the United States, where every cartman is as good as myself."²⁹

Racial depiction on stage went a long way in creating the identity of what race meant in the United States in the nineteenth century. Whether intentional or not, stage presentations of race acted as an educational tool for many. Several minstrel shows in the late 1860s/70s, such as the Haverly Colored Minstrels and Callender's Colored Minstrels, purported to recreate plantation life, advertising the veracity of their recreations and for northern urban audience members, these performances were often accepted at face value as true to life. The illustration below, an advertisement for Callender's, emphasizes the jolly life of the plantation slave.

²⁹ Francis J. Grund, *Aristocracy in America: From the Sketchbook of a German Nobleman* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), 51.



Figure I.2 “Calender’s Colored Minstrels”

Stage presentation-as-educational-tool created audience expectations of race. And as the century progressed the definitions provided by stage depictions not just of Black, but of Native American, “Dutch,” Chinese, and Italians, shifted in representation and therefore in reception.

This shift was evident on the musical stage from minstrel shows (which, despite some assumptions about its solely Negro-centric comedy, spoofed not only Blacks, but every other community found in the American melting pot, as well as popular culture), to the burgeoning form of musical comedy, to the late century rise in burlesque. The American musical comedy, the only genre of theatre created in America which is still in existence,³¹ became, as Raymond Knapp contends, a stage locale for the creation and

³⁰ Robert Toll, *Blackening Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1971).

³¹ The other primary American contribution to world drama is, of course, blackface minstrelsy.

definition of the American.³² Harrigan's works enacted particular cross sections of New York life in very specific neighborhoods—replete with the various denizens of these neighborhoods. Harrigan's Americans inhabit the poorer areas of working class New York and his portraits of these characters are extremely detailed in their wants, pursuits, peeves and drives. At the core of the Mulligan Guards series, and indeed most of Edward Harrigan's plays lies the depiction of the New York Irish community and, to a slightly lesser extent, the African American community.

The American stage representation of Black in the nineteenth century is predominantly, but not exclusively, through blackface. Blackface can be traced to European traditions, but as an American institution, the practice could well be said to have been born with Charles James Mathews in the 1820s. Mathews was an English actor/comedian who made a career out of performing “American types.” He introduced the song “Possum Up a Gum Tree” impersonating a black man, and making the claim that his depiction was accurate. Likewise, legend has it that Thomas (Daddy) Rice, the father of blackface minstrelsy, was imitating a disabled Negro stable hand or dock worker when he performed his infamous “Jump Jim Crow.”

Race was a murky subject in the nineteenth century. The common posting, “No Irish need apply,” which was prominent in cities throughout the later half of the nineteenth century echoed the sentiments given to freed slaves and inner city Blacks. Noel Ignatiev delineates how the Irish disengaged themselves from identification with the black community through oppression and segregation.³³ Robert Toll shows how the Irish

³² Raymond Knapp, *The American Musical and the Formation of National Identity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³³ Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995).

and Black communities were united in ridicule on the minstrel stage and how the Irish image evolved from the primitive portrayals of early minstrelsy: “Unlike the Germans, who had gotten favorable treatment from the beginning, the minstrel Irish went from simple, negative caricatures to a more diversified treatment than that given any other group, even the Germans.”³⁴ However, the Irish image shifted with the development of minstrelsy, whereas the black image did not. Before the Irish had completely shifted to White status, Harrigan gave the character a voice that moved beyond that of the minstrel stage. Because he wanted his characters to be believable, Harrigan’s Irish characters had depth that moved beyond the stereotypes of the belligerent and alcohol swigging Irishman. To a lesser extent, Harrigan did the same for his Black characters, however, they retained much of the minstrel flavor that had developed over the previous half a century.

William Dean Howells points out the imbalance of Harrigan’s portrayals between the black and white communities. “Not all the Irish are good Irish, but all the colored people [in the Mulligan series] are bad colored people.”³⁵ As I explore in greater depth later, despite Harrigan’s insistence on parity and accuracy in his portrayals, the Black community in Harrigan’s works remained with one foot firmly planted on the minstrel stage.

It is within the Black and White communities that Harrigan’s comedy was most frequently found. Their daily struggles as working class residents of New York offered fodder for Harrigan’s characterizations. The Black and Irish communities, as the primary

³⁴ Robert C. Toll, “Social Commentary in Late-Nineteenth-Century White Minstrelsy,” *Inside the Minstrel Mask: Readings in Nineteenth-Century Blackface Minstrelsy* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 99.

³⁵ William Dean Howells, “Editor’s Study,” *Harper’s Monthly* 73 (July, 1886): 316.

citizens of Harrigan's stage worlds, are thus the focus in regard to Harrigan's Realism in his portrayal of the communities. The issue of an Irishman's depiction of Black, therefore becomes prominent in regard to Harrigan's ability to understand and accurately portray race. Steven J. Belluscio examines the dynamics of inter-racial Realism. He asserts:

For the white ethnic author who devotes him or herself to representing accurately all the exigencies of ethnic subjectivity, the realist subject is immediately problematized, as it runs into direct conflict with a dizzying array of social, economic, political, racial, and gendered realities that call into question any notion of the free-willing ethnic self.³⁶

Despite the fluidity in the definition of race, there is a clear delineation between the groups as they were personified on stage. Harrigan's self-imposed task as playwright was to depict the various races of his plays in acceptable forms, readily believable and digestible to his audiences.

Realism

In order to measure Harrigan's effectiveness in his pursuit of his particular form of Realism, it is essential that the concept of Realism in its day be understood. David E. Shi ascribes the roots of American Realism to several artistic figures of the 1850s. For it was in that decade that,

Walt Whitman published *Leaves of Grass*, Winslow Homer began his career as a magazine illustrator, Horatio Greenough launched his campaign for a more functional American architecture, and mass-circulation newspapers and illustrated

³⁶ Belluscio, *To Be Suddenly White*, 6.

weeklies introduced readers to the fact-devouring emphases of metropolitan journalism.³⁷

The thrust was toward a presentation of art in a changing view of society, one in which the middle class sought its own reflection in a dispassionate manner. In her novel *Oldtown Folks*, Harriet Beecher Stowe asserts that the artist's task was to present real life dispassionately: "I have tried to maintain the part simply of a sympathetic spectator. I propose neither to teach nor preach through them, any farther than any spectator of life is preached to by what he sees of the workings of human nature around him."³⁸ Stowe's interpretation of the role of the artist was prevalent in a country that was newly defining itself as American. The untried reinvention of what it meant to be a nation provided fertile ground for new definition and expression in the arts. George Becker sees the United States as ripe for a new approach to representation:

The harsh conditions of pioneer life, the breath-taking scale of the physical milieu, the violence of the Civil War, and in the latter part of the century the cruel and impersonal processes of industrialization and the melting pot were new experiences which were not easily bent to conventional formulas and demanded a new reading of life, though, in all honesty, this was not often given.³⁹

This "new reading of life," specifically American life devoid of the sensationalism of melodrama, was rare on the American stage before Harrigan. Although the dramas produced in America in the mid nineteenth century were predominantly British imports,

³⁷ David E. Shi, *Facing Facts: Realism in American Thought and Culture, 1850-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 120.

³⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Oldtown Folks* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1869), iv.

³⁹ George J. Becker, ed., *Documents of Modern Literary Realism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 16.

more and more American entertainment in the form of minstrel shows, comedies, and dramas were finding their way to the stages of America's cities.

The confluence of the development of American entertainment with the nascent expressions of American experience helped to launch American Realism. The nineteenth century gave rise to the definition of what "American" meant. To quote Jeffrey Mason, "'American' is a formulation rather than a received truth."⁴⁰ American identity was created and recreated with every representation.

William Dean Howells, the great advocate of American Realism, defined the rise in American Realism rather unhelpfully as, "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material."⁴¹ This study defines and elaborates on definitions of American Realism as found from the 1870s and 1880s. I do not investigate how American Realism differs or reflects Realism from Europe. I show how, despite Howells and Harrigan's assertions to the contrary, American Realism in Harrigan's case reflected a development in stage presentation combined with audience reception. Howells held Harrigan up as a model of realist writing, stating in 1886:

Mr. Harrigan accurately realizes in his scenes the actual life of this city. He cannot give it all; he can only give phases of it and he has preferred to give its Irish-American phases in their rich and amusing variety, and some of its African and Teutonic phases. It is what we call low life and it remains for others, if they can, to present other sides of our manifold life with equal perfection; Mr.

Harrigan leaves a vast part of the vast field open.⁴²

⁴⁰ Jeffrey D. Mason, *Melodrama and the Myth of America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 1.

⁴¹ Howells, *Criticism and Fiction* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891), 73.

⁴² Howells, *Harper's Monthly* 73, July, 1886: 316.

A significant aspect of American theatrical Realism was developed in the excesses of the romanticism and melodrama that flourished on American stage in mid-nineteenth century. As audiences demanded more and more elaborate stage spectacle, theatrical technology advanced to create more accurate renderings of natural wonders from lakes, ice flows, rivers, and mountains, to crowd-pleasing effects of trains and floods. Verisimilitude sold tickets. Producers and theatre owners such as David Belasco and Charles Mackaye sought greater and more elaborate stage effects to insure an audience in a highly competitive era, while also seeking to push the boundaries of what stage production could accomplish. Belasco would reach the pinnacle of his stage verisimilitude with *The Governor's Lady* in 1912. Mackaye redesigned his theatre to accommodate these stage spectacles, removing the forestage and proscenium doors, moving the orchestra out of the pit to a position above the stage, and putting seats in what had been the former orchestra pit. All of this made the theatre more conducive to the Realistic dramas to come.

Realism is not an American creation, but America's approach to Realism was tailored to the developing American culture. David Shi claims that, "What differentiated American realists from their European peers was the piquant residue of moral idealism and social optimism inherent in their outlook."⁴³ American Realism proudly brought to life America's working class in all its newness and moral complexity.

American Realism, however, was not a single school of thought in which artists approached their genres with a unified agenda. Each artist had his/her own interpretation of what they meant by Realism. In an age of the burgeoning fields of photography and

⁴³ Shi, *Facing Facts*, 6.

the earliest forays into recorded sound,⁴⁴ Realism developed amidst a period of documentation of various sorts of real life. So a single definition of the movement cannot be ascribed, for, as Amy Kaplan asserts, “Rather than as a monolithic and fully formed theory, realism can be examined as a multifaceted and unfinished debate reenacted in the arena of each novel and essay.”⁴⁵ To view these artists through a contemporary lens with regard to “isms” is to deny them their meaning in their own period. Thus, it is necessary to establish a contemporaneous local view in which the art and theory of art can be examined. Stanley Corkin defends this re-emersion into the period being investigated:

The best way to understand these texts in their history and as history is not to subject them to anachronistic reading strategies culled from poststructural insights, but to read *along* with them within the currents suggested by the most salient and convincing historical accounts of the period.⁴⁶

The only unifying factor in the various authors’ approach to Realism is the personal attempt to convey art that whether consciously or not, reflected the author’s interpretation of actual life in a budding culture. In my opinion, this approach only covers a fraction of Harrigan’s Realism, which ultimately depends on his understanding of his subject matter combined with a thorough knowledge of what his audience expected and accepted.

Chapter two explores Harrigan’s own interpretation of Realism, which differs from his actual practice of Realism.

American entertainment in 1879—qualities that contributed to Harrigan

In the nineteenth century, American theatre formed along several fronts. Popular melodrama was finding a voice in the works of Boucicault and Daly developing along

⁴⁴ In 1877 Edison recorded the first human voice, “Mary had a little lamb.”

⁴⁵ Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism*, 15.

⁴⁶ Corkin, *Realism and the Birth of the Modern United States*, 3.

distinctly American lines, as American locales and American types became more pronounced as the century developed. Similarly, minstrelsy became a staple in America's developing stage entertainments, ultimately becoming the most popular form of entertainment in the United States for the middle decades of the nineteenth century. A third form of popular entertainment that developed circa the Civil War was the American musical comedy. The starting point of 1866 is arguable, but there is no question that by the opening of *The Black Crook* in that year, this spectacle/hybrid musical entertainment was becoming more and more popular on the American stage, retaining its popularity through to the present day, the only surviving nineteenth-century American contribution to world theatre.

Although other forms of entertainments were popular with nineteenth-century American audiences including operettas, revivals of classic plays and operas, vaudeville, circuses, and museum shows, these three forms of entertainment—melodrama, minstrelsy, and musical comedy—coalesced in the plays of Edward Harrigan. Beginning in 1879 with the premiere of *Mulligan Guards Ball*, Harrigan's plays would become some of the most successful/popular stage entertainments in New York of their time.

In January of 1879, the month that *Mulligan Guards Ball* opened, New York's legitimate theatres offered a wide range of amusements that spoke of a country in transition. It is significant to realize the broad spectrum of entertainments that were in competition with Harrigan for an audience and a profit. At the Park Theatre, one of the two theatres that catered to the wealthiest class of New Yorkers at the time, Offenbach's *Robinson Crusoe*, a comic opera, was performed by the Colville Opera Burlesque Company. The other upscale theatre, the Fifth Avenue Theatre presented *Dr. Clyde*,

“Sidney Rosenfeld’s version of L’Arrange’s successful comedy.”⁴⁷ Other New York theatres offered a selection of diversions including: “Mr. Frank Mayo in his world-renowned American play,” *Davy Crockett* at Niblo’s Garden Theatre, the Old Guard, a military and civic reception at the Academy of Music, the “Grand Italian Opera” *Mignon* with “one hundred artists” at Booth’s Theatre, the “new American play,” *The Baker’s Daughter* at the Union Square Theatre. At the Aquarium, *Cinderella* was ending an extended run starring Monsieur Oscar and his thoroughbred Kentucky horses, the “comic trick mule Huckleberry,” and “Mr. Charles Seely and his untamed steed Black Bess.” The San Francisco Minstrels starring the great Sam Devere performed at the Opera House. And at Chickering Hall, Anna Newell gave a lecture on “Paris and the French People.” There is no preponderance of theatrical styles such as melodrama or comedy or minstrelsy or vaudeville which outnumbered the other entertainments. It is in this hodgepodge that *Mulligan Guards Ball* premiered.

With little fanfare, *Mulligan Guards Ball* was advertised for the first time in early January, 1879. But by the end of January, only two weeks after *Mulligan Guards Ball* opened, the advertisements for the musical read, “Hit of the season. Don’t fail to see the great consternation scene. The sensation of the day.”⁴⁸ Granted, the advertisement could merely be sensationalism on the part of the producer, but it could suggest the growing hit status of the play.

As I detail in chapter four, performance analysis, the popularity of the Mulligan Guards series hinged on Harrigan’s particular form of Realism. Harrigan was on the forefront of the growing trend toward American Realism, not because he attempted to be

⁴⁷ *New York Times*, January 15, 1879, 4.

⁴⁸ *New York Times*, January 22, 1879, 5.

attuned to larger theatrical innovations, but because he was trying to make money and wrote what he thought would be pleasing to his audiences. Within a few years, Harrigan's particular brand of entertainment brought in a new audience unseen in working class theatres such as that belonging to Harrigan and Hart, The Theatre Comique. An unnamed reviewer in a *New York Times* article on amusements describes a very large and interesting audience—interesting because it was composed of so diverse elements. It is a fact worth noting, however, that the select portion of this theatre was occupied—by a class of persons who were not wont, a short time ago, to frequent down-town places or houses dedicated to the tenth muse of “variety.”⁴⁹

As *Mulligan Guards Ball* grew from a sketch to a full-length evening with little fanfare, it is clear that Harrigan was attempting to pin a plot to his already-developed characters. Plot was the backbone of melodrama, which in turn had held reign on the serious stage in the United States for decades. This need for plot and story was paramount in Harrigan's day. In 1897 James Herne explains in an article “Art for Truth's Sake” the importance of plot.

We had tragedy, melodrama, domestic drama, spectacle, and farce. The standard drama of that day was a drama of plot rather than of purpose. The dramatist was concerned first of all with his plot. A play without a plot could not have obtained a hearing twenty years ago. In fact it is pretty hard work today to get a hearing for a play based upon theme and character, and depending upon treatment and not upon plot; but twenty years ago such a thing would have been impossible.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *New York Times*, February 22, 1881, 5.

⁵⁰ John Perry, *James A. Herne: The American Ibsen* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1978), 314.

Beginning with *Mulligan Guards Ball*, Harrigan dutifully hammered out plots on which he was able to string his sketches together, keeping with the prescribed mode of the day. But as chapter one shows, Harrigan's primary influence was minstrelsy and his most significant gift to American drama was his particular brand of characterization. Harrigan brought to life on the stage a socio-economic class of people who, until this time, primarily had two realms in which they were portrayed: the minstrel stage and as victims or "others" in melodramas. According to Harrigan, these characters were drawn straight from the neighborhoods of the author's experience.

Mulligan Guard neighborhoods

Harrigan's Americans inhabit the poorer areas of working class New York and his portrayals of this wide variety of characters are extremely detailed portraits of the kind of people who inhabited these neighborhoods. He was not the first to present a multitude of communities in a single performance setting; melodramas and minstrel shows often incorporated an amalgamation of races and nationalities in a single piece. Charles White's "Hop of Fashion," a minstrel show skit from 1856 precedes Harrigan's world of Black and Irish by twenty years and includes a variety of types from Irish to African American, to fictional characters from Shakespeare. Harrigan incorporated the minstrel tradition of presenting many ethnicities and "types" into a unified play, but unlike pun and satire driven minstrel shows, Harrigan shows how the various divergent communities add up to a new and larger population providing the contemporary reader a glimpse at New York City in the late nineteenth century. As John Storey claims, it is through the always present implied "otherness" that a conceptual landscape of popular culture

emerges.⁵¹ Harrigan's plays are entirely peopled by "others," in that there is no dominant community that is contrasted by the other populations (although you could argue that the Irish maintain this role). A study of Harrigan's world provides a microcosm of the culture of the day according to Storey's concept of culture originating from "the people."

The plays of the Mulligan Guards series were written and produced immediately following the Long Depression (1873-1879). While not as severe as its twentieth century counterpart fifty years later, the depression held a grip on the United States in which the working class finally achieved an audible voice. The railroad strikes of 1877 raised class and race struggles to a national level of awareness as economic hardship particularly struck urban centers. The fiction writers of Realism and eventually naturalism such as Crane, Norris, and Dreiser would depict the working class of urban America in these city settings. Prior to any of these American fiction writers, however, Harrigan found an audience for his depictions of what Howells called the "actual life of this city."

Chapter breakdown

In chapter one I provide the background of Edward Harrigan with regard to his theatrical training and exposure to performance. Harrigan was influenced by a broad range of theatrical genres, not just in New York but across the country from San Francisco to the East Coast. Likewise, I offer a brief background on Harrigan's two primary collaborators, Tony Hart and David Braham, as well as the other primary figures in Harrigan's acting company. The history of these entertainers shows where the themes of race and Realism developed in relationship to stage presentation.

⁵¹ John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (New York: Pearson/Prentice-Hall, 2001).

The second chapter explores and analyzes Harrigan's personal take on Realism and his depiction of race. The chapter looks at Harrigan's own theories on Realism: his emphasis on accuracy in costuming and language as well as his detailed account of his New York neighborhoods. The chapter delineates the difference between mimesis and Realism in Harrigan's work. This look at Realism is juxtaposed with Harrigan's blatant departure from the movement in casting, staging, and comic departure from real life. I argue that Harrigan's Realism transcends his limited scope on the movement to incorporate a model that was born of the necessity of doing business, namely that his Realism relied on his audience. To that end, Harrigan ultimately sought to make financially successful stage pieces that sometimes superceded his attempts at realistic portraiture. I focus in detail on Harrigan's depiction of race, particularly in the use of Tony Hart in blackface. Whereas *The Mulligan Guards Ball* is the central concern, I provide an overview of Harrigan's Mulligan Guards series in regard to Realism versus race. The specific approach to Realism within the parameters of Harrigan's dramaturgy, particularly his depiction of race, is the crux of this chapter.

Chapter three provides a detailed textual analysis of *The Mulligan Guards Ball*, the first full-length piece in the series, and to a lesser extent, the other plays in the Mulligan Guards series. I examine the texts to determine exactly how Realism and race are presented individually and in conjunction with one another. I analyze the characters in regard to motivation, language, patterns, and actions, again emphasizing race and Realism in their depiction. Although music analysis is only touched upon in this dissertation, being the work of David Braham and not Edward Harrigan, I analyze the lyrics for their characterization and details.

Chapter four focuses on performance analysis of the Mulligan Guards series. With clues gleaned from newspapers and periodicals, personal accounts, illustrations, and critical writing on the plays, I reconstruct the look of the original productions and analyze them in regard to race and Realism. Likewise, I reconstruct the makeup of the audience of the original productions and use that information to paint a picture of the perception of race and Realism. To reconstruct the audience I use illustrations such as that shown in Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* of January 17, 1874, which shows an all-white audience dressed in working men's clothes attending the skit version of *The Mulligan Guards Ball* as well as examining newspaper accounts of theatrical attendance.

In the conclusion I show how Edward Harrigan's approach to Realism, particularly through his depiction of race, despite his self-defined approach, transcends simple imitation of actual life to incorporate an implied contract between the author, performer, and audience that together create a Realism of acceptability, meeting expectations based on precedent. Finally, I show how the Mulligan Guards series acts as a crossroads in American theatre in its forward-looking use of Realism and its backward-looking holdover of racism in the guise of accurate portrayal of race, and how the two are intertwined.

Chapter One - Background

Harrigan's use of race and Realism emerged from the combined histories of the people who created the plays as well as his own background in New York City's Sixth Ward. This chapter examines the background of Edward Harrigan, his collaborators, and the primary actors in the Mulligan Guards series. Throughout the history of the series, Edward Harrigan's casting remained consistent; thus, the unique talents of the actors who played the various roles helped to influence the evolution of the characters. As Harrigan tailor made the roles of the plays to fit the talents of his cast, I examine the backgrounds of Harrigan's primary players to elucidate how their histories helped influence the development of the characters they played.

The purpose of this chapter is not to provide a biography of Edward Harrigan, but to show how his personal theatrical experience, combined with those of his fellow artists, created the Mulligan Guards series. Harrigan was influenced by a broad range of theatrical genres, not just in New York but across the country. Likewise, those performers with whom Harrigan worked brought with them a spectrum of performance and artistic histories, primarily from the United States, but also from Europe and Australia, all of which contributed to the development of their characters and the series as a whole. The primary actors in the Mulligan series and their respective roles are as follows: Edward Harrigan–Dan Mulligan; Tony Hart–Rebecca Allup and Tommy Mulligan; Annie Yeamans–Cordelia Mulligan; Harry A. Fisher–Gustavus Lochmuller; Annie Mack–Bridget Lochmuller; Johnny Wild–Sam Primrose; Michael Bradley–Walsingham McSweeney; and Billy Gray–Palestine Puter. Harrigan also employed a wide range of variety performers who brought their specific talents to the series.

In addition to the actors with whom Harrigan worked, the plays were influenced by the specific skills of Harrigan's long-term collaborator, David Braham, who wrote all of the music for the Mulligan Guards series. I examine Braham's background as to how it influenced Harrigan's writing, as well as the history of Harrigan's set designer Charles W. Witham, Josh Hart (the producer), and other peripheral contributors.

Harrigan's Background

Although Harrigan was from a section of New York City called Corlears Hook in the Five Points area of the city (the Sixth Ward), he never actually used the Five Points as a locale for any of his plays until after the Mulligan Guards series with a play entitled *Leather Patch* (1886). However, Mulligan Alley (in the Seventh Ward), the primary location of Dan Mulligan and his confreres, resembled the Five Points in its socio-economic status and spectrum of a poor yet diverse community, without the dire poverty and crime of that notorious neighborhood.

In the early nineteenth century New York City was divided into wards that were the smallest political units in early nineteenth-century New York. Representatives of the wards—aldermen and assistant-aldermen—stood on the two boards that made up the Common Council in the 1830s, which operated as the legislative branch of New York City's government. Because of their influence in their specific neighborhoods, these representatives held as much, if not more power than the city's mayor. Later in the century the parochial nature of the ward system would be attacked as a source of corruption in city government, but until the late nineteenth century, the ward system governed the various neighborhoods designated by ward boundaries. By 1832 New York City contained fifteen wards, all of which lay below Twenty-Third Street in Manhattan.

The wards themselves were sub-divided into neighborhoods each of which had a distinct reputation that was understood by all New Yorkers. The two sides of a single street could serve as a boundary between an affluent ward such as the Fourteenth Ward and a poorer ward such as the Sixth Ward in which Harrigan was raised.

Mulligan Alley, had it really existed, would have been located in one of the poorest and ethnically diverse wards, the Seventh. Harrigan may have set his plays in this locale for its diversity rather than the homogenous (Irish) Sixth Ward of his childhood, although the two wards bordered each other at Chatham Square. The Seventh Ward extended from Catherine Street in the east to Corlears Hook, bounded on the north by Division and Grand Streets, and south by the East River, basically within the confines of what is now considered the Lower East Side. The poverty and congestion is preserved in the famous photos of Jacob Riis. The packed tenements housed an average of eight families. When Harrigan tapped the area for his source material, these families were primarily African American and Irish.

“The Mulligan Guards,” the first Harrigan and Hart hit song was written was written in 1872, shortly after the professional arrival of Harrigan in New York City. Already in this early date in their collaboration, the lyric (which Harrigan had sent to Braham in February of that year) stresses the importance of location for the author:

Just give us your attention-
We'll tell you all we know-
It's all about the Mulligan Guards,
In the Seventh Ward below.
Our captain's name is Hussey.

A Tipperary man:

He carries his sword like a Russian duke

Whenever he give command.⁵²

Whereas Mulligan Alley was a diverse population of many races, Corlears Hook was predominantly first-generation Irish, so much so that the district was known as “Cork Row.” The districts surrounding the Sixth Ward in which Harrigan was raised were more diversified. Harrigan credits his childhood wanderings into these surrounding districts as the source for his inspiration. Asked if he went “slumming” for dramatic material, he replied:

There was no need of that. From boyhood I had exceptional advantages to become thoroughly familiar with the ragged edge of society. I knew every alley in the lower wards of the city, every street, every shipyard, every sailor’s boarding house. So I didn’t have to hunt up characters. I had thoroughly familiarized myself with every existing type, not only from an inborn tendency to study human nature but by actual commingling with these characters in their everyday life. That was my stock in trade. The audiences recognized the authenticity and correctness of the types I endeavored to reproduce on the stage and I suppose that the success of the Mulligan series and subsequent plays of local life was due, in large measure, to that fact.⁵³

The quote is not dated, but is representative of Harrigan’s public response to writing. Throughout his life, when Harrigan was interviewed concerning the origin of his characters, the playwright would credit his upbringing as his primary resource. In an

⁵² Edward Harrigan, “The Mulligan Guards,” New York Public Library, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Box 4, Folder 1.

⁵³ Uncredited obituary in NYPL Lincoln Center Locke Robinson scrapbook #234, 101.

article in *Pearson's Magazine* in 1903 entitled "Holding the Mirror up to Nature,"

Harrigan states:

I was raised among these very Irish, German, and colored people, and an instinctive recognition of their humorous side early led me to meditate upon their peculiarities, and at times to give slight imitations of well-known [seventh] ward types.⁵⁴

Harrigan often credited his upbringing not only as a primary source for his inspiration, but also for his taste in performance. The same obituary explains two early influences on the playwright's development. "From his mother young Harrigan learned his negro songs, for which he soon became known about his district. His first stage appearance was at the Bowery Theatre with Campbell's Minstrels, where one night he delivered a stump speech of his own composition"⁵⁵

The stump speech was a common element in minstrel shows in the nineteenth century. Harrigan would later use a variation on the stump speech in his Mulligan Guards series. In the *Mulligan Guard Nominee* Dan addresses his political constituents in a ridiculous stump speech that illustrates the exaggerated nature of this minstrel tradition:

Dan: Fellow citizens and friends of the Mulligan champagne. I arise like the morning sun and I'll never set till the name of Daniel Mulligan is carried from the 14th Ward, to Asia, Afghanistan, Parequan, Equidius, Circassian, Balvaria and the world all over. Why is it that they give us a sidewalk of four feet wide in the 14th Ward and Fifth Avenue has a sidewalk 20 feet wide, when feet are larger in the

⁵⁴ Edward Harrigan, "Holding the Mirror up to Nature," *Pearson's Magazine* (November, 1903): 499.

⁵⁵ Uncredited obituary in NYPL Lincoln Center Locke Robinson scrapbook #234, 101.

14th Ward than on Fifth Avenue?⁵⁶

The comedy from the speech emerges through the absurdity of the promises: “carried from the 14th Ward to Asia, Afghanistan,” the invention of names: “Parequan, Equidius,” the malapropisms: “Balvaria,” and the ridiculousness of the issues that have an echo of truth: “they give us a sidewalk of four feet wide in the 14th Ward and Fifth Avenue has a sidewalk 20 feet wide, when feet are larger in the 14th Ward.” As I illustrate more fully in chapter three, Harrigan incorporates many of the elements of minstrelsy into his plays.

With the exception of a few excursions to New Jersey and upstate New York, New York City is the primary setting for all scenes in the Mulligan Guards series; the popular entertainments of the city as he knew them shape the series. While still in adolescence, Harrigan participated in minstrelsy, melodrama, and variety shows. The characters of the Mulligan series exhibit techniques and styles from all three of these genres. Singing, dancing, comedy, and vaudevillian turns come naturally to the residents of Harrigan’s plays. A character can burst into song and remain true to any denizen of the neighborhood in which he resides, mirroring the people of Harrigan’s own upbringing. For instance, one of the neighborhood haunts of Harrigan’s early childhood study of performance was a saloon called Powers and Kerns. Saloons were the first venues in which variety acts were performed in New York City. In an article for the *New York World* in 1894, “Ned Harrigan’s Originals,” the unidentified author states that the owners of Powers and Kerns “had been a variety team and their place was a great rendezvous for vaudeville performers.”⁵⁷ Indeed, such a performance was not uncommon for the inhabitants of the Seventh Ward, so when Dan Mulligan begins singing “John

⁵⁶ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, 15.

⁵⁷ *New York World*, June 3, 1894, 36.

Riley's "Always Dry" from *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* (1881), an apparent drinking song that seems suited to a vaudevillian comic, he is remaining true to character and his location.

Lower Manhattan in the mid and late nineteenth century abounded in cheap entertainments such as minstrel and variety shows (later known as Vaudeville). Harrigan would use all these as well as other genres such as street performance as he witnessed during his formative years in developing his Mulligan Guards series. In that same article in the *New York World*, in reference to the original "Mulligan Guards Ball" sketch, the author claims that: "The character of Dan Mulligan used in this sketch and afterwards elaborated was taken from life, the original being a tailor of the same name who lived in the Seventh Ward close to where Harrigan was born."⁵⁸ Likewise, the "Hussey" mentioned in the original Mulligan Guard lyric was "Capt. Jack Hussey, an old-time volunteer fireman and famous life-saver in the Seventh Ward, and a great friend of Harrigan."⁵⁹ Hussey's wife Cordelia was the model for Dan's wife Cordelia. These and many of the other characters were culled from actual people from Harrigan's daily life in the Sixth Ward. The places, the people, and particularly the African American and Irish communities were only slightly fictitious versions of actual life. Even locations beyond Mulligan Alley were drawn from actual locales. The uptown locale for *Squatter's Sovereignty* was taken from a shantytown in the hills of upper Fifth Avenue.

The portrayal of Irish characters had a long history on the American stage prior to Harrigan's creation of Dan Mulligan and company. Harrigan simply built on the comedies and melodramas that came before him. Dion Boucicault (1820-1890) was the

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 37.

reigning master of melodrama on the American stage in the mid-nineteenth century as both a writer and performer. His broad range of characters is peppered with Irish right off the boat as well as Gaels presented in their native land. In addition to the prominence of Boucicault who first came to America in 1853, when Harrigan was maturing in New York, the stage Irishman also included performances by John Drew (1827-1862), John Brougham (1810-1880), and others. As Stephen Watt states concerning these performers: “That elements of caricature tintured their performances is beyond debate; that they offered audiences more than this is also abundantly clear.”⁶⁰ Harrigan would appropriate and personalize this combination of caricature and “more than this” as he developed not only his Irish characters in the Mulligan Guards series, but all the characters who appeared across the series.

As Richard Butsch explains, for many Americans, the nineteenth-century stage acted as a school in which the audience was “taught” what to expect by certain “types” as entertainments were often the first exposure many people had to groups other than their own.⁶¹ These lessons on what to expect would include any “Others” that might occupy or enter the predominantly Anglo audiences of the mid-nineteenth century. As I examine in chapter two, Harrigan’s portrayals of these “Others” would capitalize on the expectations of the audiences, while developing or dissolving the stereotypes. The audience’s perception of the characters on stage is paramount to understanding Harrigan’s Realism as they are collaborators in Harrigan’s presentation of what would or would not be

⁶⁰ Stephen Watt, “Irish American Drama of the 1850s: National Identity, “Otherness,” and Assimilation,” *Feeling the Famine: North America and the Irish Refugees, 1845-1851*, Margaret M. Mulrooney, ed. (Westport, Ct.: Praeger, 2003), 99.

⁶¹ Richard Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences: From Stage to Television, 1750-1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

considered realistic. This is where Harrigan's concepts of Realism differ from the Realism he actually employed. As I explain in chapter two, Harrigan's interpretation of his own realism was that he was recreating New York City neighborhoods on the stage, offering a pictorial duplication of New York, but as Brian Richardson states: "Pictorial analogies to the contrary, literary realism is never an unambiguous reproduction of the external world, but always entails numerous interpretive strategies and significant ideological self-situating."⁶² The interpretation in regard to Harrigan's Realism is through the perceptions of the audience. Harrigan's self-situating is through the eyes of an audience member.

A prescribed list of expectations was negotiated and refined between the audience and the stage in that certain characteristics would be tried and developed or tried and discarded depending on audience reactions. Thus, when presenting an "Other," Harrigan could not discount the expectations of the audience or of common perceptions, but would expand on these expectations and develop the characters, capitalizing on what Eric Lott calls their elasticity. The interaction and collaboration between audience expectation and author's portrayal are the core elements in Harrigan's brand of Realism. Realism for Harrigan is not solely the work of the author. It hangs in the middle between the stage presentation and the reception of that presentation. Likewise, race relied on the acceptance and perception of the greater community.

Harrigan's racial depictions began with his own race. The dominant portrait of the stage Irishman was rife with stereotypes: the slovenly hard drinking, belligerent,

⁶² Brian Richardson, "Introduction: The Struggle for the Real-Interpretive Conflict, Dramatic Method, and the Paradox of Realism," *Realism and the American Dramatic Tradition*, William W. Demastes, ed. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1996), 2.

brogue speaking, simian simpleton who is quick to temper and raring for a fight. Despite growing assimilation, the Irish were, as Ignatiev explains, other than white.⁶³ More often than not the Irishman on stage would embody a short list of characteristics, which, like the minstrel Negro, lived up to the expectations of the audience. The Irish stereotypes exploded with the population boom of Irish emigration that was set in motion by the Irish Potato Famine (1845-51). During this era more than two million Irish sought refuge in the United States and Canada, and as newcomers, they were quickly labeled with the stereotypes that marked them as outsiders.

Harrigan's stage Irishman, however, would differ from those presented before him in that his Irish characters were not presented in contrast to a hierarchical dominant, but rather against other outsiders or "Others." Brenda Murphy states, "Harrigan's sketches differed from the plays of Brougham and Boucicault in that they did not portray the Irish in opposition to Yankee or English authority, but focused instead on those Irish who achieved some local status in ward politics."⁶⁴ As with his portraits of other stage "types," Harrigan took the traditions to which he had been exposed and altered them to suit the needs of the very specific world he was presenting in his Mulligan Guards series as he painted a new sort of Irishman.

Harrigan was influenced by his experience with the representation of the stage Negro similar to how he was influenced by depictions of the stage Irishman. The two races were linked in their negative portrayals which dominated the American stage, although not universally, prior to Harrigan's sketches and plays of the 1870s. Stephen

⁶³ Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

⁶⁴ Brenda Murphy, "Irish-American Theatre" in *Ethnic Theatre in the United States* (Greenwood, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1983), 226.

Watt neatly ties the two “races” together:

On the stage, such [Irish] representations paralleled stereotypes of American blacks, as [minstrel star] Barney Williams’ early career suggests. While still in his teens, Williams appeared as a singer of “Negro songs,” also performing as a blackface “wench” in minstrel shows. By the mid-1840s, he was, in Walter Meserve’s phrase, “more Irishman than minstrel,” later starring in *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, a Hibernian version of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel.⁶⁵

On stage, the two communities were linked in their function as sources of humor as well as derision.

In Harrigan’s obituary in the *New York Evening Post*, Harrigan is said to have acknowledged his mother as the source for the African American influence of his writing. “It was from her that I learned most of my Negro business and old songs. She had a capital dialect and could dance and sing ‘Jim Crow’ as well as I ever saw it done.”⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that Thomas Dartmouth “Daddy” Rice, often called the “father of minstrelsy,” was, like Dan Mulligan and his confreres, raised in the Seventh Ward. W.T. Lhamon, Jr. proposes that Rice obtained his legendary “Jump Jim Crow” through observation of dancers in the Seventh Ward who danced for food (eels). Dale Cockrell explains that the blackface minstrel grew out of such neighborhoods of economic tumult in which the performance gave voice to a lower socio-economic class in which Irish and African Americans co-existed in economic parity rather than racial division. In his first incarnation, according to Cockrell, the minstrel performer, behind the disguise of blackface, burlesqued upper class airs and the posturing of political figures. Through

⁶⁵ Watt, *Irish American Drama of the 1850s*, 99.

⁶⁶ *New York Evening Post*, June 6, 1911, 26.

dialect and malapropisms the performers skewered the rich and famous, aiming the laughs at their victims rather than at themselves. It was in this atmosphere of racial presentation that Harrigan observed and practiced his early forays into performance.

The influence of minstrelsy on Harrigan's career cannot be overstated. This American contribution to performance was the most popular mode of entertainment in nineteenth-century America. Richard Butsch quotes an 1855 issue of *Putnam's Monthly* that considered the popularity of "Jump Jim Crow," the quintessential minstrel song:

The school-boy whistled the melody. The ploughman checked his oxen in mid furrow, as he reached its chorus. Merchants and staid professional men unbend their dignity to that weird and wonderful posture. It is sung in the parlor, hummed in the kitchen, and whistled in the stable.⁶⁷

William J. Mahar asserts that minstrelsy *was* American popular culture in antebellum America and remained so for the decades following the Civil War. The darkening of the face with burnt cork, or blackface, the defining characteristic of minstrelsy, was the mask through which American pop culture found its definition. Eric Lott explains "the audiences involved in early minstrelsy were not universally derisive of African Americans or their culture, and there was a range of responses to the minstrel show which points to an instability or contradiction in the form itself."⁶⁸ Rather, the burlesque elements of minstrelsy allowed America to form an identity while mocking itself. Mahar identifies the two-way street of black and white culture inherent to minstrelsy, but argues that in its earliest days (1843-48), the satire was focused on class rather than race. It wasn't until the third phase of minstrelsy (1855-60) that the depictions on the minstrel

⁶⁷ Richard Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences: From Stage to Television, 1750-1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 81.

⁶⁸ Lott, *Love and Theft*, 3.

stage were considered accurate portrayals of African Americans. The art form devolved from a subversive text that burlesqued all of American society, with particular emphasis on the upper class, to a perception of a public exhibition of the American Negro in all his supposed foolishness. In his early exposure to the stage antics of blackface performers, Harrigan was witness to this third stage of minstrelsy's development. According to Mahar, this phase contained an inherent nostalgia for the earliest days of minstrelsy as a time of supposed innocence and purity of the form, while misinterpreting the burlesque nature of the early shows as reproduction of actual southern Blacks.

In the period following the Civil War (1860s-1880s), several significant occurrences took place on the minstrel stage that would have an influence on Harrigan's work. First, minstrel shows, in their attempt to retain their popularity, capitalized on the false notion of an idealized South where plantation Blacks would frolic out of the sheer joy of their existence. Also, during this period the minstrel troupes grew in size to match the spectacle that was taking place in melodrama as well as in the nascent art form of musical theatre. Productions of minstrel shows became more opulent and producers such as J.H. Haverly accentuated the glamour of the productions. Producers looking for fresh approaches to the art form introduced all-female casts, offering sexuality in the form of skimpy costumes. Likewise, it was in this period following the war that African American performers began appearing in minstrel shows in greater numbers to further give credence to their authenticity of "real" portrayal of these self-same plantations. Harrigan's study of minstrelsy occurred during this third phase of the art form. His observations of the various new productions of minstrel shows no doubt had an influence on his own choices concerning the depictions of race, specifically Black.

By the time Harrigan was performing in minstrel shows in his teens (1850s-60s), the reception of these entertainments had shifted to a one-sided racism in which the audience jeered and cheered at the antics and buffoonery of the stage Negro. As Richard Butsch asserts, “Minstrelsy was for many whites their first vivid depiction of black life and slavery.”⁶⁹ It is with this in mind that I explore the nature of Harrigan’s Realism, particularly in regard to his depiction of Blacks. His Realism was not duplication of real life, but rather portraiture of the “black race” as it was accepted and expected by the White audience of his day. Mel Watkins argues,

Black minstrel shows were seen as real-life scenarios in which the participants engaged in their normal behavior, revealed their childlike, irresponsible natures, and unleashed their natural inclination toward song, dance, and comedy, as well as their primitive passions. Black minstrelsy was regarded not as performance but as a kind of peep show that offered an unobscured view of Negroes in their natural and preferred environment—servitude and the Southern plantation.⁷⁰

Watkins’s interpretation of the form is narrow in its scope as it offers only one interpretation of the performances, but it encapsulates the popular view of the last phase of minstrelsy. The “inclination toward song, dance, and comedy” also describes the image of the stage-Irishman, who would likewise be characterized as prone to brawling and drinking alcohol. Harrigan would have observed and participated in the stereotyped depictions of these two races.

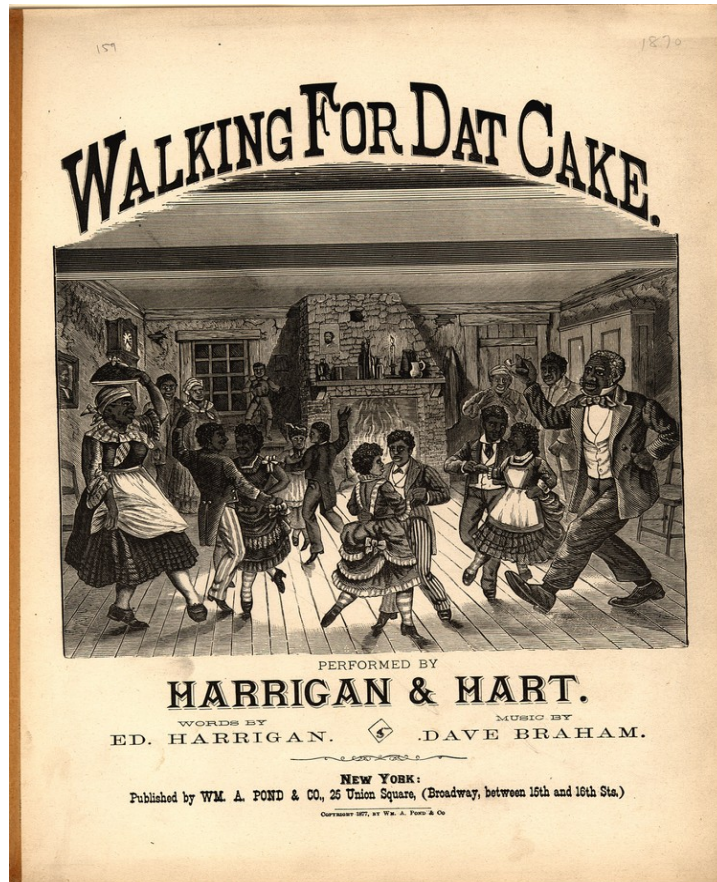
After the Civil War, blackface minstrelsy passed from being an exclusively

⁶⁹ Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences*, 86.

⁷⁰ Mel Watkins, *On the Real Side: Laughing, Lying, and Signifying—the Underground Tradition of African-American Humor that Transformed American Culture, from Slavery to Richard Pryor* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1994), 121.

“white” phenomenon to an art form that was increasingly performed by African Americans. (Mixed-race companies did not exist with the rare exception of a single Negro performer such as Master Juba in an otherwise all-white troupe.) And like their white counterparts, the all-Negro minstrel troupes soon performed in blackface. Promoters of these increasingly extravagant “authentic” Negro minstrel troupes banked on the real-life depictions that these entertainments were supposedly presenting. The impression of these performances and the accuracy of their depictions of “actual” Negroes would have an influence on Harrigan’s own depictions of Blacks. Harrigan continued the trend toward claiming authenticity as advertisements appeared in for Harrigan’s Theatre Comique sketches touting the re-creation of the Negro in his plantation setting. One ad proclaims: “Harrigan & Hart in Edward Harrigan’s exquisite picture of Negro Life and Customs, pronounced by all to be the most masterly productions ever placed upon the stage, entitled “Walking for dat Cake” in which Harrigan played Hezekiah Hemmingway and Hart played Hannah Hemmingway.”⁷¹ The illustration below emphasizes the jolly life of the “authentic” plantation life. Note that all depictions of Black in the illustration are meant to be Black, not White-as-Black.

⁷¹ Unidentified clipping, n.d., Robinson Locke Scrapbook.



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Figure 1.1 “Walking for Dat Cake”

Thus, prior to the development of the Mulligan Guards series, Harrigan too capitalized on the minstrel show craze. His supposed authenticity in his depiction of a plantation setting does not mesh with Realism in regard to his depiction of Black. The minstrel tradition that pre-dates Blacks playing Black, that of White performers performing Black is adhered to tightly in Harrigan’s Realism. His decision to present Black through White actors suggests a purist approach to minstrelsy—one that precedes Blacks performing in minstrel shows.

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<http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.ragtimepiano.ca/images/walkingfordatcake.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.ragtimepiano.ca/rags/cakewalk.htm&h=800&w=600&sz=178&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=ITv9Ikm3ajlIIM:&tbnh=143&tbnw=107&prev=/images%3Fq%3D%2522Edward%2BHarrigan%2522%26gbv%3D2%26svnum%3D10%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Dactive>, accessed August 12, 2008, accessed on November10, 2008.

Even the structure of the characters in minstrel shows would manifest itself within the Mulligan Guards series. The characters Palestine Puter and Captain Simpson Primrose recreate the traditional minstrel characters of Tambo and Bones. Tambo was traditionally lean and Bones was traditionally fat. Koger shows how these two characters exist in the Realism of Harrigan's world while keeping one foot firmly planted on the minstrel stage:

The Reverend Palestine Puter was a fat man, so obese that when he hid in a coffin in *Mulligan Guard Chowder* it had to be lowered out the window rather than carried down the stairs. The Harrigan counterpart of the lean Tambo, Captain Simpson Primrose, loved to deck himself out in fancy uniforms and "take a bath in cologne 'for I start out.'"⁷³

Harrigan manipulates the popular characters of minstrelsy to suit the needs of his plays, retaining characteristics while imbuing them with personality that transcends the broad strokes of the endmen.

Harrigan's use of minstrelsy went beyond mere imitation of these two popular characters. His plays incorporated the use of puns, cross-dressing, stump-speeches, on-stage musicians, spoofs on popular music and the three act form. This is not surprising since minstrelsy played such a huge role in Harrigan's own training.

After leaving New York City, Harrigan's first professional appearance occurred in San Francisco in 1867 where he was a banjo-playing minstrel who also performed Irish and Dutch dialect initially working for twenty dollars a week. The performance types in which Harrigan was involved in San Francisco were varied, all of which would have a great influence on the Mulligan Guards series. In an obituary of the author, Harrigan is

⁷³ Koger, "A Critical Analysis," 157.

quoted to have said concerning his time in San Francisco: “the program consisted of variety, minstrelsy, and at least one drama of three acts. I was cast in everything.”⁷⁴

A program for the New Bella Union at Kearny Street in San Francisco dated April 22, 1870 lists “Ned” Harrigan among the chorus of the evening’s entertainment. The program opens with a minstrel show, although the traditional minstrel characters of Bones, Tambo and Interlockotor are renamed. Ned plays the minstrel end man, “Bones,” to Mat Kelly’s Interrogator (Mr. Interlockotor) and Ned Buckley on Tambourine (Tambo). Later in the same opening performance, Harrigan is listed as performing “She Danced Like a Fairy,” an unlikely title for a blackface skit. The second portion of the program announces Ned Harrigan performing “Dutch Song and Dance.” Obviously, this sketch and song capitalized on Harrigan’s “Dutch” characterization. Following this he is listed among the cast for what is presumably a short comic piece, “Getting Tested, or, Rough Usage for a Policy.” The final piece in the program is *Pocahontas, or, The Gentle Savage* (frequently written as *Po-ca-hon-tas*) in which Harrigan plays Mynneer Rolff (presumably another Dutch character). This musical burlesque subtitled “An Original Aboriginal Erratic Operatic Semi-civilized and Demi-savage Extravaganza,” was written by John Brougham in 1855 and was an extremely popular parody of the Indian narratives and their Noble Savage central characters which were common at the time. The evening performance suggests a mixture of a typical three-part minstrel show combined with other entertainments.

Whereas minstrelsy laid the groundwork for Harrigan’s depictions of various races and ethnicities, vaudeville provided a structure by which Harrigan often organized his pieces. In the obituary for the Harrigan and Hart blackface star Johnny Wild in *The*

⁷⁴ *New York City Post*, June 6, 1911, 5.

New York World, February 14, 1898, the author asserts:

The Harrigan and Hart dramas were the direct and legitimate outgrowth of the American variety business, now politely termed “the vaudeville,” and the company itself consisted largely of various “teams” that had previously acquired reputations as artists of the song and dance, knockabout or “black-face” variety.⁷⁵

Variety, or vaudeville, was the ultimate democracy, embodying the American dream, allowing for anyone with an “act” to perform or exhibit their talents no matter their background and economic status. The early vaudeville of Harrigan’s youth and training—prior to the “cleaning up” of the genre by entrepreneur Tony Pastor—was a reflection of an idealized American experience, welcoming all walks of life to make a dollar by whatever means the public would deem entertainment. Albert F. McLean, Sr. asserts: “Vaudeville, in short, was one way by which the American people, passing through a neoprimitive stage, sought perspectives upon their common experience.”⁷⁶

Vaudeville offered an even playing field on which anyone with talent (or not) could make money. The broad range of possible entertainments offered a view of the range of cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, regions, of what America was at the time. As I illustrate in chapter three, Harrigan utilized this everyman genre as he presented his own take on the “common experience.” McLean proposes that a distinct purpose emerges in the art form in regard to city inhabitants at the time.

Through its symbolizing, vaudeville sought to allay those common tensions among city-dwellers brought about by their crowded lives, by their worries over employment and scarcity, by the growing depersonalization of their occupations,

⁷⁵ NYPL Billy Rose Collection, Harrigan Papers, Box 9, folder 19.

⁷⁶ Albert F. McLean, Sr., *American Vaudeville as Ritual* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1965), ix.

and by the erosion of their simple moral values.⁷⁷

Harrigan capitalized on the urban themes that were shared by his audiences, thus, like minstrelsy, which depended upon the audience's expectations of the stage world of African Americans, Harrigan incorporated the diverse world of variety into his plays to tie the common man together with his brother in his depiction of life in New York City. Again, Harrigan's primary purpose was not to break new ground in creating a hybrid entertainment, but rather to make a living using a form of entertainment which grew out of his own personal experiences with various genres.

In order to achieve this amalgamation of genres which included musical theater and melodrama as well variety and minstrelsy, Harrigan assembled a multitalented company of performers that were recognized individually for their tremendous talents. To understand the popularity of the Mulligan Guards series better, particularly in regard to Harrigan's use of Realism and race in the series, it is important to examine these other members of Harrigan's company. Each performer and collaborator brought with him or her a honed set of talents on which Harrigan capitalized.

Tony Hart

The name most frequently tied to Harrigan was Antonio "Tony" Hart. Prior to meeting Harrigan, Hart worked in a variety saloon in Boston as a singing waiter (as Irving Berlin would do a half century later). He was heard by producer Billy Arlington who hired him to perform in his minstrel troupe. Known for his outstanding voice in Billy Arlington's Minstrels, Hart's talent was utilized to perform sentimental ballads. In M.B. Leavitt's *Fifty Years in Theatrical Management*, the author succinctly sums up the universal attitude toward Hart's magnificent voice: "That voice once heard can never be

⁷⁷ Ibid., 15.

forgotten.”⁷⁸ Hart’s voice was probably a high tenor, with a purity of sound that made him ideally suited to play women’s roles. His arrival in Illinois coincided with Harrigan’s tenure in Chicago where he had been performing in variety and minstrelsy. According to Moody, Harrigan “was now searching for a partner who could look and sound like a girl.”⁷⁹ Thus, it was in Chicago when Hart was still in his teens, that “Tony” Hart met “Ned” Harrigan.

Unlike Harrigan, Hart was first generation Irish American (Harrigan was second generation). Both of his parents were born in County Mayo on Clare Island. The first time Harrigan and Hart performed together was at the Winter Garden Theatre in Chicago in a sketch entitled “The Big and the Little of It,” but there is no record of the roles the performers played. The first piece developed by the pair was a sketched called “The Little Frauds” in which Hart played a German girl. “The Little Fraud” was a burlesque of the popular song entitled “Oh Little Maud!”

An illustration for “The Little Frauds” shows Harrigan and Hart in costume, with Harrigan dressed in dapper garb and Hart dressed as a woman.

⁷⁸ M.B. Leavitt, *Fifty Years in Theatrical Management* (Broadway Publishing Co., 1912), 309.

⁷⁹ Richard Moody, *Ned Harrigan: Corlears Hook to Herald Square* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1980), 32.



Figure 1.2 “The Little Frauds”

One could not tell from the illustration that Hart was a man, costumed as he is in his girlish dress, light stance and frilly hat.⁸¹ The illustration suggests that the illusion of womanhood was being emphasized rather than comedic “drag.” Although this is merely an early sketch in Harrigan’s career, this illusion of Hart as an actual woman is consistent with Harrigan’s ongoing assertions that he was presenting characters drawn from the streets. Harrigan capitalized on Hart’s ability to play women. In “Holding the Mirror up

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<http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.musicals101.com/News/harriganfrauds.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.musicals101.com/histst2.htm&h=447&w=289&sz=14&hl=en&start=12&tbnid=kt1NSnNSIoGNRM:&tbnh=127&tbnw=82&prev=/images%3Fq%3D%2522Edward%2BHarrigan%2522%26gbv%3D2%26svnum%3D10%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Dactive>, accessed June 7, 2008.

⁸¹ Harrigan and Hart scrapbook MWEX+n.C. 13,346-13,347.

to Nature” Harrigan states:

“Tony” was always a great inspiration to me; he was then about seventeen, and he proved to be, in my opinion, the best impersonator of women that I ever knew on the stage. I had great trouble at first in persuading him to make the trial of these female characters. His success was tremendous. In Chicago the spectators would hardly believe that it was a boy in the role.⁸²

From the moment they began performing together, the names of Harrigan and Hart were bound. Despite the fact that Harrigan was the director, costar, conceiver, and when they first performed together, producer, Hart’s star power was so great that the two were given equal attention. Together they would dominate New York theatre for over a decade.

Referring to an unidentified source, Wittke summarizes: “Harrigan and Hart, the most famous Irish comedians in the 1870’s, started as ballad singers with the minstrels, and the latter was called ‘the best “genteel wench” that ever trod the boards.’”⁸³

Within months the team was headlining variety and minstrel shows, first in Chicago, then Boston. When the pair finally arrived in New York in 1872, hired by Tony Pastor for his variety hall, they performed variety acts together, mostly consisting of sketches devised by Harrigan. By the time the pair was hired by Josh Hart for The Comique in 1874, Harrigan was writing all of their sketch material as well as the lyrics to songs with music by David Braham. Harrigan wrote over forty sketches in his first three seasons at The Comique. Many of these sketches retained the patterns of traditional minstrel shows, which became less and less about pun-driven minstrel sketches and more and more about New York City. Moody writes: “[Harrigan] wrote pages of comic patter

⁸² Harrigan, “Holding a Mirror,” 502.

⁸³ Wittke, *Tambo and Bones*, 237.

for the Negro minstrels, Tambo (Harrigan invariably called him Sam) and Bones, and recitations for the stump speakers.”⁸⁴ Although blackface was prominent, their comedy and musical numbers included burlesques of popular musical pieces, dramas, Dutch humor, and spoofs of contemporary stars and trends. In Harrigan’s obituary in the *New York City Post*, Harrigan was quoted to have said of his first appearance in New York at the Globe Theatre in 1872: “Tony and I performed a song and dance in white faces.” The distinction is important as Harrigan distinguishes himself from purely a blackface performer, separating himself from identifying purely as a minstrel performer.

Despite a quiet arrival in New York entertainments, Harrigan and Hart would quickly become headliners, due not only to their performance ability, but to the frequency of updating their programs. Moody states,

In a brief year and a half, Harrigan and Hart had climbed to the top, and audiences soon discovered they offered a new kind of program. Most variety houses rejuvenated their weekly bills by a complete change of performers. Harrigan and Hart relied on fresh turns from their in-house writer.⁸⁵

Harrigan established the trend to retain performers and update the material rather than replace the artists with new artists, thus developing specialized material around the specific talents of his young troupe. Their variety acts and music and comedy would grow in popularity until the first full-length piece, *The Mulligan Guards Ball*, opened in 1879, catapulting the comic duo to stardom. As they developed a reputation as a comic duo, the pair formed a partnership that would last nearly a decade. They became business as well as onstage partners when they purchased the lease for the Theatre Comique in

⁸⁴ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 41.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

New York City and, capitalizing on their reputations, made it one of the most popular theatres in New York in the 1870s/80s.

As I elaborate in chapter four, Hart's Tommy Mulligan was highly praised, but it was his singing and embodiment of his female characters, most notably Rebecca Allup, that made Hart one of the greatest draws to the Mulligan Guards series. In 1882 Augustin Daly wrote to Harrigan after the opening of Harrigan's play *Squatter Sovereignty*, "I have no leading woman who could touch the hem of [Hart's] petticoat in the part, and as for yourself, you're a living chromo⁸⁶, where on earth did you pick up that walk and those trousers?"⁸⁷ Unfortunately, there is no recording of Tony Hart's singing, or film of his dancing, for he was considered one of the best of his generation. In his memoirs from 1914, Nat C. Goodwin wrote in fond remembrance of the female impersonator: "Hart sang like a nightingale, danced like a fairy, and acted like a master comedian."⁸⁸ Hart's reputation was universally praised only for as long as he worked in conjunction with Harrigan and the carefully crafted material that Harrigan constructed to mesh with Hart's abundant talent. When he went off on his own in 1886, Hart's reputation, ability to sell tickets, and his health all deteriorated. Hart tried to capitalize on his ability to perform multiple roles with *Toy Pistols* (1886) in which he played an Italian, a young Hebrew, an Irishwoman, and a Chinaman, but without the tailored material created for him by Harrigan, the play was a comparative flop, lasting only five weeks, which although respectable for its time, did not approach the popularity of the Harrigan and Hart comedies.

Harrigan's Company

⁸⁶ A photograph.

⁸⁷ January 20, 1882, Quoted in Adelaide Harrigan's Memoirs, Nedda Harrigan Collection.

⁸⁸ Nat C. Goodwin, *Nat Goodwin's Book* (Boston: R.G. Badger, 1914), 83.

Harrigan and Hart were not the only two stars of Harrigan's company. Harrigan had the prescience to assemble a troupe of actors of which at least two more could have been headliners in their own right: Annie Yeamans and Johnny Wild.

Unlike most of Harrigan's company, Annie Yeamans was Welsh, not Irish. She was born on the Isle of Man, but raised in Australia. Her background in performing arts began with the circus in Australia. She was apprenticed by her father to work in the circus in Melbourne at the age of fifteen where she performed bareback riding. Yeamans was unique in the circus in that she was a woman in an all-male environment, and at one point, the only performer. She states: "There was a man there who had a circus without any performers. I was the whole circus, and gave songs and dances, and in addition, we used to give farces"⁸⁹

Yeamans's training in circus arts might seem unusual training for a woman who would make her career as an actress, but in the nineteenth century pantomime and minstrelsy were common in circuses. In fact, many of the first minstrel shows were performed at circuses. In an 1889 essay, "The Negro on Stage" for *Harper's Magazine*, the author states that in the early days "negro songs were sung from the backs of horses in the sawdust ring, that Robert Farrell, a circus actor, was the original 'Zip Coon.'"⁹⁰ In the nineteenth century circus and minstrelsy were closely tied in America and abroad, and Marian Hanna Winter explains how the influence of Master Juba and other minstrel dancers transcended the minstrel stage to influence circus arts:

The minstrel dance changed the clowns' entrée, adding splits, jumps and cabrioles, as well as blackface make-up, to form a new type. Between 1860 and

⁸⁹ *New York Times*, October 8, 1899, 16.

⁹⁰ Hutton. "The Negro on Stage" in *Harper's Magazine*, Volume 79, June-November, 1889: 132.

1865 this character was taken over to France by touring British circuses, and later became a fixture in French and Belgian cirques et carrousels. The vogue for Lautrec's famous Negro clown Footit was part of this trend.⁹¹

Yeamans married a circus clown and together they traveled the world from Shanghai to Europe and eventually to the United States. When she moved to New York City she appeared in several pantomimes, including George L. Fox's *Humpty Dumpty* at the Olympic. Fox, one of the most celebrated performers of the nineteenth century, was famous for this white face role, performing it over 1000 times. Yeamans's experience with *Humpty Dumpty*, perhaps the most famous American pantomime, exposed the actress to a keenly developed form of slapstick comedy that relied on purely physical comedy as the performers acted their roles without spoken dialogue. Her training in physical comedy contributed the demands of Harrigan's extremely physically challenging comedies. Yeamans acted in serious dramatic roles as well including *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Daly's *Under the Gaslight*, and as Cordelia in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It was with this broad background in physical and dramatic arts that Yeamans was hired by Harrigan.

Following Harrigan, Hart, and Yeamans, Johnny Wild—was the fourth star in the Harrigan company of actors. In the obituary for Edward Harrigan by Charles Darnton, Wild is described as “the best delineator of the New York negro of his day.”⁹² Originally joining Harrigan and Hart in Boston in the early 1870s, Wild did not appear in all of the same sketches as Harrigan and Hart, however, Harrigan was writing material specifically for Wild at least as early as 1875. A program from that year lists Wild playing Jimmy

⁹¹ Marian Hana Winter, “Juba and American Minstrelsy,” in *Dance Index*, Vol. VI, No. 2, February 1947: 38.

⁹² NYPL, Locke Robinson scrapbook 236, 124.

Lush in Harrigan's new sketch entitled "Gallant 69th!" On the same program Harrigan and Hart appeared in "Harrigan and Hart's New and Original Centennial Sketch, entitled the Blue and the Grey!"⁹³ Also on the same program, Wild's minstrel dance skills were touted in "John Wild's Great Sketch, entitled the Challenge Dance! in which Wild plays Mr. Skimmerhorn." Wild was originally apprenticed to the Bryant's Minstrels, from which Harrigan invited him to join his own company. With Harrigan's company, Wild continued to perform in blackface where he was praised for his true-to-life depiction of the Negro. Hutton's "The Negro on Stage," mentions: "the delightful band of 'Full Moons,' led for many seasons by 'Johnny' Wild, at Harrigan and Hart's Theatre, who were so absolutely true to the life of Thompson Street and South Fifth Avenue."⁹⁴ An obituary for Johnny Wild states:

With the exception of Tony Hart, Johnny Wild was the most original performer in the whole company, and his stage characterization of the New York darky was probably the very best thing of its kind that the town has ever seen. Indeed, he may safely be termed the creator of the various types of "New York coon" which occur so plentifully in the drama of to-day.⁹⁵

It is important to note that the author of the article is praising Wild's "types of New York coon." He is not praised for fooling the audience into thinking he was indeed Black, but rather that he perfected the stage Black. The Realism inherent in this relies on the traditions of stage performance, not imitation. However, journalists at the time attributed Wild's success to his observations of non-performative Blacks. The prevalent racism of

⁹³ Program found in the Locke Robinson Scrapbook 236, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.

⁹⁴ Hutton, "The Negro on Stage," 132.

⁹⁵ NYPL Billy Rose Collection, Harrigan Papers, Box 9, folder 19.

journalism of the day is apparent in another obituary for Johnny Wild where his authenticity is extolled:

Take a darky boy off a plantation and put him behind the lunch counter in a Broadway café, where he will be called upon to serve both loafers and gentlemen, and men of fine education as well as those who have none at all, and in six months he will have enriched his language, not with the vulgar slang that falls upon his ears, but with the longest and most impressive words that he has been able to pick up, while at the same time his manners will be more nearly those of the gentleman than of the barroom hanger-on. It was this peculiar phase of negro character that Mr. Wild studied with an assiduity and clearness of comprehension that made his characterizations the most artistic and lifelike portrayals of their kind that the New York stage had ever seen. In his hands Capt. Primrose of the Skidmore Guards, was essentially a man of elegance and refinement, and one given to high-sounding words and stately, polished decorum. No wonder that the Widow Allup fell an easy victim to his charms, or that the other members of his race made him captain of their company and a high priest in the mystic Order of Full Moons.⁹⁶

According to the author of this obituary, Wild's depictions relied solely on his observations of "authentic" Negros. However, the description in the article is describing the classic minstrel character of Zip Coon, the well-dressed, "high fallutin'" coon who was given to "high-sounding words and stately, polished decorum." Zip Coon (or in this case Primrose) spoke in a jargon of pseudo-intelligence. For instance, when Primrose expresses concern that Rebecca Alup will marry Hog Eye in *Mulligan Guard Chowder*,

⁹⁶ Ibid.

he states derides the idea of “de connubial state wid a assisattic.”⁹⁷ The language is skewed, but the author of the obituary blurs the line between on-stage and off and cannot decipher between what is a creation of the stage and what is actual.

Harrigan’s Mulligan Guards series depend heavily, not only on the presence of African American characters, but on their ability to maintain a foil for the Irish and German characters in proportion to their counterparts. Many of the plots hinged on the conflict between the communities: *The Mulligan Guards Ball*, which pits the Irish Mulligan Guards against the Skids in renting the same dance hall; *Mulligan Guards Picnic*, in which the two groups again schedule an event at the same place at the same time—a picnic ground in New Jersey; and *Mulligan Guards Nominee*, in which the politics of race are heightened by Dan’s running for alderman. Thus, the actors playing these roles had to rise (or sink?) to a level of character development that would maintain a balance with the other “races.”

Billy Gray, the third master of blackface in the Harrigan stable of actors was praised for his depiction of Dan Mulligan’s African American neighbor, Palestine Puter. Gray’s background was with Bryant’s Minstrels, one of the most celebrated minstrel troupes of the day, the same minstrel troupe from which Harrigan hired Wild. Harrigan regarded Billy Gray’s Puter “a genuine masterpiece in the black-face line.”⁹⁸ For Harrigan, his praise of Gray had to include his admiration for the depiction of Black, not just comic expertise, for Harrigan insisted on a troupe of actors who could convey race in a believable manner. This is important in understanding Harrigan’s practice of Realism in regard to race. This does not mean that the Gray’s performances could be

⁹⁷ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, 18.

⁹⁸ Locke Robinson Scrapbook 236, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library. “Echoes of the Week,” March 5, 1891, H. Scrap.

misconstrued as a true African American. Authenticity of race was not participatory in Harrigan's Realism, rather Harrigan's Realism relies on audience expectation. In the case of Hart and Wild, these depictions were praised for their faithfulness to expectations, although when viewed through a twenty-first century lens, these same depictions can be viewed as severely racist.

In addition to the Irish and African American characters and the actors that portrayed them, Harrigan's troupe included masters of Dutch performance as well. Harry (Charles) Fisher—who played Gustav Lochmuller in all of the Mulligan Guard plays, had little performance experience before working with Harrigan, but his portrayal of Lochmuller received praise that put him in the same realm as his co-workers. In an article entitled “The Mirror of the Stage, Reflections Brought Out by the Death of Harry Fisher,” the author of the obituary, Charles Pike Sawyer, praises Fisher stating: “I considered him the best German comedian we ever had on the American stage. His acting and his make-up, as well as his dialect, were never exaggerated, and always reminded one of the genuine thing.”⁹⁹ It is important to note the phrase “reminded one” in Sawyer's statement. He does not make the claim that Fisher duplicated Dutch, but rather he offered an approximation of Dutch that for Sawyer at least, the actor was accepted as such.

Like many of the other characters of the series, Harrigan based Lochmuller on an actual person from his own experience. Lochmuller was what was then known as a ‘bologna pudding’ butcher and kept a shop on Pearl Street, between Centre and Elm. The dialect, make-up, &c., was a perfect reproduction of Lockmuller's. His wife was a strapping Irish woman, who

⁹⁹ *New York Post*, December 2, 1922, 11.

dominated the little German with her stronger will. Annie Mack, now Annie Mack Berlein, of Joseph Jefferson's support, first played this part.¹⁰⁰

As Gustav Lochmuller's wife Bridget, Harrigan hired the actress Annie Mack. Mack, originally from Dublin, had more acting experience in plays than most of the other performers in Harrigan's company. She played opposite two of the greatest actors in their greatest roles in the nineteenth century: Ophelia opposite Edwin Booth's *Hamlet*; and Gretchen, the wife of Rip Van Winkle, opposite Joseph Jefferson in the title role. With both of these actors Mack was exposed to a distinct form of acting that would appear to work against the over-the-top broad strokes of minstrelsy. Unlike the acting style of his father, Junius Brutus Booth, Edwin Booth was known to perform in a naturalistic quiet style of acting that foreshadowed the rise of Realism. Likewise, Jefferson insisted on a restrained acting style stating, "In acting we must keep our hearts warm and our heads cool."¹⁰¹ Yet, despite the seeming incongruence, Mack's performance style fit in well with Harrigan's company, as proven by Harrigan's continued employment of the actress.

Rounding out the company of actors/performers, Harrigan hired a variety of specialty acts, lending the series its variety slant, while maintaining the true-to-life feeling of the Sixth Ward. Among the performers/acts that Harrigan employed were: Harry Sefto –("The Dancing Spider"); Neil Warner—a comic lecturer ("In Africa; or, How I Found Livingstone"); and Professor Gilbert—and his performing birds. While these actors and their specialty acts were not regulars in the series, they added flavor to the colorful world of Harrigan's Mulligan Alley.

¹⁰⁰ *New York World*, June 3, 1894, 5.

¹⁰¹ Francis Wilson, *Joseph Jefferson: Reminiscences of a Fellow Player* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1906), 329.

David Braham, Charles Witham, Josh Hart

David Braham offered the musical equivalent of Harrigan's tailoring roles to suit the actors. Like Harrigan, Braham had a minstrelsy background, arriving from London in 1856 to New York as a violinist. By the time Harrigan and Braham met in Boston, Braham had worked his way up to conductor for the Comique in New York City. Braham continued to conduct outside of the Comique in all forms of musical theatre from opera to the first American production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*.¹⁰² He would use his diverse musical background to great effect in the Mulligan Guards series, particularly in his ability to fit the music to the performer. In an article for the *New York Herald* he explains his approach to composition in regard to the Mulligan Guard company.

The main difficulty in song writing for our company is to get the music to fit the voices and characters of the actors. It's far different from writing a song to put on the public market. It is likely to happen that a good actor has a poor voice and that naturally makes it the more difficult to get up an effective song for him.

When poor Tony Hart was with us we had to nurse his voice very carefully.

When he went out for himself and had strangers write his songs for him he found it very different I imagine. When I write music for Johnny Wild it has to be very very simple to suit the compass of his voice.¹⁰³

Braham's music was the perfect match to Harrigan's approach to characterization. Like Rodgers and Hammerstein sixty years later, Harrigan and Braham wrote character specific songs that worked within the drama of the play, but transcended the specificity of the stage to become hit songs. For instance, in *Mulligan Guards Ball*, Dan Mulligan, a

¹⁰² John Charles Franceschina, *David Braham: The American Offenbach* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁰³ *New York Herald*, July 12, 1891, 4.

barkeep with a tremendous fondness for the beer he sells breaks into song extolling the glories of “A Pitcher of Beer,” staying true to his character while introducing a song that would soon become a popular hit. As I examine in depth in chapter four, Harrigan and Braham wrote a sizeable list of hit songs that emerged from the Mulligan Guards series including: “The Mulligan Guards Ball,” “Father’s Dinner Pail,” and “Babies on Our Block.”

Another contributor to the Mulligan Guard sensation was its set designer, Charles W. Witham. Witham was considered one of the great Realists in stage design in his time. His Realism—like that of Harrigan, was not in duplicating the slums of the Lower East Side, but in creating a version of those tenements that served the purposes of the comedies without disconnecting the audience from that locale. His idealized, dimensional settings offered a locus for the interactions of the characters that did not remove the audience from the world being created by Harrigan. Although his most famous creation was Mulligan Alley, Witham’s designs extended beyond the realm of Realism to include sets for Booth’s *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Likewise, Witham was Daly’s principal scenic artist, requiring the designer to create spectacle on stage and utilize advanced stage techniques into his designs, a skill which would serve him well in creating the special effects that would include exploding boats and collapsing ceilings.

The producer that brought the team of Harrigan, Hart, Braham, and Witham together was Josh Hart. Hart was not only a producer, but a performer as well. He is listed in the program for The Theatre Comique in 1874 playing in “Sawdust!, or, scenes at the tombs police court, a new and laughable Court Scene.” A program from the Comique describes the sketch: “The life-like pictures of his Hon. Judge Dowling and the

great criminal lawyer, Hon. William F. Howe. Josh Hart played Howe.”¹⁰⁴ Despite his stage experience, Josh Hart’s legacy lies in his role as producer. Before Harrigan and Hart purchased the Comique from Josh Hart, the producer had gambled in hiring the talents that would contribute to the success of the Mulligan Guards, particularly Witham and Harrigan. Moody explains Hart’s gambit: “The Comique’s success was no accident. Hart had outbid Pastor for talent, offering \$150 per week each to Harrigan and Hart and his other top artists, and the gamble paid off”¹⁰⁵

As their fame grew and as the company took shape throughout the 1870s, Harrigan’s sketches evolved, incorporating not only his stage experience, but that of his company as well. By January 1, 1877, when the long sketch “Christmas Joys and Sorrows” premiered Harrigan’s new hybrid entertainment was reaching its fruition. Moody explains that with this sketch: “Farce sprinkled with melodrama was the new game.”¹⁰⁶ “Christmas Joys and Sorrows” also introduced the character Caroline Long (later called Rebecca Allup, whose name was derived from a washerwoman’s cry, “Well, it’s all up.”), Tony Hart’s most famous role. This sketch was the culmination of years of development that led to *The Mulligan Guards Ball* two years later. “With Christmas Joys they turned the Comique into a new kind of Broadway house—a house where a full-length play and variety turns occupied the same stage at the same time and all for one price.”¹⁰⁷ Harrigan’s sketches had grown in length slowly incorporating an amalgam of theatrical styles that were integrated with the storylines and characters of the sketches. All the while the box office continued to flourish and the fame of Harrigan and Hart

¹⁰⁴ NYPL, Harrigan and Hart scrapbook MWEZ + N.C. 13, 347.

¹⁰⁵ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 44.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

grew, Harrigan was developing his own form of Realism.

Chapter Two – Harrigan’s Realism and Use of Race

When confronted with the question of whether he would consider having Negroes perform the roles of Negroes, Edward Harrigan responded, “Hardly, and there’s a good reason. A negro cannot be natural on the stage. He exaggerates the white man’s impersonation of himself and thus becomes ridiculous.”¹⁰⁸ Considering Harrigan’s response, the question is raised: if Harrigan was indeed touted as a Realist, how is this statement justified in light of his seemingly blatant disregard of what is real? In fact the statement itself offers insights as to the nature of Harrigan’s Realism. First of all, what does Harrigan mean by “natural?” According to final sentence of the quote, un-natural includes impersonation of impersonation, in other words, the Black version of the White version of the Black man. The triple remove from actual African Americans, as implied by Harrigan’s statement, is one step beyond acceptability according to Harrigan’s definition. Duplication of African American is also not suitable to Harrigan’s goals, as his desired portrayal of the Negro is the “white man’s impersonation” of Black. Thus, his Realism lies in the realm of impersonation, not duplication. Impersonation implies comic exaggeration that makes obvious the subject matter being imitated, but does not replicate the subject matter. It is always clear to the observer that he is watching a version of the subject, not the real subject.

This chapter explores and analyzes Harrigan’s approach to both Realism and race. I examine the definition of Realism within the context of the nineteenth century and the traditions that led to Harrigan’s Mulligan Guards series. I scrutinize Harrigan’s own words/theories on Realism putting them into the context of the concepts of race and

¹⁰⁸ *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 21, 1903, Townsend Walsh scrapbook of Harrigan memorabilia, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.

Realism in his own era, and examine how he implements his own theories.

Realism

Realism is a fluid concept that has changed meaning from its inception in the mid-nineteenth century to the present. As William Demastes states, “[Realism] has a chameleon-like existence, changing colors at almost every turn and blending into a context appropriate to whatever needs a particular practitioner or critic deems appropriate for his or her goals.”¹⁰⁹ Harrigan’s particular goals were, as I’ve stated, entertainment, not innovation. But even though his form of Realism was inherently of his time, and despite the fact that he did not set out to ascribe to any school of theatrical theory, he was a Realist nonetheless.

Even within the three decades in which Harrigan did the bulk of his writing, theories on Realism evolved. As is noted by the editor of the 1903 *Pearsons* article “Holding the Mirror up to Nature,”

It is the artist’s feeling for realism that makes such characters live in the memory of the theater-going public. But the realism of one generation is not the realism of the next, and Mr. Harrigan has been too shrewd an observer of human nature not to appreciate this fact.¹¹⁰

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of Harrigan’s Realism, one must understand what was meant by the term and what theories led up to his particular practice of Realism.

Nineteenth-century American Realism was a response or alternative to the traditions that preceded it, most pointedly Romanticism. The Realists focused on current themes and working class people, however as Harold H. Kolb, Jr. states, “The realists’

¹⁰⁹ William W. Demastes, ed., *Realism and the American Dramatic Tradition* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), x.

¹¹⁰ Harrigan, “Holding a Mirror Up to Nature”: 499.

concern with common experience, contemporary issues, and Baedeker topography¹¹¹ should not lead us into the trap of discussing realism in terms of photographic portrayal, statistical norms, a one-to-one correspondence with reality, or a slice of life.”¹¹² Realism lay in the attitudes and depictions of characters, subject matter, and time rather than “photographic” or duplicative reproduction. The objective was the presentation of an authenticity through setting and character, one that was palatable to an audience seeking to see itself in the art form presented to them. In other words, the stage Realist creates a world that can pass for ordinary life in that the locale and people seem plausible, as governed by the rules that are encountered in non-fictional life, or as Brian Richardson states, “The hidden source of the strength of realism’s appeal is that it accurately reproduces the same canon of probability that also governs everyday existence.”¹¹³ This probability to which Richardson refers, is evaluated by the audience. The receptor enters the theatre with a foreknowledge of what can and cannot happen in daily life as well as what is acceptable on stage and he consciously or unconsciously imposes that foreknowledge on what he observes. As with the twentieth century phenomenon of the television sit-com, the characters are thrown into situations wherein the writer’s creations interact with each other in plausible ways, the aim of which is to amuse the audience.

The analogy to the situation comedy is apt on many levels when examining the Mulligan Guards series: a specified location provides a background for character interaction; characters remain consistent, developing naturally from one “episode” to the

¹¹¹ Baedeker refers to the travel guides founded by the German publisher Karl Baedeker in 1827.

¹¹² Harold H. Kolb, Jr., *The Illusion of Life: American Realism as a Literary Form* (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1969), 42.

¹¹³ Brian Richardson, “Introduction: The Struggle for the Real–Interpretive Conflict, Dramatic Method, and the Paradox of Realism” *Realism and the American Dramatic Tradition*, William W. Demastes, ed. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), 9.

next; and there is no closure to the storyline. The audience was expected to follow the characters from one play to the next. Developments such as marriages, change of address, or career continued from one “episode” to the next. For instance, in the *Mulligan Silver Wedding*, the audience was assumed to remember that at the end of the previous play, *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, Dan had been appointed alderman. This approach to dramaturgy wherein plotlines are not resolved, but rather offer a “continuity of incidents” is a characteristic of Realism in which plays are not wrapped up tidily with fortunate coincidences as in melodrama, but left open for continuation.

As in such sit-coms as “Rosanne” or “Married with Children,” a well-defined cache of characters is thrown into a conceivable yet comic situation within the confines of a world with which the audience is familiar (despite its being fictional). Thus, the author creates a realm that is governed by the same rules as the non-fictional world in that people quarrel, the rules of science apply (gravity, linearity, et al), misunderstandings abound, and reconciliations take place, and melodramatic coincidences are absent. Fiction resembles non-fiction, the characters act through motivations, the locales are recognizable, but it is a created world nonetheless; not photographic, but familiar. Harrigan believed his primary function was to move those who would come to see his plays: “In this principle of playmaking, or sketch-prolonging, we find reason for the character-drawing which should be the one great aim of the dramatist. Laughter and tears should be the component parts. The sunshine is not appreciated without the shade.”¹¹⁴ The emotional connection with the audience is the first duty of the dramatist in Harrigan’s view.

Realists presented characters that differed from what preceded them on stage and

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

in literature. They were neither the stereotypes of melodrama nor the stock characters of nineteenth-century variety and minstrelsy. Kolb states: “Opposing both caricatures and generic portraits, the realists sought to strike a balance. Their characters became individualized without being eccentric, representative without being ideal.”¹¹⁵ Harrigan’s use of “types” embodies this approach of representation without idealization. His Black characters, despite the fact that they were White men in blackface, represented Black, and this was understood by the viewer. To reiterate Harrigan’s stance on Black playing Black that opened this chapter, the white man’s impersonation of Black was the desired effect, not exaggeration of that impersonation (as would occur with Black playing Black), nor the duplication of Black, but the version of Black as portrayed traditionally by White.

The trend in nineteenth-century American literature was always a movement away from the portrayal of upper classes toward giving a voice to the middle classes. American Romanticism, which arguably began with Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *Nature* in 1836, developed in part as a result of a nation seeking its own identity as one distinct from its British roots. However, the community portrayed in Romanticism tended away from urban portraits toward bucolic portrayals of mankind. At its core, Romanticism found moral soundness in the individual and exhibited a certain idealistic sentimentality. Romanticism was upended by Realism, which sought to portray a different community: the urban poor and middle classes, highlighting the social conditions of a societal cross-section of everyday life. This Realist movement represented a shift in moral standing that gave definition and voice to the un-pretty, non-ideal of these classes. Kolb states, “The realistic movement away from idealism, sentimentality, and romance is

¹¹⁵ Kolb, *The Illusion of Life*, 109.

evolutionary.”¹¹⁶ American Realism held its own social agenda of a forum through which previously unheard or unseen masses were brought to light.

William Dean Howells stood at the fore in trumpeting Realism as a weapon to be raised in the revolution against the entrenched forms of literature and drama, particularly Romanticism. According to Howells, Realism addresses “the serious treatment of everyday reality, the rise of the more extensive and socially inferior human groups to the position of subject matter for problematical-existential representation.”¹¹⁷ These “socially inferior human groups” included all but the wealthiest people. In other words, Realism offered an opportunity for new subject matter: the lives and locales of the less-than-wealthy.

The trend toward creating middle class and lower middle class characters coincided with economic growth within these communities which afforded them the ability to consume popular culture. In an age in which mass culture was represented by the growing popularity of pulp novels, and pseudo-museums (little more than side shows), Realism provided an alternative, both to the age of Romanticism as well as the rise of sensationalism. Kaplan explains Realism’s role in redefining the landscape of literature:

Realism can therefore be understood as both an aggressive and a defensive literary stance, which while pitting itself most obviously against the residual forms of the romance, more anxiously asserts itself against emerging forms of mass culture.¹¹⁸

Thus, Realism was performing various roles: disavowing the legitimacy of alternative

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 42.

¹¹⁷ Howells, *Harper’s Monthly* 77: 317.

¹¹⁸ Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism*, 15-16.

forms of culture which did not reflect all classes; and simultaneously rejecting the precursor to Realism–Romanticism. Like Romanticism, Realism was a conscious disengagement or revolt against the powers that be. Shi states, “What all realists held in common was a language of rebellion against the genteel elite governing American taste.”¹¹⁹ Realism consciously confronted society’s myopic view of itself. Howells’s “socially inferior human groups” were demanding a voice, which the Realists were able to provide.

American Realism suffused all aspects of culture from advertisements to visual arts to literature, shining a light on what had previously been overlooked. Nineteenth-century America was a nation comprised of newly arrived peoples each of whom brought with them the baggage of their own traditions and struggles that carried them to America, such as the potato famine in Ireland. American Realism subsumed their diverse voices and perceptions. Amy Kaplan asserts:

The true value of realism lies not in empirical accuracy but in adherence to common sense, to a communal consensus about the way things are—“the measure of all we know.” Yet in a society of immigrants in which many Americans did not speak the same dialect, let alone the same language, a common language had to be constructed against the counterforces of foreign tongues and social fragmentation.¹²⁰

The nineteenth-century urban centers contained a hodgepodge of cultures and traditions that acted as source material for the Realists, a “melting pot,” (a term that would not enter popular usage until 1908 with the play of the same name).

¹¹⁹ Shi, *Facing Facts*, 6.

¹²⁰ Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism*, 23.

The trend toward Realism arrived with the second half of the century. David Shi points to the 1850s as the launching point for American Realism.

During that decade, orthodox religious believers and natural philosophers felt the first unsettling tremors of evolutionary science. At the same time, debates between “idealists” and “realists” filled the literary journals. It was also during the 1850s that Walt Whitman published *Leaves of Grass*, Winslow Homer began his career as a magazine illustrator, Horatio Greenough launched his campaign for a more functional American architecture, and mass-circulation newspapers and illustrated weeklies introduced readers to the fact-devouring emphases of metropolitan journalism.¹²¹

As Americans began identifying themselves as Americans rather than by their country of origin, or the previously dominant power, England, and as the middle class grew, they insisted on art that reflected themselves in their new definitions. This was particularly true in the growing cities where the trend toward Realism flourished. Shi states, “The urban world of social thriving and social acting provided the theater of cultural realism.”¹²² Artists and writers responded in kind by producing works that reflected the new consumer—the middle class. As such, there was an explosion of urban-centric books in the thirty years from 1840 to 1870. In those decades, literature shifted from themes that focused on the frontier of the ever-expanding country, to life in American cities.

Howells recognized that the Realists were basing their portrayals on the working class. And although the Realists were for the most part from wealthy backgrounds, Howells recognized Realism as emerging for a population that had previously remained

¹²¹ Shi, *Facing Facts*, 10.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 85.

invisible in the realm of cultural significance. As Corkin explains, this provided the unique American-ness to the movement of Realism: “Howells’s commitment to the agenda of the rising middle class is one of the elements that distinguishes his vision of realist literature from that of his French counterparts, particularly Balzac and Zola.”¹²³ American Realism, in Howells view, was appropriated by the middle class because it gave a distinct voice to their own specific issues. According to Howells, the realist cannot look upon human life and declare this thing and that thing unworthy of notice, any more than the scientist can declare a fact of the material world beneath the dignity of his inquiry. He feels in every nerve the equality of things and the unity of men; his soul is exalted, not by vain shows and shadows and ideals, but by realities in which alone the truth lives.¹²⁴

What preceded the Realist movement on the stage, and indeed continued indefinitely, were plot-heavy melodramas in which spectacle superseded all else: character, plot, etc. Melodramas resolved conflicts with implausible resolutions—the transformation of villains from bad to good, the appearance of a lucky coincidence that arrives just in a nick of time, but these incongruities to actual life were accepted as characteristic of the genre. Heroes and villains were cutouts who underwent a variety of episodic adventures in formulaic storylines. Contrary to this, according to Howells, in the best Realistic fiction:

nothing happens; that is, nobody murders or debauches anybody else; there is no arson or pillage of any sort; there is not a ghost, or a ravening beast, or a hair-breadth escape, or a shipwreck, or a monster of self-sacrifice, or a lady five

¹²³ Corkin, *Realism and the Birth of the Modern United States*, 30.

¹²⁴ Howells, *Criticism and Fiction*, 15.

thousand years old in the whole course of the story.¹²⁵

Realist fiction offered what might appear as mundane, but within which individual characters emerged with specificity that transcended the bounds of melodramatic “types.” Harrigan’s characters can trace their lineage to such “types,” but develop individual characteristics that challenge expectation without departing from plausibility whether in the dialogue or written text, or in performance.

Howells championed character over plot, character as a quality of Realism as opposed to plot which is associated with Romanticism and melodrama. Realism relies on character in that character reveals the individual’s moral stance rather than representing a whole group. Within this concept of individual character, Harrigan’s use of White actors portraying Black characters appears incompatible with Realism’s tenets as the practice suggests stereotypes, particularly when observed through a modern perception of race and Realism, but when examined with a nineteenth-century perspective, Harrigan remains true to the movement.

Realism does not attempt to duplicate, but rather, it offers an accepted “general truth.” The Realist is concerned with authenticity insofar as it matches the truths of the audience (and playwright), grounded in the commonplace of everyday life. To briefly expand on this notion, which is dissected at greater length in chapter three, in essence Black, as a stage presence, was expected to be performed by White. By the time Harrigan was writing, this simple rule became more than tradition, but indeed the accepted truth. Unless it was an all-Black production such as *Out of Bondage* in the late nineteenth century, specialty performances feature star players such as the Hyers Sisters, or an all-Black company, such as The African Company in the early nineteenth century,

¹²⁵ Ibid. *Harper’s Monthly* 81, 1890: 804.

to portray Black by a Black breaks the fourth wall, as the audience is unused to Black actors in Black roles. To present Realism meant to meet an audience's expectations. This held true in all forms of Realism from painting to fiction to theatre. In regard to Realist plays, Brenda Murphy states:

The rhythm of life, these plays constantly suggest, is not a movement toward transcendence or harmony but a continual return to the mundane; not resolution or closure but irresolution and open-ended action; not spectacular world rending moments of truth but gradual processes of partial revelation, which may or may not effect some limited change in character or environment.¹²⁶

While Realism was adopted by the theatre, it did not lend itself to all forms of drama. As Henry James points out in a review of *Macbeth* in 1875,

The truth is, no artist need expect to play parts demanding style and elevation in this familiar juxtaposition and alternation with the "realistic" drama of the period. Realism is a very good thing, but it is like baking a pudding in a porcelain dish; your pudding may be excellent but your dish gets cracked.¹²⁷

Thus, Realism was found in contemporary locales utilizing set pieces that were drawn from the commonplace, not foisted upon classic plays or fantastical settings, which by their very nature cannot incorporate Realism. In fact, stagecraft was the first aspect of drama to get the label "realism," applied to the works of Daly, Mackaye, Belasco, Irving, Mansfield, and Herne. As I show in Chapter Three, Harrigan utilized stagecraft as a vehicle for the Realism of his dialogue and even more so, as an acceptable location for the realization of his characters.

¹²⁶ Ibid., xii.

¹²⁷ Henry James, *The Scenic Art: Notes on Acting and the Drama 1872-1901*, Allan Wade, ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1948), 34.

The period in which Harrigan presented his Mulligan Guards series is ideally suited to investigation of Realism on the American stage: 1879-1886. As Brenda Murphy states,

As a base from which to begin, then, the New York stage during the 1879-80 season has clear advantages. The year 1879-80 was not only the beginning of that crucial decade for literary realism in America, it was also a season that proved crucial for the introduction of realism in the theater. It was the season when Steel Mackaye's *Hazel Kirke*, recognized by theater historians as a watershed in the development of American dramatic realism, was first produced. It was the season when Mackaye's technically advanced Madison Square Theatre opened and when Augustin Daly began his reign as manager and promoter of realistic ensemble acting at Daly's Theatre. It was the season when James A. Herne (The "American Ibsen") made his first appearances in New York. Finally, the 1879-80 season marks a convenient midpoint between James's first review of a New York season (1875) and Howells's (1886).¹²⁸

Although Murphy does not include Harrigan in this identification of the period as a benchmark for American Realism, the first of the full-length plays in the Mulligan Guards series premiered in 1879. Harrigan's incorporation of a spectrum of communities from the Five Points region of New York had not existed previously on the American stage, and his depiction of the peoples and locale of this area embodied the developing ideals of Realism in terms of subject matter and location.

In *The Poetics*, Aristotle prioritizes six areas of drama addressed by the writer of tragedies. In *The Scenic Art*, Henry James uses an Aristotelian approach to describe six

¹²⁸ Murphy, *American Realism*, 2.

elements of Realistic representation: 1. the subject, some aspect of “the human spectacle”; 2. the author’s conception of that spectacle as it exists in his mind or imagination; 3. the making of the representation that expresses the author’s conception; 4. the author’s product, the text; 5. the interpretation of the text by the theatrical company (the actor’s interpretation); and 6. the spectacle of the theatrical production itself.¹²⁹ Each of these elements combined to create Realism on stage. For Harrigan, it was element number five, the interpretation of the text by the theatrical company, which lay at the center of his label as a Realist. The editor’s note which provides an introduction to Harrigan’s “Holding the Mirror up to Nature” in *Pearson’s Magazine* in 1903 asserts:

Before [Harrigan’s] adventure into dramatic characterization, there had been upon the American stage no representative of the foreign element in our great cities. There had been, to be sure, plenty of burlesque Irishmen, negroes, and Germans—burlesques based entirely upon the immigrants who landed at Castle Garden. Of the foreigner who had become a naturalized American citizen, or of his children with their mixed national traits there was not one hint. Mr. Harrigan’s peculiar creations may be said to have been the Americanized foreigner of Irish and German ancestry, and the town “coon” who apes the white man. He was the first to introduce such characters to the stage.¹³⁰

The author is correct in his assertion. Harrigan’s innovation was the presentation of characters in terms that went beyond the clichés of minstrelsy, providing layers of development in the characters’ desires, settings, and conflicts that had previously been glossed over through the shorthand that sketch comedy (minstrelsy and variety) provided.

¹²⁹ James, Henry. *The Scenic Art: Notes on Acting and the Drama 1872-1901*, Allan Wade, ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1948), 34.

¹³⁰ Harrigan, “Holding a Mirror Up to Nature”: 499.

Interestingly, the author praises Harrigan's introduction of the "town 'coon' who apes the white man," where that very "coon" was portrayed by the white man. This adds yet another layer to the representation of race in Harrigan's Realism. Was he purposefully trying to depict Black using Whites because Blacks were "aping" Whites?

Harrigan presented communities that had been common to the stage and recreated them as individuals. The conflicts at the core of the plays existed on two levels: between communities such as the Mulligan Guards and the Skidmore Guards, but also between individuals such as the (Black) Rebecca Allup and the (White) Bridget Lochmuller.

Concurrent with the shifting mores from Romanticism to Realism was the development of racial identity in America. The two fields, while they may appear at first to be unrelated, are actually intricately woven as the Realists examined the urban setting in America and its diversified populations. As I have stated, Realism was not a duplication of American society, but rather it offered a venue for otherwise unheard/unexamined aspects of America to be brought out of the shadows and, as such, displayed the Other in ways that had previously been relegated to comic or stereotyped villainous roles on the stage and in print and virtual invisible on canvass. Prior to the emergence of any definition and representation of a growing middle class, popular culture utilized Other-ness as a tool in self-expression—primarily to offer contrast to upper-class with middle and lower-class (the Others). The use and purpose of race shifts with the emergence of Realism and the growth of the representation of the working class. In this regard, the presentation of Other as characters in plays acted as a primer through which Other-ness was defined for the receivers by the presenters. The audience (the receivers) had expectations of how Other looked, sounded, and acted. The presenters

(Harrigan and company) capitalized on these expectations and created characters that fit within the constraints of expectations while bringing life to the characterizations through situations and interactions between disparate sets of staged Others.

Harrigan's work in presenting the Others in ways that fit the expectations of the audience without stooping to minstrel-ish broad strokes was ground-breaking. As William H. A. Williams states, "Harrigan was among the first to recognize that within the crowded tenements of New York something like community could exist in spite of the poverty and ethnic tensions."¹³¹ Harrigan's Realism incorporated the understanding of late nineteenth-century New York and its inhabitants, while stretching that understanding, in a sense leading the audience, to new possibilities in the definition of Others.

As I analyze in chapter four, Harrigan's portrayal of the Sixth Ward rang true to his audiences who were intimately familiar with, if not actually from, that area. I show how reviewers and critics of the Mulligan Guards series would again and again cite the accuracy of Harrigan's stage world as it depicted a specific cross-section of one of New York's most diverse neighborhoods. The truth is that Harrigan captures the essence of the neighborhood, but in no way duplicates it. The neighborhood was an amalgam of races and ethnicities that were in constant conflict, in a state of poverty that Harrigan does not even attempt to depict on stage. Harrigan capitalized on the inherent drama of the characters' interactions, and the comedy of conflict found in the Ward, but he presented the conflict within the confines of a dramatic structure, resolving conflicts with temporary solutions while leaving the characters open to future interactions in succeeding chapters.

¹³¹ William H. A. Williams, *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream: The Image of Ireland & the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800-1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 164.

At the core of Harrigan's conflicts were interfamilial and interracial conflicts. Race in the nineteenth century was not merely a Black/White issue. As each new population of immigrants arrived in America from Europe, such as the Irish or Italians, they were considered their own race until they assimilated and achieved the label of "White." Each group essentially acted as a footstool for the previous populations to step on up the ladder of assimilation. For African Americans and Eastern populations, the delineations were more severely demarcated. A volume entitled *Nineteenth Century resource, The American Cyclopaedia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge* dated 1860 regards the differences within the Caucasian race:

The Caucasian race, taught a Civil War-era school text, was in fact divided into two, "Celts" and "Goths," the former, including the Irish, characterized by "Strong passions and lively dispositions," the latter—the ancestral line of Protestant Anglo-Americans—identified by a manner "ingenious, but usually phlegmatic, and most distinguished by patient, persevering industry."¹³²

Despite the color of their skin, the Irish were, to a great degree, no better off than the Negro in terms of their position as Other within American society. White, but not White, they held the least desirable jobs, lived in the poorest neighborhoods, and were subject to the harshest treatment epitomized in the slogan "No Irish need apply." New York City had a population of just under a million people at the time of the Mulligan Guard series. Nearly half that population was foreign born, two fifths of whom were Irish, and 150,000 were German. The census of 1880 lists 13,000 "colored" people living in New York City. It is interesting to note that despite the vast difference in numbers between the African American population and the Irish American and German populations in New

¹³² Knobel, *America for the Americans*, 85.

York City at the time of these plays, the communities all shared the same neighborhood, and despite the difference in numbers, the African American population occupied a great deal more stage time than the Germans. The Irish, as the people and history of the author, received the bulk of the focus in the series.

All of the communities represented in the series were in conflict with one another, but as I demonstrate in chapter three, personal conflicts intra-communally exist almost exclusively within the Irish population of Mulligan Alley.¹³³ It is in the larger portrait of the three primary communities where Harrigan's conflicts are more well-balanced on a macro scale, "demonstrating the animosity between the Celtic, Teutonic, and Ethiopian races."¹³⁴ But where individuals within the same community are in conflict with one another on a micro scale, we see this occurring primarily with his Irish characters, predominantly within Dan Mulligan's family, with occasional spats between the minstrel-based Puter and Simpson.

The core of the inter-community conflicts exists primarily between the Irish and African American groups. In the first play of the series, *The Mulligan Guards Ball*, inter-racial conflict is established early on between the Irish Mulligan and the German Lochmuller, but as Moody explains,

The Irish-German skirmishes were, however, only a warm-up for the main event, the showdown between Dan's Mulligan Guard and the blackfaced Skidmore Guard, commanded by the barber Simpson Primrose and by Brother Palestine Puter.¹³⁵

¹³³ The only exception would be the comic conflict between Puter and Primrose, whose pun laden arguments echo those of Tambo and Bones from blackface minstrelsy.

¹³⁴ *Boston Traveller*, March 24, 1894, 16.

¹³⁵ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 88.

The Negro/Irish conflict continues through all of the plays in the series. This conflict reflects, albeit in a sanitized way, the state of such neighborhoods in New York City at the period in which the plays were written/take place. Lauren Onkey proposes that Harrigan's portrayal provides a key to understanding the state of black/Irish relations in that period. "I suggest that Harrigan's work is essential to our understanding of black-Irish relations, because it reveals the complexities and constant slippage between identification and anger."¹³⁶ Despite their completely different histories, the two communities historically were at odds with each other, but shared the same slums, worked the same jobs, and suffered the same indignities, while likewise engaging in almost perpetual conflict. These complexities are explored in Harrigan's work.

Although the discord between the communities serves the comedy of the plays, the unrest between them reflects a very real friction that existed between the Irish and Negro populations in New York City, over jobs, housing, and civil rights. Again, the closing image of Act II of *The Mulligan Guards Ball* with the collapse of the ceiling of the dancehall and the melee that ensues embodies the meeting of conflict and music and comedy. Harrigan's plays do not resolve the friction, however. There may be a ceasefire for the purposes of wrapping up the action of the play, but the tension remains ever present. The characters are aware that they must exist side by side and thus tensions do not remain the focus at all times, as shown in the common use of shops such as the barber shop in *The Mulligan Guards Ball* where an implied truce allows all three primary communities to utilize the business creating a setting in which personal conflicts like that between Dan Mulligan and Lochmuller.

Harrigan's plays offer a glimpse into the world of the multi-racial downtown

¹³⁶ Onkey, "A Melee and a Curtain," 13.

neighborhoods and the inter-community relationships in New York City. They expose the racial perceptions of their era. For instance when Dan Mulligan is running for Alderman in *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, he is transparently racist when speaking with his fellow Irishmen, but relies on the Black vote to get elected.

Dan: Gentlemen, there are 800 colored voters in my district. It would crush me financially, physically and constitutionally to see them stay home to-morrow and not vote the straight Mulligan ticket. What can I do for them? How can I give up ten years of me life to serve them?¹³⁷

There is an imbalance in the presentation of the races of Irish versus Negro. All six plays in the series, as well as the three subsequent Mulligan plays built on the same characters, invariably conclude with a positive presentation of the characterizations of the Irish characters, the predominant focal point of the series, despite whatever ambiguous ethical choices the characters may have made along the way. The African American characters are not quite so neatly tied up by the end of the pieces. As Howells points out in an essay in 1886 for *Harper's Magazine*, "Not all the Irish are good Irish, but all the colored people [in the Mulligan series] are bad colored people."¹³⁸ Koger echoes this assertion stating: "The Blacks constantly manipulated the action to improve their financial positions. Rarely did Harrigan make a blackface character in the variety farces an honest man."¹³⁹ Harrigan broke new ground in his characterization of African American characters, but the imbalance remained between Black and (not-yet-White) Irish.

Harrigan was not the first American dramatist to present non-minstrel African

¹³⁷ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, 9.

¹³⁸ William Dean Howells, *Harper's Monthly* 73: 316.

¹³⁹ Alicia Kae Koger, "A Critical Analysis of Edward Harrigan's Comedy," Ph.D. dissertation. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1984), 157.

American characters. Indeed some of the most notable dramatic roles in the nineteenth century were African American characters. These included Zeke in Anna Cora Mowatt's *Fashion; or, Life in New York* (1849), Pete in Boucicault's *The Octoroon* (1861), and most famously, Uncle Tom and Eliza in the many stage versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Blackface was commonplace, particularly after the rise of minstrelsy, but not exclusively. Nearly all great American performers of the nineteenth century performed in blackface: Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, even P.T. Barnum. Before branching into the family friendly "Vaudeville" Tony Pastor had a minstrel troupe at 201 Bowery, and performed in blackface himself. The Negro character, however, was rarely more than the broad minstrel caricature in his various manifestations, but that single caricature was the most popular figure of the nineteenth-century stage. Hutton explains:

How much of the wonderful success and popularity of the negro minstrel is due to the minstrel, how much to the negro melody he introduced, and how much to the characteristic bones, banjo, tambourine upon which he accompanied himself, is an open question. It was certainly the song, not the singer, which moved Thackeray to write many years ago, "I heard a humorous balladist not long since, a minstrel with wool on his head and an ultra Ethiopian complexion who performed a negro ballad that I confess moistened these spectacles in a most unexpected manner."¹⁴⁰

The American character of the stage minstrel shifted in meaning throughout the nineteenth century. As Dale Cockrell and David Krasner delineate in their studies of the art form, the tradition of the minstrel performer transformed from the voice of the underdog spoofing the upper stratum of society, to portrayals of African Americans that were perceived as accurate. As the minstrel show became more commonplace, so too did

¹⁴⁰ Hutton, "The Negro on Stage," 144.

the perception that the Black characters on the stage reflected the African American community. This shift in perception from satire to mockery occurred slowly as the minstrel show evolved over the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Although “Daddy” Rice may have been inspired to “Jump Jim Crow” through observation of a Negro dockworker, minstrelsy did not form out of observation of African American comedy or even out of burlesque of African Americans. As Ralph Ellison explains:

The role, which makes use of Negro idiom, songs, dance motifs and word-play, [does not] grow out of the Negro American sense of the comic (although we too have our comedy of blackness), but out of the white American’s Manichean fascination with the symbolism of blackness and whiteness expressed in such contradictions as the conflict between the white American’s Judeo-Christian morality, his democratic political ideals and his daily conduct—indeed in his general anti-tragic approach to experience.¹⁴¹

With the advent of the Civil War and growth in the population of African Americans in urban areas, the minstrel shifted toward a (supposed) more literal portrayal of African Americans. In mid-century, when African Americans actors, musicians, and singers began performing in minstrel shows, the programs were touted as authentic; however these performers were imitating the blacked-up white performers’ versions of Black. Thus, when Tony Hart is praised for his authenticity in his performance of African American women, was he being praised for his ability to imitate the earlier blackface minstrels (the white performers in blackface)? Or was he being praised for his accurate depiction of African Americans? Or was Hart’s portrayal of African American simply less cartoonish than African American performers who were used to performing the

¹⁴¹ Ralph Ellison, *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison* (New York: Modern Library, 1995), 47-48.

burlesques of their own race?

Mel Watkins states that “from the outset, [minstrel] troupes with black performers were advertised and promoted as ‘the real thing.’ Frank Queen, editor of *The Clipper*, a contemporary entertainment newspaper, bluntly referred to them as ‘real nigs.’”¹⁴² After African Americans were employed to perform in minstrel shows, some producers of these shows competing for audiences created gigantic minstrel shows advertised these mammoth reviews as re-creations of southern plantations. The rise in claims of authenticity in minstrel shows coincided with the post-Civil War reconstruction period (1865-77). In this period the minstrel show transformed. As Finson states,

In place of a primitive sage decrying excesses of power and lampooning upper-class politesse from behind a black mask, composers substituted a “realistic” African-American who represented one ethnic minority among many in an increasingly diverse population.¹⁴³

But while the label of “realistic” was attached to these songs and performances, the Reconstruction period also saw a backlash against African Americans in song. Sam Dennison recognizes that during this period of Reconstruction, “Many songwriters were either unable or unwilling to recognize the human dignity of freedmen and resorted to atavistic forms such as the ‘carry-me-back’ in apparent disregard of the new status of blacks.”¹⁴⁴ Likewise, at the time of the Mulligan Guards series the “coon song” phenomenon was launched with “The Dandy Coon’s Parade” by J. P. Skelley, published in 1880. Coon songs, essentially racist songs that propagated stereotypes about chicken

¹⁴² Watkins, *On the Real Side*, 121.

¹⁴³ Finson, *The Voices that are Gone*, 200.

¹⁴⁴ Sam Dennison, *Scandalize My Name: Black Imagery in American Popular Music* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 295-96.

stealing, razor toting coons, would remain popular well into the twentieth century at least as late as 1920. Thus, there was a shift from broad humor that served a particular function of burlesque and satire toward an outright maliciousness. “The heightened realism in the music of pseudo-spirituals and the increased attention to ‘Negro oddities’ for their own sake led to even more derogatory songs, as criticism of blacks gave way to deliberate malice.”¹⁴⁵ Harrigan’s African Americans were developed in a period in which the comic stage African-American, as well as the “coons” of popular music were buffoons to be ridiculed and the theatre-going public grew to expect these types of representations.

Although Harrigan would produce Black on stage through the use of a non-black actor, he was not completely insensitive to the actual background of the slave. In 1876 Harrigan and Braham wrote an unsuccessful song entitled “Slavery Days” in which the life of the slave was depicted in all its tragedy.

I am thinking today,
Of dem years that passed away,
When they tied me up in bondage long ago:
In Old Virginny state,
It was there we separate,
And it filled my heart with misery and woe.
They took away my boy,
He was his mother’s joy,
From a baby in a cradle we him raise:
Oh dey put us far apart,

¹⁴⁵ Finson, *Voices that are Gone*, 219.

And it broke de old man's heart,
In dem agonizing cruel slavery days.

Chorus:

Dey never come again,
Let us give our praise to him,
Who looks down on whar de little children play:
So ev'ry night and morn,
We will pray for dem dat's gone,
In dem agonizing cruel slavery days.¹⁴⁶

This portrayal of the horrific life of the slave was a great departure from more typical and popular songs by other writers who cast a nostalgic or comic view of plantation life by the former slave.

It is important to recognize casting in regard to Harrigan's portrayal of Blackness. Whereas Harrigan would employ Annie Mack and Annie Yeamans to play two of the pivotal ongoing roles in the series—essentially white women playing white women—all of Harrigan's female black characters were played by men. While men in women's roles was a comic tradition, the fact that female characters were played by both men and women in the same pieces makes a bold statement about Realism. Through this practice, Harrigan's assertion that "Negroes cannot be natural on stage" is raised beyond simply race, but also includes gender. Tony Hart's masterful Rebecca Allup was a cornerstone in keeping the series popular. The implication in casting is that Caucasian men are more capable of playing black characters, whether the character was male or female. And although he had white female stars among his troupe of actors, Harrigan did not cast a

¹⁴⁶ See appendix B for the complete lyric.

white woman in a leading Negro role.¹⁴⁷

To put blackface on a performer did not make the performer Black. Tony Hart was praised for his authenticity in embodying Rebecca through his lovely voice and sense of realization of character (not Black women in general, but Rebecca specifically). This was not universally true of all blackfaced actors. Other performers at the time, not associated with Harrigan and his company, although acclaimed for their performances, were not accepted as Black despite the use of blackface makeup. For instance, as Hutton explains, Bernard Flaherty, a hugely popular performer in the mid-nineteenth century,

is perhaps the one man upon the American stage with whom anything like negro minstrelsy will never be associated, not so much because of his high rank in his profession as on account of the Hibernian style of his laterday performances, and of the strong accent which always clung to him and which suggested his native city [Dublin] rather than the cork he used to burn to color his face.¹⁴⁸

Since Realism in regard to race depended on meeting an audience's expectations for what they anticipated seeing/hearing from that character, despite the burnt cork makeup of the blackface performer, Flaherty fell outside of the realm of acceptance as Black because of his acting style and brogue. Hart was such a master at creating the stage persona of "Black," keeping within accepted parameters dictated by tradition, that the audience accepted him as the character he was portraying.

The Irish, as the Blacks, were equally outsiders or "Others" in nineteenth-century America. Prior to Harrigan's creations, the stage Irishman was as stereotyped as the minstrel Black. As Montrose J. Moses describes them, "The stage Irishman became as

¹⁴⁷ There is also no evidence that a woman played any of the minor black characters either.

¹⁴⁸ Hutton, "The Negro on Stage," 139.

much of a cartoon as the stage conception of Uncle Sam. He was a red-nosed, down-at-heel buffoon.”¹⁴⁹ Political cartoons of the period attest to the bestial, less-than-human depiction of the newly-arrived Irishman. Maurice Bourgeois states in 1913 in regard to the stage Irishman:

His face is one of simian bestiality with an expression of diabolical archness written all over it. In his right hand he brandishes a stout blackthorn or a sprig of a shillelagh. For his main characteristics (if there be any such thing as psychology in the stage Irishman) are his swagger, his boisterousness, and his pugnacity.¹⁵⁰

Harrigan sought to banish these images of Irish, replacing them with a reflection of the population in which he grew up. Unlike Harrigan’s portrayal of the Irish, the dominant model of the Irish immigrant however was as outsiders of an intimidating population belonging to a separate race than White. Images like the one below create a simian type image of Irish that depict them as less than human.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Moses, “Edward Harrigan,” 26.

¹⁵⁰ Maurice Bourgeois, *John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre* (New York: Macmillan, 1913), 47.

¹⁵¹ *Harper’s Weekly*, September 2, 1871.

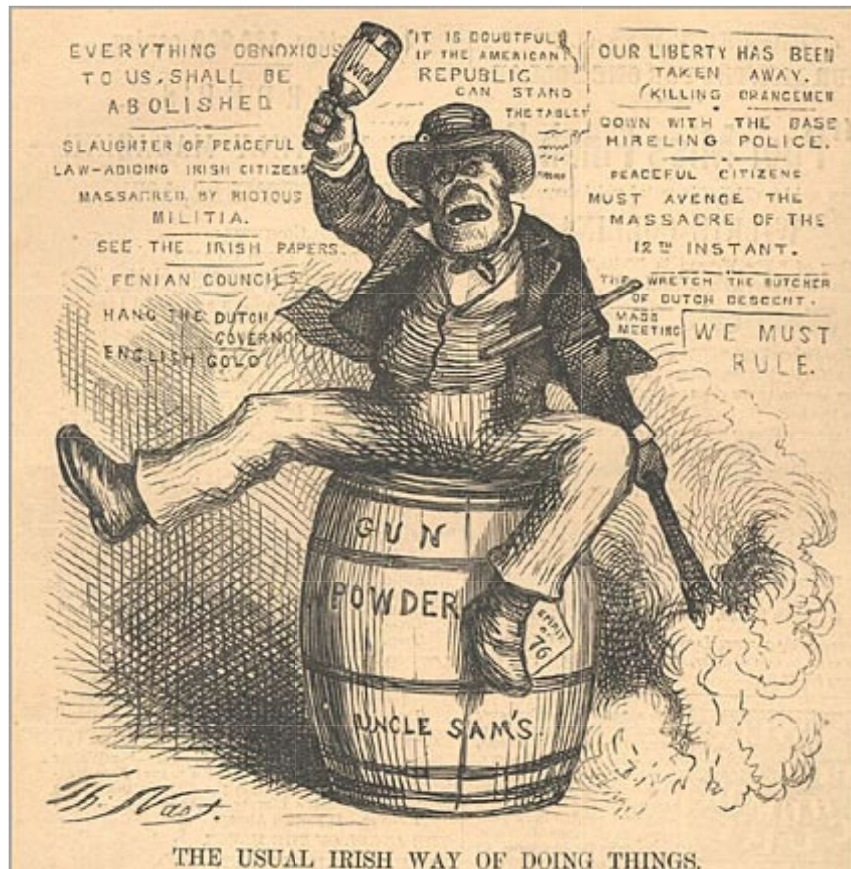


Figure 2.1 “The Usual Irish Way of Doing Things”

As the image suggests, the Irish were portrayed as belligerent, uneducated, alcoholic, ape-like invaders and were depicted as such in literature, theatre, and newspapers of the day. As Knobel points out in his essay “Celtic Exodus,” “The issue is not whether Celts and Anglo-Americans could be distinguished biologically in any meaningful way but how the rhetoric of ‘race’ represented wishful thinking about the permanence and indecisiveness of American nationality.”¹⁵² The presence of Other-ness helped to maintain a hierarchy based on assimilation or lack thereof. The 1860 census even contained the categories/labels of “Teutonic” and “Celt” to differentiate these newly arrived hordes from the established Whites. As with many stereotypes associated with African Americans, the famine-ravished Irish that appeared in the United States were

¹⁵² Knobel, *America for the Americans*, 86.

victimized with stereotypes that were held as fact. The stereotypes promulgated a hatred and fear that seemed justified and encouraged abuse, and these stereotypes as Knobel states,” “helped give some plausibility to the notion that immigration was introducing a wholly different sort of people into the American social fabric.”¹⁵³ In other words, the negative characteristics attached to the outsiders helped to maintain their “otherness.”

The juxtaposition of Irish and Black within the Mulligan series allows the audience to differentiate between the two races within the same piece. As I show in chapter three, one of the fundamental tools in differentiating character race—even on the page—is through dialect. Despite the presence of both communities, united in their ostracism, Harrigan’s depictions of the two races were not equally sympathetic. The Irish Mulligans garnered the bulk of the audience’s empathy. As Onkey asserts, “Harrigan’s ‘types’ constructed the Irish as a more tame group than blacks; the Irish may not be model citizens, but they don’t wield razors.”¹⁵⁴ But to be Irish on stage was not necessarily to be sympathetic.

In the 1870s, Harrigan’s presentation of a sympathetic Irishman may not have been the first of its kind, but Harrigan attempted to recreate the stage Irishman in his own image. He states: “My Irishmen were something new, too, for before that time it was the Irish immigrants, the Handy Andys of the Barney Williams and ‘Billy’ Florence type, which were portrayed on the stage.”¹⁵⁵ He brought to the stage the Irishman he knew from his own neighborhood and youth, not the relatively few “upper class” Irishmen, but the “shanty Irish” of the Sixth Ward.

Harrigan debunked many (but not all) of the stereotypes that were attached to the

¹⁵³ Ibid., 87.

¹⁵⁴ Onkey, “A Melee and a Curtain,” 8.

¹⁵⁵ Harrigan, “Holding a Mirror Up to Nature”: 500.

stage Irishman, a task that necessitated dissolving set-depictions and recreating the character while still maintaining a stage image that was still acceptably within the bounds of “Irish.” Although Dan Mulligan and his cronies drank, enjoyed fighting, and remained unedited in their emotional response to circumstances, Harrigan provided nuances and human circumstances in which the characters were allowed individuality. Stephen Watt examines the difficulty of this reinvention.

Playwrights and actors who endeavored to vanquish [the prevalent Irish] stereotype from the stage thus needed to deconstruct the binary opposition between Anglo-American “civilization” and a primitive Irish “Otherness” upon which it was based. But this was not Irish drama’s only task, for in addition to redacting the stage Irishman, the forming of a counter discourse to his dominance on stage and in print, it also needed to advance a progressive vision of the melding together of Irish immigrant and Yankee resident into an evolving American society.¹⁵⁶

Harrigan’s intentions of creating “a progressive vision of the melding together of Irish immigrant and Yankee resident into an evolving American society” may be the residual effect of his more intentional vision of presenting what he considered a plausible world on stage. To measure the effectiveness of Harrigan’s vision, I not only examine his plays (chapter three), but how his own statements concerning Realism and theatricality reveal his intent, which with the benefit of hindsight can be analyzed as to his effectiveness in carrying out that intent.

Harrigan on Race and Realism

Harrigan’s understanding and interpretation of his own Realism centered on his

¹⁵⁶ Watt, “Irish American Drama,” 100.

attention to characterizations and developed to include sets, props, and costumes. The plots were simply frames in which his characters interacted. For instance the plot of *Mulligan Guard Picnic* is merely the planning for and execution of an excursion to New Jersey for a picnic where the Mulligan Guards and the Skidmores both plan their trips for the same time and same place. Like many of his plays, the plot is episodic in nature, but serves the function of throwing characters into circumstances together. In 1896 Harrigan states: “the modern dramatist concerns himself too much with the manipulation of situations and the consideration of questions beside the mark. He neglects his real business—which is to draw characters from real life, to people the stage with flesh and blood.”¹⁵⁷ To Harrigan, Realism meant to create a world on stage that seemed to depict a fictionalized idealized version of the non-fictional world.

The love of my work of setting forth these lowly but genuine human types grew upon me with my own growth in the art of stage realism. I have sought above all to make my plays like pages from actual life. I have depicted some painful types, I am well aware, and some that may have been rather shockingly realistic in their unconventional fidelity to a stratum of human society that has not been so much neglected since I first began to portray it, but which was rather an unknown country to the playwrights and even to the story-tellers of my Mulligan, Old Lavender and Leather Patch days.¹⁵⁸

This rather grandiose view of his own work is accurate only to a degree. Harrigan’s plays indeed focused on lower class and “painful types” for several reasons. These characters not only acted like “pages from actual life,” but gave the plays an

¹⁵⁷ Robinson Locke Scrapbook #234, 3.

¹⁵⁸ Harrigan. “Holding a Mirror Up to Nature”: 505.

entertainment value that was absent (in Harrigan's view), in the upper stratum of society: "Polite society, wealth, and culture possess little or no color and picturesqueness."¹⁵⁹ His plays would include on occasion the wealthy (*Cordelia's Aspirations*), but these upper class characters acted as "a foil to the poor, the workers, and the great middle class."¹⁶⁰ Aside from his obvious benefit of first-hand knowledge of those characters drawn from his own life experience, Harrigan's use of the less-than-rich served several functions: portraiture of real life, familiarity to the author, and entertainment value inherent in their colorful lives. But as for Harrigan's claim that "I have sought above all to make my plays like pages from actual life" and "I have depicted some painful types, I am well aware, and some that may have been rather shockingly realistic," he was either fooling himself to his own effectiveness, or, as I suspect is the case, his words are not meant to be taken literally. His plays never resemble "actual life" except in the rhythms of speech, the detail of sets, costumes and props, and the consistency of character. In order to measure whether or not some characters were "shockingly realistic," one would have to have experienced their portrayal in their original stage incarnations, but as I show in chapter four, no critic seems shocked by what he saw.

Again, the focus was on character. Whether it is the bickering between Rebecca Allup and any number of characters, the schemes of the Skidmores to thwart the Irish from riding on streetcars, or even the marital spats between Dan Mulligan and his wife Cordelia, the entertainment primarily emerged from the comedy of the characterizations. It was from these "painful types" that Harrigan's reputation grew, both in the characters as they existed on paper and more particularly as they were portrayed by the outstanding

¹⁵⁹ Daly, "American Playwrights on the American Drama," 100.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

team of actors who surrounded the playwright.

It seems apparent through the various statements that Harrigan made regarding his plays that he wrote what he thought necessary to entertain himself, culled from his day to day experience, put down on paper in an edited version. He stated, “The secret of success in playwriting lies largely in fidelity to nature. A play succeeds when a spectator can put himself in the place of a leading part and see himself doing what is being done.”¹⁶¹ This simple statement gives insight into Harrigan’s interpretation of Realism. For Harrigan, Realism lies in audience identification—particularly with the leading role. As Harrigan himself played the leading role (Dan Mulligan) in all of the Mulligan Guards series, the achievement of his brand of Realism rested upon his shoulders through audience identification with Harrigan. However, his Realism seems unintentional as he never made reference to his own work as Realism until relatively late in his career (1903 onward), well after he had received the label of Realist by Howells and others.

At the outset of his career, the only motivation for Harrigan in creating stage characters was to make a living through creating highly entertaining comedies (with the occasional (melo)drama). From his early days in developing his own sketches through the Mulligan Guards series and beyond, Harrigan tailored roles for himself. And although he studied the smallest detail with all of his characters, as Harrigan states: “I always take as much pains with the smaller parts as I do with my own. Of course I give myself the lion’s share.”¹⁶² This quote is accurate for the most part, but it could be argued that by the later plays of the series, Rebecca Allup shared equal stage time.

As I show in chapter four in my analysis of stage directions and text analysis,

¹⁶¹ E.J. Kahn, *The Merry Partners: The Age and Stage of Harrigan and Hart* (New York: Random House, 1955), 262.

¹⁶² New York Public Library, Locke Robinson scrapbook #234, 97.

characterization developed in dialogue, conflict, and setting as well as in minutiae such as character gesture. Harrigan's Realism was an outcome of his obsession with being true to the "actual" world, but was not the goal of his writing. The drive for what was realistic came from Harrigan's desire for naturalness (not to be confused with Naturalism). Although he aimed for humor in his character developments and plotlines, this was not (usually)¹⁶³ at the expense of what might be observable in real life. He states:

What I insist upon in an actor, above everything else, is entire naturalness. I cannot endure a distortion of the actual character which I have studied in life and sought to give in characteristic lines of the play. My slum and beggar types, my tramps, are not the burlesque caricatures that appeal to the mirth of spectators by absurd and implausible exaggeration of rags or make-up.¹⁶⁴

As I show in chapter four, it appears that Harrigan was accurate in his assertions concerning his directorial vision. He was praised for the naturalness of the characterizations and the actors were touted for their depictions of these characters. Harrigan's use of the word "types" is significant in that it suggests that his characters emerged not as individuals, but as the embodiments of certain cross-sections of New York's denizens, as well as "types" that emerged from theatre traditions that preceded him, most notably melodrama and minstrelsy.

But for Harrigan, "types" do not equal characters. "With the plot fixed or started and with the types and places in my mind it is easy to construct the characters and write

¹⁶³ See "Chapter Three: Text Analysis" for instances where, for the sake of humor, Harrigan blatantly retreats from what "might be observable in real life," such as when an African American character, after having been hit, gets a "white eye."

¹⁶⁴ Harrigan. "Holding a Mirror Up to Nature": 505.

the piece.”¹⁶⁵ Harrigan attempted to present these “types” as they appeared in their natural states: “I try not to put too many patches upon my shabby gentility. I examine the general effect of every character with the closest scrutiny, just as I watch the general gestures and movements and ‘dolor,’ so to speak , of the part.”¹⁶⁶ Rather than putting “too many patches upon [his] shabby gentility,” Harrigan would find the costume that was not a costume at all, but rather the garment that had exactly the correct number of patches, and would literally buy it off the back of a New Yorker who was deemed by Harrigan as the same “type” as the character. As Moody states regarding the costumes Harrigan used in his productions, “Garments weren’t built. They had evolved in the distant past, having adapted their shape to the body and spirit of their host.”¹⁶⁷ E.J. Kahn quotes Harrigan stating:

I have often followed a man or woman around the city for hours until a favorable opportunity presented itself for opening negotiations for the purchase of clothes. No matter with whom I may be or what I am doing, let me see a quaint costume and I will do my utmost to secure it.¹⁶⁸

The detail of the costuming such as the uniform worn in *Mulligan Guards Ball* in the collection at the Museum of the City of New York suggests that Harrigan’s claim was true. In the real garment Harrigan found the life essence that allowed his plays to transcend the footlights and reach the audience. Again, it was not his goal to duplicate day to day living, but to offer entertainments in which an audience might identify the characters and situations as commonplace enough to have happened to themselves. “In

¹⁶⁵ Daly, “American Playwrights on the American Drama,” 100.

¹⁶⁶ Harrigan, “Holding a Mirror up to Nature”: 506.

¹⁶⁷ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 170.

¹⁶⁸ Kahn, *Merry Partners*, 51.

every theatrical representation devoid of vulgarity you will find some reflex of life, and life is the fount from which the playwright must draw.”¹⁶⁹ Again and again Harrigan would stress the importance of drawing his dramas from the streets of New York City.

In creating his characters, no matter how great the actor was, he insisted that the actor playing the part be suitable for the part: “He never tried to disguise a young man with a beard and gray wig; cosmetics did not create age.”¹⁷⁰ The question naturally arises that if Harrigan was so attuned to the suitability to the actor for the role, why were White actors cast in Black roles? As I discuss in chapter three, Harrigan did work with at least one black actor, but that was in sketch comedy. His standards were different for his full-length plays in which he was creating a specific illusion. The rules were specific for the Mulligan Guards series. He might not put a beard and gray wig on a young man, but he didn’t hesitate to put burnt cork on one. Again, the answer lies in the suitability of the actor for the role. If a Black actor was to perform the Black roles, the play would leave the realm of acceptability in that an audience was unfamiliar with Black actors playing Black. The experience of Harrigan and his audience was rooted in minstrelsy and blackface, so suitability lay in familiarity. Even in this regard Harrigan was ruthless in casting. Tony Hart, as Rebecca Allup, was known to have a pretty voice, one suitable to a woman, not a basso who is transparently and comically not female, but an actor who embodies the lie that is being enacted.

In answer to the question of casting, Harrigan responded, “John may be a good actor, an honest fellow with a family to support, but if he doesn’t suit my character I

¹⁶⁹ Harrigan, “The Play’s the Thing,” New York Public Library, Locke Robinson scrapbook #234, 99.

¹⁷⁰ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 169.

won't try to use him."¹⁷¹ Suitability to the play was the motivation. And although Harrigan's troupe of actors attained stardom individually, it was through performing the roles that Harrigan created for them that they achieved that success. Essentially, the celebrity of Hart, Harrigan, Yeamans, and others stemmed from their portrayals of characters in the Mulligan Guards series.

His insistence on proper casting might explain a number of phenomena in the series: continuity and development of characters, consistency in casting, and tailoring the roles to suit the actors. This is a chicken or egg deliberation. Did the roles emerge first or did the actors with whom he worked collaborate in designing the roles? When asked in an interview in 1891 if it is easier to create a play when he knew who was going to be in the cast, Harrigan responded simply, "Very much easier."¹⁷²

With a core group of actors with which to work, Harrigan's task as playwright was simplified as he envisioned the actual performance. In a revealing essay in which he discusses his methodology, Harrigan stresses the impact of knowing his actors:

I have the whole stage in my mind as I write. I put a phrase down for an actor and I can see that actor's face as he says it. I imagine every motion of the hand of each member of the company. When I make a character I always have the person in mind who is to create it. It is much easier to construct a drama when you thoroughly understand the peculiarities and the capacities of the people you employ. Writing a play to order does not harm the imagination at all, but, on the contrary, it incites it.¹⁷³

The "types" of characters in the plays existed before the plots of the plays, which

¹⁷¹ Unidentified clipping December 13, 1891, Harvard Theatre Collection.

¹⁷² Locke Robinson scrapbook #234 p. 97.

¹⁷³ Daly, "American Playwrights on the American Drama," 100.

Harrigan found to be the most difficult part of play writing, but as with the “types” of characters, Harrigan drew his stories from the streets of his city. Harrigan would try various storylines before settling on what would eventually become the play. When asked about how he develops a plot, Harrigan responded.

Do I write round a given situation? No, I endeavor to lead up to one. I do my best to get my characters into the most complicated state possible, and then I set to work to disentangle them. I rarely have a clear idea of what the climax will be when I am proceeding with the act. Then again, often as not, when the act is finally completed it rarely satisfies me. I tear it up and begin again.¹⁷⁴

It is easy to believe Harrigan’s analysis of his approach to play structure. As many of his plots rely on a “deus ex machina” in the form of a chaotic incident that interrupts the plot, particularly around the completion of acts, it appears that Harrigan relied on these large comic effects to create dramatic conclusions to his thin story lines. But unlike the sensationalism of melodrama, Harrigan’s events were inherent to the locales and situations of his plays. These events, such as the explosion that occurs onboard the ferry to Albany in *Mulligan Guards Nominee* or even the appearance of the turkey-stealing-giraffe who sticks his head through a window in *Mulligan Guards Christmas*, unlikely as they may seem, do not erase the Realism, for as William Demastes states, “An audience may accept certain levels of theatricality but still identify the work as fundamentally realistic”¹⁷⁵ as long as the author remains true to his depiction of characterization and does not devolve into melodramatic devices of coincidence, and unjustified actions.

Rather than a single fluid story, Harrigan’s plots are episodic in nature with a

¹⁷⁴ New York Public Library, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Locke Robinson scrapbook #234, 97.

¹⁷⁵ Demastes, *Realism and the American Dramatic Tradition*, xi.

thread that ties them together. For example, *The Mulligan Guards' Surprise* centers on Dan Mulligan's conflicts with his in-laws who have moved in with him and Cordelia in their new upper-crust, Upper East Side home. The family moves in, and causes marital conflict with Dan and Cordelia, and the couple resolves their differences by moving back to the old neighborhood. In response to an accusation that his plays were merely prolonged sketches, Harrigan asserted that his plays were rather, "a continuity of incidents, with some simple reason for their dovetailing, and each link on the string sustained by some natural motive that calls for the building of the entire stage structure."¹⁷⁶ The "sketches" were simply glimpses into the lives of the characters. Basically, as with all the other plays in the series, the plot serves as a frame on which to hang the many comic encounters. This is not a weakness in the playwright's ability, but rather it was his intention to create snapshots that reflected his observations of New York. "Each drama is a series of photographs of life today in the Empire City."¹⁷⁷ The metaphor of photography is often used in reviews of Harrigan's work as well as Harrigan's own descriptions. Obviously, Harrigan is not reproducing the observations he made of life in New York City, but rather, in the tradition of the stilted, posed portraits of photographs of the day, he offers glimpses of familial relationships in formalized settings.

In his daily regimen of walking around New York City and jotting down observations, Harrigan sought real life situations and locales that would appeal to the audience.

As examples, the bar-room in one of the Mulligan series was copied from a saloon in Roosevelt Street, the opium den in *Investigation* from a "joint" in Pell

¹⁷⁶ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 167.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

Street, and the “dive” in Waddy Googan from an establishment in the neighborhood of the Bowery.¹⁷⁸

With locale and types in hand, Harrigan built plays that would be labeled (by others) as Realism and received as new in their approach to American theatre. But Harrigan did not set out to be an innovator, rather, he was simply writing what he knew. He realized and acknowledged that his work might only be digestible on the local level, never imagining himself to be anything more than a specialized entertainer who focused solely on a certain stratum of New York City. He wavered on the universality of his plays, first acknowledging that they were American, “I class my works as American, and the greatest compliment paid to my plays by foreigners is that they do not understand them,”¹⁷⁹ and then admitting that his plays were even more localized in their appeal, “I now understand, of course, that its main success is owing to the purely local interest of all the characters. The piece wouldn’t be understood outside of New York.”¹⁸⁰ Despite his claims of catering to a particular community, as the series grew more popular, he incorporated elements that reflected the changing population of his audience, particularly in Mulligan’s rise in socio-economic status that matched that of the new audience members. As the review of *Mulligan Guards Surprise* states in 1880, “It is clear that the popularity of Messrs. Harrigan and Hart is reaching the up-town quarters of the city and that the patrons of the fashionable theaters are beginning to find their way beyond Wallacks.”¹⁸¹

Significant in examining the Realism and reception of Harrigan’s plays is how the author staged the pieces. The Realism lay not only in the text or in the specificity of

¹⁷⁸ Daly, “American Playwrights on the American Drama,” 97.

¹⁷⁹ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 167.

¹⁸⁰ New York Public Library, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Locke Robinson scrapbook #234, 97.

¹⁸¹ *New York Times*, February 18, 1880, p. 5. Wallacks was one of two theaters that catered to the wealthy up-town crowd, the other theater being the Park Theater.

stage dressing or costume, but in the direction. This is a component of theatrical Realism which is overlooked in the study of nineteenth-century American theatre. Sets and text are examined, but the “how” of the production is disregarded. In chapter four I analyze audience and critical response to Harrigan’s plays. One must acknowledge Harrigan’s attention to detail in his staging of his work in order to assess how to define his form of Realism. In an interview with Harrigan in 1881, two years after the first full-length Mulligan Guards play premiered, Harrigan allowed insight into his approach to direction:

The hardest part comes after the play is written. No matter how finished it may appear from a literary or artistic standpoint it is still in a state of utter crudity to all practical intents and purposes. I have to place it before my company, hammer it into shape, gait it, and in short, act it over and over again until I am satisfied with it. The man who directs the stage has the hardest part of the battle in his hands.¹⁸²

This quote is consistent with the apparent objective of Harrigan’s approach, the presentation of character in detailed realization, allowing for characterization that transcends stereotypes. A rehearsal period in which to “hammer it into shape” provided Harrigan with a directorial opportunity to realize the vision in his head when he set out writing the piece.

With his core troupe of actors Harrigan was able to bring his complicated world of diverse types to life. There is little record of Harrigan’s viewpoint on the various “races” found in his stage pieces, but he was consistent in viewing each of the “types” as a race unto themselves. “With four races to handle—the Irish, Germans, Africans, and Celestials¹⁸³—my sketch was somewhat crowded at first; but it has come out all right.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Celestials refers to Chinese immigrants.

He incorporated these “races” for their entertainment value, fleshing out stereotypes that preceded his work and imbuing them with characterization that enhanced the storytelling. Stereotypes need no definition whereas characterization contains specificity of motivation and interrelationship with other characters. The difference lay in Harrigan’s individualizing his characters rather than slapping onto his characters pre-existing behaviors dictated by the minstrel stage and low variety sketches. For instance, rather than imitate the minstrel character John Chinaman who was primarily a source of comedy solely through his pidgin English, Harrigan’s creation of Hog Eye had romantic interests (Rebecca), defended himself against outrages (his struggles with Cordelia), and was able to identify the Otherness of characters outside of his own minority. In *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*, Hog Eye confronts Mrs. Dublin, putting her in her place while defending his business of washing clothes:

Mrs. Dublin: You come over here and undermine me in my washing. Where I charge ten cents for a frilled bosom, and five cents for a dickey, you charge three cents; and the divil a button you lave on a shirt you moon eyed rice destroying vampire.

Hog Eye: Chinaman washee welly cheapee. Ilish woman washee halleeway or sidewalk, Chinaman washee collar aller same new.¹⁸⁵

Harrigan reinvents the stereotypes, modifying them with each succeeding play in the series to cater to the skills of the actor while developing that character’s own specific storyline. However, his view of these “races” was not without inherent prejudice. In explaining his concentration on Irish and African Americans he states: “they form the

¹⁸⁴ New York Public Library, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Lock Robinson scrapbook #236, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Harrigan, *Mulligan Silver Wedding*, 122.

most salient features of Gotham humanity, and they are the two races who care most for song and dance.”¹⁸⁶ At the same time as he projects a broad image of a “race” as a whole, he never relinquishes his acknowledgement of the distinctiveness of the individual: “I have never met an Irishman such as is presented before the variety footlights. There is no such thing as a typical Irishman.”¹⁸⁷ Harrigan looked at the population of New York City as individuals rather than simply glomming them together in groups, thus breaking the caricature mold of stage portrayals of Irish that preceded him.

Despite the seemingly stereotypical behaviors of some of his characters when viewed through a modern lens, and taking into account the fact that he continued to use blackface while purporting to portray what was actual, Harrigan was consistent in asserting that he was depicting the New York City he knew as well as his abilities allowed. He felt that this was the duty of the Realist: to portray a community in all their foibles including questionable ethics. His plays were not meant to preach, but rather to entertain. He felt that certain rules applied to certain communities and he maintained these rules in his stage portrayals. This quote summarizes his approach and philosophy regarding the job of the Realist:

I believe in being truthful to the laws which govern society as well as to the types of which it is composed. A playwright drops to a low level when he tries being a moralist, but to a much lower level when he gilds vice and sin and glorifies immorality. All of these are parts of life, and as such are entitled to be represented in the drama. The true realist will depict them as they are.¹⁸⁸

Reception and Effectiveness of Harrigan’s Realism

¹⁸⁶ Daly, “American Playwrights on the American Drama,” 97.

¹⁸⁷ Townsend Walsh Scrapbook, Theatre Collection, 142.

¹⁸⁸ Daly, “American Playwrights on the American Drama,” 100.

In order to measure the effectiveness of Harrigan's philosophy and approach to his craft and in particular, to his own specific brand of Realism, one must examine this effectiveness in light of a nineteenth-century perspective. Harold Kolb stresses the importance of applying the correct definition to the ever mutating definition of Realism.

Realism is a pluralistic term—there are many realisms—and some discussions have floundered because of a failure to consider carefully the scope of the definition. A definition of realism which distinguishes between Homer and Elohist, between Chaucer and John Gower, or between Falstaff and the medieval Vice tradition, may not be useful in a consideration of nineteenth-century American literature.¹⁸⁹ Contemporary assertions can be clouded by the intervening century in which definitions have slid and shifted in regard to race and Realism. As Patricia Denison states, “‘Realism’ is, of course, an elusive category with ever shifting boundaries and a complex relationship to its own legacy.”¹⁹⁰ Therefore, each Realist must be regarded according to their own approach to the form.

William H.A. Williams states, “Harrigan was among the first to recognize that within the crowded tenements of New York something like community could exist in spite of the poverty and ethnic tensions.”¹⁹¹ Generalizations should not be made that the various groups within this community were perpetually at odds with one another. Often they worked or played side by side in collaboration with or in neighborly camaraderie. Of note are the inter-racial communal spirit in *The Mulligan Guards Ball*, or the friendly shooting competition between the Skidmores and the Mulligan Guards in *Mulligan*

¹⁸⁹ Kolb, *The Illusion of Life*, 12.

¹⁹⁰ Patricia D. Denison, “The Legacy of James A. Herne: American Realities and Realisms” *Realism and the American Dramatic Tradition*, William Demastes, ed., (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), 19.

¹⁹¹ Williams, *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream*, 164.

Guard Christmas. However, communities did not interfere in the conflicts of other sub-groups. For instance, when Clinton (African American) steals the caps from the guns of the other Skidmores in *Mulligan Guard Christmas*, his own group attacks him. When the Mulligan Guards rush forward to join the melee, Dan stops them: “Back, Mulligans, it’s a family quarrel, let them fight it out, we have their prizes.”¹⁹² Williams’s assertion of Harrigan’s portrayal of the community is provable through the examination of period writing, but to glean an insight into the reception that Harrigan’s work, one must look at how Harrigan was received in his own age.

Charles Witham’s set designs, particularly the one for *Mulligan Alley*, provided Harrigan the Realist the space in which these characters interacted not as imitative of New York City, for the sets did not even attempt to duplicate the dire poverty of the neighborhoods in which the plays are supposed to take place, but rather a locale that suggested New York City. Realism does not duplicate, but approximates, or as Brian Richardson states regarding literary realism, the author’s vision “should be viewed not as a mirror, and not as delusion, but as a synecdoche, a model that attempts to reconstruct in an abbreviated but not inaccurate manner the world that we inhabit.”¹⁹³ Thus, Harrigan’s fictional worlds encapsulated “New York” rather than pretending to be New York.

As I explore in chapter four, Witham’s sets were praised for their detail and naturalness, but more than this the sets gave the characters a space to inhabit. This space provides for the Realist what Miles Orvell describes, “One dominant mode in the popular

¹⁹² The prizes refers to the marksman prizes the Skids have contributed. Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guard Christmas: an Original Comic Play*, 1879, Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits Readers’ Collection, box 14, 11.

¹⁹³ Brian Richardson, “Introduction: The Struggle for the Real–Interpretive Conflict, Dramatic Method, and the Paradox of Realism,” 3-4.

culture in the late nineteenth century was thus the tendency to enclose reality in manageable forms, to contain it within a theatrical space, an enclosed exposition or recreational space, or within the space of the picture frame.”¹⁹⁴ Harrigan took an edited version of an unwieldy world of “types” and culled from it a select cross-section of characters housed by Witham’s Mulligan Alley. It was within this frame that Harrigan threw his characters into various situations such as the imprisonment of Skidmores in the basement of one of the buildings, the laundry line struggle between Hog Eye and Dublin, and the rally that Dan Mulligan conducts as he runs for Alderman. The format of a Harrigan Mulligan Guards plays is simply a situation and place providing a battleground on which his characters bicker, miscommunicate, form allegiances, dissolve allegiances, and resolve conflict. This interaction was Harrigan’s Realism.

As has been stated, the foremost advocate and critic of American Realism in the late nineteenth century, was William Dean Howells. Stanley Corkin states, “By noting Howells’s various roles in the political, economic, and literary culture of the day, we can see that realism is not simply a matter of textuality but also a means of naming a body of social interventions.”¹⁹⁵ When viewed through the writing of the primary theoretician regarding American theatre in the late nineteenth century, Howells makes it clear that Harrigan’s Realism, as Corkin’s statement implies, extends beyond textuality. Howells offers a window into the accepted ideals of his age as the popularity of Harrigan’s plays suggests.

In reference to *Dan’s Tribulations* in 1886, Howells writes, “The illusion is so perfect that you lose the sense of being in the theatre, you are out of that world of

¹⁹⁴ Orvell, “The Melee and the Curtain,” 35.

¹⁹⁵ Corkin, *Realism and the Birth of the Modern United States*, 11.

conventions and traditions in the presence of the facts.”¹⁹⁶ Howells recognizes that Harrigan breaks with the conventions and traditions of the stage, creating an illusion that is self-contained; the fictions that Harrigan presents are not the piecemeal efforts of variety and minstrelsy, nor are they the spectacle driven, coincidence-laden melodramas that are transparent in their awkwardness. For Howells, illusion was tied to the actualization of Realism, but Howells’s statement is deceptive as the play that he observed did not in any way recreate New York City on the stage, rather that the illusion of the play was so engaging that it was completely captivating. I question “the facts” to which Howells refers. Is he implying that the play was indeed factual? I would suggest that indeed the Harrigan’s world is complete unto itself, following its own conventions and remaining consistent in its characters and self-contained logic. The facts that Howells refers to are the elements of Harrigan’s world true to themselves.

One cannot re-create the entirety of real life on the stage and it is therefore up to the artist to cull from real life those elements that will best contribute to their story telling. This is another distinction between what might be deemed “realistic” as opposed to Realism. Realism requires the author to choose qualities in characterization that serve the fiction. Howells rails against a flaw in Harrigan’s *Leather Patch* in which the author pulls out all the stops, as it were, to create a spectacle that was untrue to his piece.

It is the artist and not the material which makes the work of art. The error of the dramatist has been that he has at times has not known how to hold his hand; he has given us the whole truth where part of it would have been enough; he might have spared us some shocking suggestions of the undertaking business. At other times he quite forgets his realism; the whole episode of the colored wake with its

¹⁹⁶ Howells, *Harper’s Monthly* 73, 1886: 316.

plantation spirituals is real and excellent; but when the old clothes men and women of Chatham Street join in a chorus one perceives that the theatre has come to the top and the poet has lapsed.¹⁹⁷

Thus, certain parameters must be placed around a piece to maintain the containment necessary for Realism. The non-fictional “person off the street” does not meet the needs for Realism for he/she embodies a host of characteristics that will not serve the story created by the Realist. Realism is a carefully framed work in which what is shown on stage has been carefully selected as to how it contributes to the overall storytelling. When the framing of storytelling is erased, as with say, observing a crowd in a city park, it is no longer Realism, but unedited banality. Likewise, the Realist must balance his art with feasibility. Howells complains that when the (presumably White) old clothes men and women of Chatham Street join in the chorus of the “colored wake,” Harrigan has sacrificed his Realism for theatricality, as such an incident would never occur in the non-fictional realm of day to day life.

Within Harrigan’s Realism, at its heart in fact, was the overwhelmingly popular “local-color” that Harrigan presented in his characterizations or “types.” Harrigan’s Realism transcended the characterizations that existed before him, in a sense creating a new type of American character. In David Ewen’s *The Story of America’s Musical Theatre*, one of the earliest histories of American musical comedy, the author speaks of Harrigan’s American character stating, “The humor came not merely from the blundering way in which these people tried to solve their homespun problems, but also from their individual speech and behavior patterns and their personal mannerisms.”¹⁹⁸ Harrigan’s

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ewen, *The Story of America’s Musical Theatre*, 7.

characters were not stock characters but a new breed of character, one which centered on individualization.

The origins of the character Dan Mulligan can be traced to the popular character Mose who first appeared in Benjamin Baker's *A Glance at New York* (1848). The neighborhood hero of Baker's comedy eventually transformed into the neighborhood figure of Harrigan's series. The fireman/hero Mose was a recurring figure in dozens of mid-century plays, but as he evolved into Dan Mulligan he came to life among Harrigan's "American order." He is one of several fleshed out characterizations of Harrigan's fictionalized New York. As Montrose Moses states in 1926, "[Harrigan's plays] throb with the spirit of the New York of their day; they catch with a photographic distinctness those palpitant strains of unusual life in a large city which very few dramatists besides Harrigan have had sufficient interest to study and embody in plays."¹⁹⁹ And as is stated above, these distinctly New York characters developed with the performers who inhabited them and refined them over the series. Koger quotes an unidentified clipping from 1894 regarding this development.

At the first glance, one might be tempted to regard the "types" which make up the *dramatis personae* of his works as grotesques and extravagances; but it is asserted, by persons fit by experience and observation to judge, that the author has gone little beyond the actualities in depicting the color and movement of the town's lower life.²⁰⁰

Harrigan's New York was not quite as gritty as the city that inspired it although he took unpleasant details from his daily observations and incorporated them into his comedies

¹⁹⁹ Moses, "Edward Harrigan," 176.

²⁰⁰ Koger, "A Critical Analysis," 130.

ever remaining true to possibility. When in *The Mulligan Guard Picnic* Dan begins to shave and finds that the faucet draws “more roaches than water,”²⁰¹ one accepts the comedy of the situation as well as the harsh reality of the exaggeration.

Chaos and tragedy were a part of tenement life. Harrigan incorporated these harsh realities and turned them into fodder for the comedy of his plays. Act I of *Mulligan Guard Chowder* ends with the following stage direction:

Going to alarm box, turning key. Chinaman throwing out bedding, Mrs. Allup throwing out bedding, Mulligans carrying out bar piece from R. and L. General Business. Noise of engine, firemen enter with hose through the doors in B.L. Firemen with extinguishers squirt on Chinaman in window.²⁰²

When buildings catch fire or a ceiling collapses raining bodies on those below, one can see how these incidents reflect the severe life of tenement living in New York without duplicating it. Harrigan uses such moments to provide spectacle that is not larger than life, but pulled from life. He takes the wide swath of New York living and pulls from it those “types” and incidents that will contribute to a cogent whole. The Realism begins with this form of editing, but Harrigan’s choices are not what make his plays expressions of Realism. Yes, the stage actions and those who inhabit the works are harvested from real life, but they are not meant to be reproductions of the non-fictional world. Rather, Harrigan’s world is a new reality; a reality that cannot be found on any of the streets of New York, but at the same time acceptable to those who were watching the plays.

It is important to note when examining the accuracy of Harrigan’s New York that the city in the 1870s and 1880s was still relatively limited in its scope of ethnicities,

²⁰¹ Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guard Picnic*, 1880, Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits Readers’ Collection, box 14, 20.

²⁰² Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, 31.

primarily those presented in Harrigan's plays: Irish, African American, Dutch, Chinese, English, and Italian, with a smattering of other European nationalities mentioned. In an obituary for Harrigan for the *New York City Dramatic Mirror* dated June 14, 1911 the unnamed author notes,

When Harrigan transferred to the local stage the characters of the lower East side and won a wider than a local fame, New York was a city unlike the present metropolis. The locale of Harrigan's plays was then a neighborhood in which the more homely Irish and the negroes, with an admixture of Germans, furnished excitements of the sort that gave color to his cruder drama. Now it is the hive-like home of half a dozen contrasting nationalities, at least one of which, with Yiddish for speech, has its own theatres and drama, colored perhaps by local life and conditions, yet in a manner exotic at that.²⁰³

When Harrigan was at the height of his popularity he was, as Moses states, "a dramatic barometer of [the people of New York City]'s popular interest, just as Charles Hoyt was trying to be in a different way."²⁰⁴ As I show in chapter four, Moses's assertion is validated in the reviews of Harrigan's plays. The portraits painted in the Mulligan Guards series were of the blue collar New Yorkers, or as Howells poetically puts it, "Mr. Harrigan shows us the street cleaners and contractors, the grocery men, the shysters, the politicians, the washer-women, the servant girls, the truckmen, the policemen, the risen Irishman and Irish woman of contemporary New York."²⁰⁵ Within the depictions of these middle and lower class working folk lay the characterizations that bound the writer to a public that extended beyond simply "holding a mirror up to" the audience because his

²⁰³ New York Public Library, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Harrigan papers, box 9, folder 16, 44.

²⁰⁴ Moses, "Edward Harrigan," 24.

²⁰⁵ Howells, *Harper's Monthly* 73, 1886: 316.

plays became popular with all stratum of New York society.

Like the immensely popular musical revue *Pins and Needles* in 1936 in which a shop girl who worked at Klein's Department Store could watch a musical about a shop girl working at Klein's Department Store, Harrigan's Mulligan Guards series provided a Realism of familiarity. An Irish blue collar worker could see his fictional counterpart on stage. With an audience that was initially predominantly Irish, Harrigan's concentration on that race served his audience's identification with the characters.

In his realization of the city Harrigan focuses primarily on the subjects he knows best: the Irish. Harrigan's innovation was to remove much of the detritus foisted upon the persona of the stage Irishman through those versions of the immigrant which came before his own. Likewise, he erased the banality of ordinary life, capturing plausible situations and dialogue that made for worthy stage time. As Moses observes, "Harrigan was born to be the poet-laureate of the Obscure of New York. Being Irish and a realist, he was much fairer in the human quality of his own people than was Dion Boucicault, who was a romanticist and often sacrificed truth on the altar of the Blarney Stone."²⁰⁶ Howells likens Harrigan's skills to Goldoni, another writer hailed for his Realism, whose comic observations of eighteenth century Italian blue collar workers parallels Harrigan's New York studies of a similar socio-economic echelon. Like Goldoni, Harrigan took pre-existing archetypes and infused them with new characteristics that raised them beyond their stereotypes:

In his own province we think he cannot be surpassed. The art that sets before us all sorts and conditions of New York Irishmen from the laborers in the street to the most powerful of the ward politicians and the genteelest of the ladies of that

²⁰⁶ Moses, "Edward Harrigan," 24.

interesting race, is the art of Goldoni—the joyous yet conscientious art of the true dramatist in all times who loves the life he observes.²⁰⁷

The racial divide of Harrigan’s world set the scene for much of the conflict (and humor) for the pieces. Thus, his art transcended simply a portrayal of what it meant to be Irish. The “types” of Harrigan’s contrasted with each other, drawing distinctions, pitting race against race, as well as individual against individual. As Richard Harding Davis stated in 1891, “As a historian of the war of the races Mr. Harrigan makes no mistakes.”²⁰⁸ Davis’s choice of the word “war” is apt in that indeed the Irish and African American communities were in an unending battle for jobs, housing, and acceptance in the American landscape. Whereas the Laurents/Sondheim/Bernstein/Robbins 1957 musical *West Side Story* portrayed a gritty New York in which two gangs of diverse backgrounds fought for the same piece of inner-city turf in a stylized language of song, contrived slang and ballet, Harrigan’s opposing factions warred on a more mundane level of day to day living. Unlike *West Side Story*, Harrigan’s songs, while character driven, never pretend to be anything other than songs. They simply add more color to Harrigan’s tapestry. In an obituary for Harrigan in an unnamed newspaper clipping, the celebrated Harrigan actress Annie Yeamans is quoted stating:

The only races in Manhattan were the white Americans and the negroes, the Irish, and a few Germans. The Irish and the colored people used to fight—indeed they did. They threw each other off street cars, and there was never a chance for a row that both sides didn’t make the most of it. It was mostly pretty good-natured, too, I think, and surely, when Harrigan wrote plays about their fights, there was

²⁰⁷ Howells, *Harper’s Monthly*, 73: 315.

²⁰⁸ Richard Harding Davis, “American Playwrights on the American Drama” *Harper’s Weekly* 33 (February 2, 1889): 210.

nothing but the best of good nature there.²⁰⁹

Yeamans's perspective is somewhat idealized. Indeed, in the flavor of comedies of the time, the conflicts were for the most part "pretty good-natured," but there is a lack of balance in the portrayals. The stage time of the first three plays in the series is given to Mulligan and his family, however, as the popularity of Allup grew, she eventually kept pace with Dan Mulligan as far as her appearances in the later plays. As Howells observes:

All the Irish aspects of life are treated affectionately by this artist as we might expect from one of his name; but the colored aspects do not fare so well under his touch. Not all the Irish are good Irish, but all the colored people are bad colored people. They are of the gloomy razor-bearing variety; full of short-sighted lies and prompt dishonesties, amusing always but truculent and tricky; and the sunny sweetness which we all know in negro character is not there.²¹⁰

Thus, an incongruity lies at the heart of Harrigan's Realism. If one looks at his Mulligan Guards series for a prescriptive duplication of New York in the late nineteenth century, the resulting image is inauthentic; however, the portrayals on Harrigan's stage are indeed imbued with Realism in that they reflect the New York City of the author and they rose to the expectations of his (primarily White) audience in presenting a fiction that reflects a version of the real world. Harrigan's New York is a synecdoche of the actual city; his Realism contains the real, but does not pretend to encompass all of the real; it is imitative, but not duplicative. Likewise, his presentation of race contains elements of the actual, but does not pretend to be actual.

²⁰⁹ New York Public Library, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Locke Robinson scrapbook #236, 125.

²¹⁰ Howells, *Harper's Monthly* 73: 316.

Although Harrigan did not set out to create a new form of theatre, his plays put forth a cultural agenda of portraying the familiar on the stage in digestible format. He pulled American comedy into his own neighborhoods and peopled it with knowable “types” that were yanked from the streets of his hometown. In their day, his plays were embraced as innovative in their presentation not only of New York, but of the “types” that Harrigan has identified. Hutton echoes the sentiments of his age when he proclaims, “the plays approach greatness, [because] they have introduced, and preserved, a series of purely American types which are as great in their way as are the dramatic characters of other lands and greater and more enduring than many of the Americans to be found in other branches of American Literature.”²¹¹ In seeking to entertain, Harrigan created a new order.

In chapter three, I analyze Harrigan’s *The Mulligan Guards Ball* and other plays in the series as to how they embody this new order. His Realism is examined as is the textual presentation of race.

²¹¹ Hutton, “The Negro on Stage,” 52-53.

Chapter Three – Text Analysis

The Mulligan Guards series of plays presents a diversity of characterization and situations that provide a glimpse into late nineteenth-century New York City. This chapter examines the texts of these plays and lyrics of their songs in light of their portrayal of race and Realism. Encrypted within these texts is a specific approach to Realism that manifests itself more clearly when the plays are regarded as a unit rather than simply approaching them individually. To that end, this chapter investigates the development of the principal characters of the series with regard to motivation, language, patterns, and actions. Although I do not analyze the music (being the work of David Braham and not Edward Harrigan), I examine song lyrics for their characterization and insight into the world of the Mulligan Guards.

Likewise, layered within the texts are overt as well as subversive undercurrents of racial presentation as well as reception that reflect and refine the Realism inherent to Harrigan's work. I mine the texts for their blatantly stated approach, philosophy, and interpretation of the meaning of race, as well as for the implied regard to racial issues and subtextual presentation of race. Harrigan's plays offer a window into the presentation of race on the American stage, capturing a specific moment in which race is clearly evolving from the stage presentations that preceded Harrigan. As Lawrence Grossberg explains, "Struggling against existing constructions of a particular identity takes the form of contesting negative images with positive ones, and of trying to discover the 'authentic' and 'original' content of the identity."²¹² Harrigan probably wasn't attempting to "contest negative images," but his portrayals challenge the minstrel and sketch renderings of race

²¹² Lawrence Grossberg, "Identity and Cultural Studies: Is That All There Is?" *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds. (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 89.

that dominate comedy at the time. My objective then is to identify and highlight Harrigan's version of race.

The humor of these comedies relies on an audience's understanding of certain cultural encodings surrounding race, and through deciphering these codes a portrait of nineteenth-century racial philosophy and understanding emerges from the clues peppered throughout the texts. As chapter one describes, Harrigan is a product of his theatrical background. His plays reflect this in their incorporation of elements of melodrama, variety, and minstrelsy. Describing a short play entitled *The Donovans*, which was written and performed in the 1870s as part of a Harrigan and Hart bill, Moody states: "The action moved easily from a melodramatic chase to miscellaneous variety turns, some lifted from earlier sketches with Harrigan and Hart as Darby and Lanty, a theatrical team turned detectives."²¹³ The music and comedy echoed the styles and formats of the variety halls or vaudeville, but integrated into a single play.

Simply put, Harrigan wanted to entertain his audience with his Mulligan Guards series, particularly through laughter, and his choice of characterizations was aimed toward this outcome. In 1903 he states: "In my work I find that I must look to the American, the Irishman, German and the negro. They seldom, if ever, miss the mark of laughter."²¹⁴ Much of the humor derives from the comedy of racism that was rampant in his day. Racist remarks are so prevalent in the texts and lyrics that they are only highlighted here when they provide another layer of understanding of Harrigan's depiction of race, or when they offer clues to the humor which lies in the subtext of the situations, or when they are necessary for a greater awareness of audiences' perceptions

²¹³ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 56.

²¹⁴ Harrigan, "The Play's the Thing," 99.

of race.

Although *Mulligan Guards Ball* is the primary focus of this chapter, I address each of the plays in the series, highlighting significant examples of Harrigan's specific brand of Realism to offer an arc that runs through the series. I underscore benchmark moments of dramatic action and racial representation, whether transparent or implied, which, when taken as a series, create a mosaic that when examined as a whole, gives a clear understanding of the authorial mind of Harrigan's approach to these entertainments.

When examined as a single unit, a viewpoint emerges surrounding Harrigan's Realism and racial representation. And when taken in conjunction with the regard in which Harrigan stood as a pre-eminent Realist, developing his own form of Realism well before James Herne and other American stage Realists, a clear understanding of nineteenth-century American conceptions of Realism emerges. Likewise, a highly detailed portrait of late nineteenth-century New York City unfolds through the texts. As Moses states, "Out of the scribbled pages rises an entire era of political and social peculiarities."²¹⁵ Examining the texts provides clues as to the social attitudes of the era.

Harrigan's brand of drama is open ended in the sense that he shows a world that is ongoing throughout the series, in that his characters will continue to live in this world, having changed only incrementally and with the assurance that they will live on into the next episode of their lives, much as late twentieth century situation comedies provided a temporary closure at the end of each episode with the audience's certainty of the continuation of this world in next week's half hour segment. Unlike nineteenth-century serialized novels which relied on plot, Harrigan's comedies, like those of twentieth century sit-coms, relied on characterization and the situations into which the characters

²¹⁵ Moses, "Edward Harrigan," 25.

are thrown. The plot was merely a frame in which to present character interaction. As Koger states, “The comedy in the farce was sustained by independent bits of business, ethnic dialogue, songs, and sight gags rather than by the continuity or suspense built by the plot.”²¹⁶ The “bits of business,” dialogue and sight gags all derived from previous forms of stage entertainments, but Harrigan integrated them into a single (albeit thin) plot. Harrigan admitted to his difficulty in creating this framework:

I wish a fellow could make a play without a plot. They are nightmares to me. When I find a bit of poor human nature and place it among the lowly surroundings, it grieves me to make him talk plot, yet I know that any work, let it be filled with the richest kind of character drawing, would fall with the audience that heard no plot, so I endeavor to find simple stories to serve as a gateway for my characters to enter, and I admit that my plots will never pass down into history as complex studies.²¹⁷

Harrigan does not wrap up his plays with a life-will-never-be-the-same conclusion such as a permanent shift in the world through the death of a main character, or “moving on” to another location. Even such handy conclusions as births or marriages are buried in the body of the plays rather than saved for a concluding finale. As Brenda Murphy states:

The distinguishing characteristic of realistic dramatic structure is its lack of closure. Realistic dramatic action opens up into the larger and wider rhythms of life that surround and interpenetrate it but can only be hinted at in the space of a realistic play. His action is not “an action” in the conventional Aristotelian sense but a convergence in a particular space and time of the many “actions” of several

²¹⁶ Koger, “A Critical Analysis,” 140.

²¹⁷ Harrigan, “The Play’s the Thing,” 99.

lives being lived.²¹⁸

Slice of life is indeed the portrait presented from the opening image of the first full-length play in the series, *Mulligan Guards Ball*. Harrigan sets a detailed stage picture of a dwelling in the fictional Mulligan Alley that could have passed for any Irish American home of a family of moderate means in the Seventh Ward:

A neat apartment in Dan Mulligan's house. A neat breakfast table L.H. Tablecloth, dishes, bread, a supper plain. A stove and pipe, oven in stove L.H. in front of mantelpiece. Bureau with drawers. Mirror at back R.H. three chairs at table, plain rocker R.H. rag carpet. A rolling towel hanging on B.F.L of door under which is a washstand, soap and pitcher of water. A cuspidor R.H.C. at back, pipe tobacco in cupboard. L.H. dishes and etc. in cupboard. Washing in bureau drawer. A clothes rack on B.F.L. of door over washstand. A candle on bureau. A lighted candle in candlestick on table. Needle, thread in cupboard L.H. Mulligan's black coat hanging at back on clothes rack. Violin on mantel. Mrs. Dublin, a Cork Irishwoman, enters door in flat at back with a basket.²¹⁹

The detail creates familiarity and capitalizes on this immediately with characters with whom the (predominantly Irish) audience could relate, who looked and sounded like denizens of their own neighborhoods. The introduction of Mrs. Dublin and Cordelia (both characters played by women) keeps the scene anchored in reality. The jokes are gentle and inherent to the situation, not gags that are pasted in the scene, but rather integrated and appropriate to the dialogue: “Cordelia: T'would be a dark day for the city

²¹⁸ Murphy, *American Realism and American Drama*, xii.

²¹⁹ Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guards Ball*, 3.

if the gas house men went on a strike.”²²⁰ As I discuss later in this chapter, accent is apparent through the written dialect of the characters, indicating “Irish” immediately through such words as “nagur.” Mrs. Dublin has the opening speech. She stands alone on stage.

Mrs. Dublin (Calling): Mrs. Mulligan! Mrs. Mulligan! ...She's not in. Ah well, I'll wait. Primrose, the nagur barber, must be doing a fine trade. I have here over a dozen dirty towels. That's thirty-five cents, and if Mrs. Mulligan would give me her washing, I'll make enough to cover the floor at the Mulligan Guard's Ball tomorrow night.

The exposition is rather heavy handed, but serves the purpose of the play as a necessary evil, or as Harrigan states regarding exposition in the mouth of a character, “it grieves me to make him talk plot.”²²¹ With the speech Harrigan informs the audience about Primrose, the “nagur” barber, who will shortly enter the play; and he introduces the core event of the play, the Mulligan Guard’s Ball. In short, the scene maintains the true-to-life flavor that instills expectations in the audience of an entertainment based in their own daily life. The scene devolves into minstrel-like pun-strewn dialogue only after the characters are established.

Cordelia: Get me seven pounds of corned beef - brisket piece.

Mrs. Dublin: I've corns on me teeth from ateing it.

Cordelia: Then go to the grocery, and get me three pounds of Indian meal, or mush for stirabout.

Mrs. Dublin: I've at so mush mush, I can't stirabout mush.

²²⁰ Ibid., 4.

²²¹ Harrigan, “The Play’s the Thing,” 99.

Cordelia: My husband is a vegetarian.

Mrs. Dublin: I thought he was a Corkconian.

Cordelia: No, he's from Tipperary.

Mrs. Dublin: The boys of Tipperary, light and airy. No sport on land or sea can equal the Tippararee.

Cordelia: That's so, Mrs. Dublin. Now get me two bunches of thyme. Hurry!
Hurry!

Mrs. Dublin: You can't hurry time. There's only one man can do that, and that man's a judge.²²²

Negro characters are not introduced until page twenty-three with the entrance of Puter and Simpson. Their arrival not only develops the plot (such as it is), but injects a minstrel based patter into the piece. Thus, the appearance of blackface with these characters also grounds the audience in the expectations of that type of entertainment, while still maintaining the world of Mulligan Alley. The dialect shifts radically with the African American characters, as does the infusion of non-plot related gags and puns:

Puter: Be charitable, Brudder Primrose. He owes six months' pew rent now, and it cost a dollar a day for a carpenter to widen dat pew so his fat sister could sit in it, but religion teaches us dat it's easier for a hump-back camel to enter de eye of a needle den it am for a fat woman to enter a pew.

Simpson: Yes, I collide wid you. But do we take supper at de Ball or after de Ball?

Puter: De supper am after consideration. When we get to de Ball we will consider whether we go after de supper or --

²²² Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guards Ball*, 6.

Simpson: De supper will never come after us.²²³

While the language of Puter and Simpson is indistinguishable from minstrel sketch writing, Harrigan uses the interaction to advance the plot as the characters discuss their own ball which will coincide with that of the Mulligan Guards. What will become the comic centerpiece of the play is laid out in this scene: essentially that the Irish Mulligan Guards and the African American Skidmore Guards have both booked the same dance hall for the same night. Interracial conflict is laid subtly at the close of the scene as Puter exits the stage and Dan enters. The stage direction reads: “Dan Mulligan enters first, bumps against Puter, looks at him. Mulligan followed by McSweeney who looks at Puter.”²²⁴ There is tension between the communities, but no overt violence. Puter says in passing: “I don't see why de Government can't quarantine dem people. Dey land too sudden. Dar ain't enough fumigation.”²²⁵ The anti-Irish sentiment is consistent with the mission of the Negro secret society, the Full Moons, to prevent Irish from riding on street cars.

Although the two simultaneous balls remain specific to the two organizations—the Skidmores and the Mulligan Guards, the Seventh Ward is clearly a desegregated community in as far as the communities occupy the same buildings, and frequent the same businesses. The various nationalities and races are alike in their working-man approach to life. This is apparent in Act I, scene iii in Simpson's barbershop in which the Dutch, and the Irish intermingle with the African American Simpson in friendly banter and camaraderie. This is the first scene in the series in which the two communities interact and aside from the occasional racist term (coon), or stereotype (Irishman drinking

²²³ Ibid., 24.

²²⁴ Ibid., 26.

²²⁵ Ibid.

the rubbing alcohol), the story and comedy center around the daily living of the individuals, not the communities.

Over the course of this lengthy scene, little happens, but interracial tensions creep into the conflict. After a mix of characters comes and goes, the barbershop is essentially empty except for the representatives of the three primary communities: Dan Mulligan (Irish), Lochmuller (German), and Simpson (African American). The tensions are equally distributed among the three men with a slight siding of Simpson and Mulligan against Lochmuller. Comedy easily turns to violence or threat of violence when the narrow margin between comedy and insult is breached.

Lochmuller: Do you suppose a German would fight mit a nigger?

Simpson: Hold on. You see dis razor?

Lochmuller: Yah.

Simpson: I'm Simpson Primrose, Captain of de Skidmore. Every man of dem is N.G. Nice Gentlemen. Now you'll apologize or I'll draw dis razor 'cross your jugular.

Dan: A man has no right to insult a colored man to his face.²²⁶

The lines between the communities are narrow, as are the quarters in the overcrowded districts of the working class represented in these plays. The rules of fair interplay are precise. A character has permission to use derogatory terms without physical violence breaking out, but once the line is crossed into more-than-playful, as in the above segment, the characters easily fall into more violent expressions of hostility. It is also interesting to note the subtlety of Dan's racism in the implied permission that one may insult "a colored man" as long as it isn't to his face.

²²⁶ Ibid., 59.

The first “interracial” couple of the series is Kitty and Gustavus Lochmuller.²²⁷ Within this relationship, the “rules” of proper engagement are expressed as only a married couple can express them, however, for the most part the derogatory nature of their interplay is primarily one-sided: that of the Irish Kitty speaking badly of the Dutch Gustavus.

Lochmuller: Bridget, you want Katrina to go by de ball mit Tommy Mulligan and de Swiss Warbler can stay home, I believe. Eh?

Bridget: Id’ never allow my daughter to marry a Dutchman. Her mother threw herself away on a German butcher when she could have married an Irish soldier.²²⁸

Bridget speaks of herself in the third person, venting her supposed aggravation at marrying a Dutchman rather than an Irish hero. As these two characters develop over the course of the series, the insults become more frequent and more evenly distributed between the two characters, but in this first of the series, Kitty is the aggressor and Gustavus is the victim. A possible explanation is explored in chapter four, which examines the breakdown of race and class in the audience of the Mulligan Guards series. In their first incarnation, the audience was primarily a reflection of the Mulligan family; that is to say, they were predominantly Irish in makeup. But as the series progressed, the audience reflected a broader range of the New York population: rich, poor, and middle class; Irish, German, African American, etc. This reflects Harrigan’s Realism in keeping the stage action tied with audience expectations. Again, Harrigan’s Realism is not a

²²⁷ Although there is no marriage, flirtation occurs between Honora and Hog Eye (*Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*), Rebecca and Hog Eye (*Mulligan Guard Chowder*), and Dan with an African American woman (actually his wife in disguise in *Mulligan Guard Nominee*).

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

duplication of life in New York City, but rather it is where the theatrical piece “matches” actual life by way of the audience’s bond with the character’s lives.

Perhaps the most famous of all of Harrigan’s stage pictures is that which closes Act II of *Mulligan Guards Ball*: the Negro Skidmores falling through the ceiling onto the Mulligan Guards below. The comedy of the situation is self-evident, but does the Realism of the play disintegrate in favor of comic chaos? I argue that indeed the Realism is maintained through the careful setup that Harrigan provides this situation. In Act II, scene ii the Skidmores, arriving at the dance hall at the Harp and Shamrock anticipate a conflict with the Irish Mulligan Guards:

Simpson: Halt. Members, I ordered you to carry arms tonight at the Skidmore Fancy Ball, kase we were forced to give up Lyric Hall and take de Harp and Shamrock. Dar’s no telling how many Irish will be in ambush dar, so on going in de Hall, you can put your muskets in dat hat-rack and every man have his razor ready. No one must interfere wid our pleasure.

Puter: I’m agin de shedding of blood, but when it comes to dem people, you all know me.²²⁹

Harrigan maintains a potential (versus kinetic) energy in the scene by introducing the fact that the Skidmores carry razors. Every scene that discusses the attitudes of the two communities, fosters the tensions between the groups. In a moment of dramatic irony, the audience is privy to the tension to come where the two groups will have a clash well before the groups themselves know. Thus, when the revelers arrive at the same rented space, the comedy of the situation has already been set up and when the act culminates

²²⁹ Ibid., 96.

with the collapse of the ceiling, it provides the proper climatic moment to a well-orchestrated comedic situation.

Without Harrigan's Realism in regard to the specificity of the two rifle clubs and the detailed locales, the effectiveness of the ceiling collapse would be diminished. The stage direction that launches this scene sets up the hall with great detail, with the awareness of what will be necessary for the spectacle to be accomplished.

The Harp and Shamrock Hall. The scene decorated with Irish and American flags. A.C.D. opening at back looking on hallway. The scene boxed. Chandelier of willow to fall at climax. Young men in glazed caps, blue shirts, young girls, Cordelia, Dan Mulligan, Bridget and Lochmuller, Kitty Lochmuller, Tommy Mulligan, Maggie Kearney, McSweeny in Russian hat, military coat. The Ensemble finishing a Quadrille as scene opens. Benches R. and L. Ceiling with gaps for Negro figures to fall through.²³⁰

When the Skidmores arrive, the Mulligan Guards Ball is in full swing, but stops abruptly at the two groups face off. The tension between the groups is heightened by racist remarks which are offensive to the African American characters. Dan's use of the word "nagurs" sets the Skidmores in offensive mode as they draw their razors.

Dan: What are those nagurs doing here?

Skidmores: Niggers!

(Bus. of razors and a rush of Mulligans. Woman screaming Strongarlic is between constituents; the Irish and Negroes do not get together.)²³¹

²³⁰ Ibid., 97.

²³¹ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Ball*, 103.

When the Skidmores are relegated to the “Redmen’s Lodge” upstairs the tension abates for the moment.²³² The Skidmores are content taking the alternative space because, as Puter notes: “as long as we’re upstairs-we’re above de Irish.”²³³ This analysis of the situation is significant in that Puter is identifying the ongoing rivalry and the claim (albeit comic) to having “won” this round. The arrival of the “wenches” for the Skidmore Ball apparently is too much for the floor of the Redmen’s Lodge. Probably the most famous scene follows, which closes the second act of *The Mulligan Guards Ball*.

Dance movement with Music of Virginia Reel. Dan and Cordelia forward, Lochmuller and Kitty forward. A crash as chandelier falls on Dan and Negro Dummies, Wenches and Soldiers fall through ceiling. Simpson, Puter and Four Negroes enter at back. A melee and...Curtain.²³⁴

This climactic melee is rife with comedy, and apt in its consistency with the tensions of the play. The image of the Skidmores raining down on the Mulligan Guards provides Harrigan with the perfect act closure as it heightens the tensions of the play and, although an “act of God” makes the ceiling collapse, the incident provides Harrigan with comic fodder for the rest of his play. As with actors playing Black by wearing blackface, it is unlikely that the audience would be fooled by the rain of “dummies,” but as with the mask of blackface, the reality presented on stage is accepted for what it is meant to portray. As I show in chapter four, the critics of the play all heralded this moment for its comic effect. And although the scene would appear to depart from any resemblance to

²³² It is interesting to note here that even the locale contains inherent racism: the Redmen’s Lodge suggests Native American. And when Puter objects saying, “I object, gemmen. I’m a red man” it raises the question of whether Puter is partially Native American. This detail is mentioned nowhere else in the series.

²³³ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Ball*, 105.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

real life, I would argue that the apparent remove from Realism that the situation provides is actually a new level of Realism. Harrigan's Mulligan Alley, while filled with detail culled from the tenement districts of New York never replicates the shoddiness of the tenement dwellings. Indeed, the sets necessitated solid construction or the actors would be risking their lives if the sets were as poorly constructed as the tenements. Thus, when the floor collapses, it is not a ridiculous occurrence that is not true to the world that Harrigan constructs, but rather an all-too-real possibility, once again grounding the audience in plausibility and even more so, an action that they can accept with their foreknowledge of their own neighborhoods.

It could be argued that the entire play was built around this incident of comedy/violence, merriment/racism, chaos/carefully orchestrated spectacle. What follows this incident is a series of dénouements in which the various threads of plotlines are tied up, if not neatly, then at least to a satisfactory conclusion for the purposes of this first play in the series. The young couple gets married, the Mulligans celebrate their silver wedding, and money matters are worked out for the time being.

The three communities are reunited in their loose connection as a community as Harrigan foists the conflict onto the one outsider, Push, the reporter. When Push is accused of waxing the strings of Mulligan's fiddle, the three communities are fused against him as Lochmuller, the primary opponent to Mulligan throughout the play, is given the stage direction to oust the interloper. Thus, the residents of the Seventh Ward remain united against the outsider.

Dialect

Dialect is an important marker of both race and Realism in late nineteenth-century literature and stage entertainments. Mark Twain offers this apology at the opening of *Huckleberry Finn* (1885) to explain his use of dialect in his novel:

In this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect; the extremist form of the backwoods South-West dialect; the ordinary “Pike County” dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion, or by guess-work; but painstakingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech. I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding.²³⁵

Whether Twain succeeds in his depiction of these various dialects is not significant, but his defense for the use of various dialects is, as it is clear that the author intends his dialects to offer different voices for different communities. Twain is essentially trying to capture the true sound of his characters. Gavin Jones explains:

This was the ideological power of dialect literature: the assumption that dialect recorded the way minorities *really* spoke encoded deeper beliefs that this was how they processed and structured reality, that this language revealed their stream of consciousness, their worldview, their very stuff of self.²³⁶

Through its rhythms, mispronunciations, cadences when spoken, and specific grammatical structures, dialect served various functions in nineteenth-century

²³⁵ Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Henry Nash Smith, ed., (Boston Press, 1958), n.p.

²³⁶ Gavin Jones, *Strange Talk: The Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 46.

entertainments and literature for comic reasons and as shorthand for an entire community often through the use of a single word or pronunciation of a word. In 1919 David Belasco stresses the importance of characterization through pronunciation of particular words: “I would not permit an Englishman to say ‘can’t or sha’n’t,’ nor would I allow an American character to say ‘caunt’ or ‘shaunt.’ In life people speak variously.”²³⁷ Authors assumed that audiences and readers understood the verbal signifiers of various populations. In his 1897 sketch “At the Theatre—from the Gallery Standpoint and Politics,” Anthony Drexel Biddle assumes his reader can readily identify the “races” of speakers through dialogue. The reader knows that Mister Morgenstein is of German descent through his dialogue alone as no name is initially given, “Now, mein leedle Jakey, vat vor you get so oxcited ven de fire-proof gurtain goes up, ain’t it?”²³⁸ Biddle develops this understanding of racial tropes through speech as he introduces Irish and African American characters as well. Jones states:

In addition to the already widely recognized signs of “black” speech like *gwine*, one could find *py gollies* (German), *begorra* (Irish), *just-a lak-a dat* (Italian), and *me likee, velly good* (Chinese)—key words and phrases that let the audience understand immediately which ethnic type was intended.²³⁹

With his background in minstrelsy, Harrigan was well versed in the signifiers of the various populations. In his novelization of the Mulligan family, *The Mulligans*, Harrigan

²³⁷ Belasco, David, *The Theatre Through Its Stage Door*, Louis V. Defoe, ed. (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1919), 66.

²³⁸ Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, *Shantytown Sketches*, <http://www.archive.org/details/shantytownsketches00biddiala>, 59, accessed on January 20, 2009.

²³⁹ Jones, *Strange Talk: The Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America*, 172.

analyzes the evolution of dialect and how it is influenced by the shift in communities in New York City.

The “argot” of the rougher class has changed. “Say, sis! Git up an’ dance wid me,” is now formulated into “It’s me gurl! Please being so kind if youse will to chuck a speil at her!” The latter idiom is the result of the struggle by the foreigners of the Latin races, who came to America and settled in the northern cities immediately after the Civil War, to master the English language. The commingling of the children of these people with the children of the English, Irish and native born has developed a jargon that twists our language into a dialect only matched by that spoken by the costermonger of London.²⁴⁰

Like Biddle’s Mister Morgenstein, Harrigan’s introduction of Lochmuller on page thirteen in *The Mulligan Guards Ball* capitalizes on the Dutch dialectical tropes.

Whereas the Irish Mulligans follow a consistent dialectical flow of “ye’s” and “wid’s,” and slang; Lochmuller’s dialect contains the stereotypical Dutch use of “v’s” in place of “w’s” and “und” in place of “and.” Lochmuller speaks in reference to sausages that Dan accidentally sits on, “Oh, dot's nothing. Dem is second hand bolognas. I sell dem to Italians.”²⁴¹

The more upper crust the characters, the fewer grammatical and phonetic “errors” seep into their vocabulary. When a character appears in disguise, the use of dialect acts as a source of dramatic irony, where the audience knows more than the characters, as the use of dialect informs the audience of the identity of a character in disguise, whether through costuming or posturing as a different class. In the *Mulligan Guard Surprise*,

²⁴⁰ Harrigan, *The Mulligans*, (New York: G. W. Dillingham, 1901), 137.

²⁴¹ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Ball*, 17.

Cordelia's arrogant uncle Roger poses as an aristocrat, but through his written dialogue, Harrigan exposes him as "shanty Irish" through the simple use of the word "lave" in place of "leave." "Roger: Don't lave it."²⁴² This one simple word exposes Roger's phoniness. Throughout the series, only the Irish of Mulligan's class and rank use this specific variation on "leave." Harrigan explains the necessity of dialect in regard to class. In reference to the attempt by his "shanty Irish" to attain a higher class rank in *Cordelia's Aspirations*, Harrigan states:

[The characters] gain what value they have because they are couched in the dialect of the poor emigrant and flavored with the aroma of want. A cultured, refined, and beautiful millionaire Cordelia, aspiring to be numbered among the billionaires, talking faultless English, would excite not the shadow of a smile, but simply pity and disgust.²⁴³

Thus, Harrigan's use of dialect was carefully calculated. He heard the nuances in the speech of the various immigrant communities and incorporated them into his plays.

The commingling of the children of our immigrants that have settled in the Northern cities begot the various dialects that are heard in the lowly quarters of Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and New York. The "dis" and "dat" of the tough girl jargon is an example.²⁴⁴

The characters themselves are aware of the performative nature of dialect. In *The Mulligan Guard Picnic*, the character Lemon speaks of when he was an actor. "Lemon: I play Irish too. You'd ought to hear me say: Meallin murder, paddy will you now.

²⁴² Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Surprise*, 1880, Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits Readers' Collection, box 14, 33.

²⁴³ Daly, "American Playwrights on the American Drama," 98.

²⁴⁴ Harrigan, "The Play's the Thing," 99.

Hurroo.”²⁴⁵ Thus, Irish can be donned through speech as one would a costume. The direction to use dialect occurs on occasion throughout the series in regard to characters “playing black,” but appears only once in the Mulligan Guards series in reference to “playing German.” Lochmuller is speaking in German with Bimble in the *Mulligan Guard Picnic*. “Loch: (aside in dialect) He don’t know me too.”²⁴⁶

A brief scene from *The Mulligan Guard Nominee* warrants analysis. In the scene Cordelia is in attendance at the Skidmore’s masquerade wearing a mask and encounters her husband. To hide the fact that she’s there, she must pretend to be Black.

Rebecca: De Skidmore Masquerade just in to supper. Mister Mulligan, this miss what’s your name?

Cordelia: (In dialect) Miss Phoebe Brown.

Rebecca: Miss Phoebe Brown, Mister Mulligan.

Dan: Happy to know you, Miss Brown. I’d never know ye again if I’d meet you.

Rebecca: Goodness, somebody’ll steal my jelly. (Exits)

Dan: I hope your husband Mister Brown will vote for me to-morrow.

Cordelia: (In dialect) I wish my husband was far away.

Dan: Is he a voter?

Cordelia: No, he’s a distiller.

Dan: I’m in that business myself.

Cordelia: (Aside.) Oh what will I do?

Dan: Do you know that I always admired a young mulatto?

Cordelia: Hey?

²⁴⁵ Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guard Picnic*, 1880, Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits Readers’ Collection, box 4, 40.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

Dan: They have such nice figures. A calico dress on a quadroon takes my eye.

Cordelia: (Aside) I'll take the eye out of his head when I get him home.²⁴⁷

The scene is illuminating on several levels. The mere adoption of dialect is sufficient for one character to disguise herself from another. The stage direction "in dialect" makes clear that the otherwise-Irish Cordelia can turn on a dime donning another voice like a costume. Likewise, Dan's flirtations with Cordelia show the ease and acceptability for interracial contact. When Cordelia's ruse is discovered, Dan is furious and he makes a vow concerning the Black population: "I'll put a ball on every one of them when I'm alderman."²⁴⁸

Dialect helps to inform both Harrigan's Realism as well as his presentation of race. Depending on the pronunciation of a particular word, the race of the character is revealed. A German character will almost always use a "v" in place of a "w" when it appears at the beginning of a word such as words as "when" or "where." An African American character uses "d" in place of "th" like in "this" or "that;" or "b" in place of "v" as in the word "heaven." Likewise, Harrigan's use of dialect contributes to the Realism of the dialogue, again employing the audience's expectations on what is acceptable coming from the mouth of a particular character. Although slightly critical of Harrigan's effectiveness as a humorist, Brenda Murphy extols Harrigan's use of dialect as revealing rhythms of naturalness in the characters: "Nowhere in the serious drama of Harrigan's contemporaries is there a speech with rhythms as natural as Tommy's complaint about his father."²⁴⁹ Murphy is identifying Tommy Mulligan's speeches early in *Mulligan Guards Ball*. Note how the speech not only presents a rhythm of language,

²⁴⁷ Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guard Nominee*, 27.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁴⁹ Murphy, *American Realism and American Drama*, 9.

but is also infused with a vernacular that identifies Tommy's age, the slang of which is utilized in a generational miscommunication, adding yet another layer to the comedy of the piece.

Tommy: The bill is all right, Mother, but what I'm kicking is this. Every time I fetch Kitty up here, he lights that funnel he calls a pipe. He fills it wid Navy tobacco and what's the consequence, she says, Tommy, I want to go home, when I haven't chinned five minutes.²⁵⁰

The only dialect in the speech is the use of the word "wid" in place of "with," but the speech is sprinkled with slang that serves as a signpost of Tommy's youthful vocabulary, and cadence suggested by the sentences. The technique is utilized throughout the piece.

Tommy: I haven't got [the money] yet, but I'll collect it after the ball and give it to you. Some of the old Mulligans need sugar pretty bad.

Cordelia: Sugar? Are they fond of sugar, Tommy?²⁵¹

and

Tommy: I did, ha ha. He means money, Mother. Why don't you tell her. What do you want to be slinging taffy for, all the time.

Cordelia: Taffy? Tommy, no sir, you'll not ate any taffy. It destroyed the teeth of Mrs. Brady's boy entirely.²⁵²

The author relies on the audience's knowledge of current slang so that they are in on the joke.

Lyrics

²⁵⁰ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Ball*, 13.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 10.

A key component to understanding the cultural and historical setting of Harrigan's work in his portrayal of race and Realism lies in the lyrics of the myriad songs he wrote with David Braham. Songs offer insights to the period in which they were created, or as Simon Frith states: "Music, whether teenybop for young female fans or jazz or rap for African Americans or nineteenth-century chamber music for German Jews in Israel, stands for, symbolizes *and* offers the immediate experience of collective identity."²⁵³ The collective identity in Harrigan's case is measured in the popularity of his songs in their day. From the song that launched the series "The Mulligan Guard" to his many other hits including "Maggie Murphy's Home," and "My Dad's Dinner Pail," Harrigan's lyrics capture the cultural essence of the Seventh Ward. The songs speak in a contemporaneous vernacular, and while most of the lyrics are in English, the songs are peppered with other languages as the moment demands, such as in "French Singing Lesson" from *Dan's Tribulations*. And like the integrated songs of the Rodgers and Hammerstein era, the songs are constructed to fit the characters as well as their situations. For instance, in *The Mulligan Guards Surprise*, when Cordelia makes demands on Dan, forcing him to move to a wealthier uptown location and to live in a style with which Dan is not comfortable, he gives himself false comfort with "I'll Wear the Trousers, Oh!" John Franceschina describes the music: "(The song is) reminiscent of an Irish folk song. Although the song is quite tonal, it is very expansive in its vocal range and marked by extensive leaps, dramatically evoking Dan's state of inebriation and attempts at sober decision making."²⁵⁴ The song serves the same function as the Rodgers and

²⁵³ Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds. (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 121.

²⁵⁴ John Franceschina, *David Braham: The American Offenbach*, 126.

Hammerstein songs “I’m Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair” from the Broadway musical *South Pacific* (1949) or “Many a New Day” from *Oklahoma!* (1943). In these songs a character asserts him/herself, dismissing the treatment of their love interest. Oscar Hammerstein and Richard Rodgers were praised for how their songs were integrated into their musicals, but this practice was also common with Harrigan and Braham. As with Hammerstein, Harrigan’s lyrics usually preceded the music. Because of this order of construction, the rhythms of the lyrics are devised by Harrigan and not Braham, offering further insights into his characterizations and the cadences of their speaking. But Braham equally captures the characterizations in his music. In describing the song “Roderick O’Dwyer” from *Mulligan Guard Picnic*, Franceschina observes, “It is noteworthy that when Braham repeats the melodic phrase, he changes the harmony from the consonant chords of the first hearing to more dissonant diminished chords to emphasize the growing frustration of the character.”²⁵⁵ And in the *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, the song “Oh, He Promises” in which Dan is making campaign promises, “the lyrical, almost schmaltzy, melody of Dan’s verse underscores the overblown sincerity of his campaign promises, while the more angular, rhythmic chorus response of the men evokes their lively expression of support.”²⁵⁶

The sophistication of Harrigan’s use of dialect manifests itself in his lyrics. In the following fragment from the song that established Harrigan’s (and Braham’s) reputation as songwriter, Harrigan utilizes the “Irishness” of particular speech patterns and pronunciations to enrich the rhythm of the song. Like the skit in which the song appeared, the song spoofs the militia units were formed throughout the city by politicians.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 130.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 132.

The song, written in march time, provides a glimpse into the characteristic rowdiness of these troupes and the reputation for drunkenness that neatly coincides with the Irish stereotypes of the day.

When we got home at night, boys,
The divil a bite we'd ate,
We'd all set up and drink a sup
Of whiskey strong and nate.
Thin we'd all march home together,
As slippery as lard,
The solid min would all fall in,
And march with the Mulligan Guard.²⁵⁷

Like many of Harrigan and Braham's songs, "The Mulligan Guard" follows the verse/chorus structure. When closely examined, this verse belies an apparent simplicity which can stand comparison with the great twentieth century musical theatre lyricists who like Harrigan, utilized dialect: Oscar Hammerstein, Alan Jay Lerner, and Stephen Sondheim.²⁵⁸ Like these three masters, Harrigan uses rhyme that only remains perfect rhyme when the character sings in dialect. Examples include: Hammerstein rhyming "can't" with "ain't" in *Oklahoma!*; Lerner rhyming "garn" with "barn" in *My Fair Lady*; and Sondheim rhyming "clerk" with "dark" in *Sweeney Todd*. Harrigan's internal rhyme of "min" with "in" would fail if the singer lost his brogue pronouncing it "men." Less sophisticated is "ate" (eat) with "nate" (neat) as the words would still rhyme if pronounced minus the accent. It would be difficult to not hear the Irish lilt of the lyric

²⁵⁷ Harrigan, "The Mulligan Guards," NYPL Billy Rose Collection, Harrigan Papers, Box 9, folder 19.

²⁵⁸ I have obviously left out a number of lyricists here (Porter, Hart, and many others), favoring those who frequently used dialect in their work to help define character.

when pronounced as written. Such words as “devil” and “thin” signify an Irish dialect. The song, written in 1873, illustrates the characterization that would continue to imbue the plays with humor later in the decade.

The clever use of rhyme extends beyond the Irish dialect. In “The Skidmore Fancy Ball” from *Mulligan Guards Ball*, the African American characters sing:

Now right and lef, just hold your bref,
We’re bon ton darkies all,
De fat and lean get in and scream
At de Skidmore Fancy Ball.²⁵⁹

Whereas “left” and “breath” do not rhyme when spoken properly, Harrigan’s consistent use of Negro dialect allows the two words to become perfect inner rhymes. The rhyme scheme scans as A-A-B-C-C-B, and although “lean” and “scream” are not perfect rhymes, the complexity of the rhyme and speed at which the rhymes arrive, help to maintain the buoyancy of the song and emphasize the playfulness of the situation.

The most common character type in the Mulligan Guards series is the wide array of Irish. The depiction of the drunken Irishman appears frequently in Harrigan’s lyrics. “John Riley’s Always Dry” from *The Mulligan Guard Wedding* (1881) typifies Harrigan’s drunken Celt.

His father often told him,
When John was but a youth,
That ev 'ry' mortal Riley
All died from whiskey drouth;
Of course it is a failing.

²⁵⁹ Harrigan, “Skidmore Fancy Ball,” NYPL Billy Rose Collection, Harrigan Papers, Box 9.

The poor man can't deny,
'Tis but a freak of nature, boys,
John Riley's always dry.²⁶⁰

The stereotypes would dissolve Harrigan's world if he kept them confined to the simple parameters of burlesque rather than expanding on the broad characterizations of Irish that preceded him. The title song of the 1875 sketch "No Irish Wanted" shows compassion for the Irishman that expunges the stereotype of the Irish drunk:

Oh I am an Irish laborer
Hardy, stout, an' strong
Idleness I never loved
To our race it don't belong.
I've still the strength and will to toil
For the wants of life are dear
But told where'er I ax for work
There's no Irish wanted here.²⁶¹

The song's sentiment echoes in the 1931 Harburg/Gorney Great Depression ballad "Brother Can You Spare a Dime." The characterization turns the stereotyped Irishman into a struggling laborer. Harrigan neatly captures the spirit of his characters as groups and individuals in his well-crafted lyrics.

He paints an image of his community in the biggest "hit" of *Mulligan Guards Ball* in 1879 with "The Babies on Our Block." Finson praises Braham's music for its accuracy in portraying New York in its day. "The repeated notes, graceful use of a few

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

simple chords with a bit of chromaticism at cadences, and natural declamation of text announce that this is a realistic portrait of an American scene from the seventies.”²⁶²

Following a verse/chorus structure, a common form of popular songs at the time, the song portrayed a world with which Harrigan was familiar. Moses quotes Harrigan regarding the lyric: “[‘The Babies on Our Block’] was originated in my mind, as most of my songs and sketches have been, by actual experience. I have only tried to reproduce what I saw every day. Now in going to my home I wade through swarms of children on the block.”²⁶³ Although the lyric does not capitalize on dialect, it provides a portrait of the poorer wards of the city where the teeming masses of Irish immigrants filled the streets.

If you want for information

Or in need of merriment.

Come over with me socially

To Murphy's tenement.

He owns a row of houses

In the first ward near the dock,

Where Ireland's represented

By the babies on our block.

There's the Phalens and the Whalens

From the sweet Dunochadee,

They are sitting on the railings

With their children on their knee.

All gossiping and talking

²⁶² Finson, *The Voices that Are Gone*, 294.

²⁶³ Moses, “Edward Harrigan,” 177.

With their neighbors in a flock
Singing "Little Sally Waters"
With the babies on our block.²⁶⁴

This is the first of several verses, each of which is crowded with Irish surnames that Harrigan uses in his rhymes. "There's the Clearys and the Learys, from the sweet Blackwater side, they are laying on the Batt'ry, and they're gazing at the tide."²⁶⁵ This sentimental song is not without its playful jibes. Harrigan pokes fun at the crowds of immigrants: "All neighborly and friendly, with relations by the flock, singing 'Little Sally Waters,' with the babies on our block."²⁶⁶ The "relations by the flock" reflects an overcrowded area of the city on which Harrigan capitalized in his comedies.

Whereas the depiction of Irish in Harrigan's lyrics cross into stereotype, the lyrics of African American characters, while somewhat specific to the plots of the plays, are basically minstrel songs, with extreme use of dialect and broad characterizations. The song "The Golden Choir" from an 1883 sketch entitled "The Muddy Day" exhibits Harrigan's heavy handedness in his portrayal of Black.

Oh! De sun it rises up and de sun goes down,
A burnin in de heavens blue;
Astronimists teaches us dat de moon am round.
Oh! Blow dat organ do.

The blatant grammatical errors "de moon am round" and the invention of words "astronimists" are characteristic of minstrel humor. However, this apparent exaggeration remains true to Harrigan's Realism. The song meets the expectations of an audience

²⁶⁴ Harrigan, "The Babies on Our Block," NYPL Billy Rose Collection, Harrigan Papers, Box 9.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

weaned on minstrel shows. The characters are faithful to stage convention. To depart from the expectations would threaten the Realism of the author. Unlike the “Irish” numbers, which range from comic to heart wrenching, the African American numbers are universally comic in tone.

In the tradition of the urban Dandy (Zip Coon), Harrigan incorporates the Skidmore militia with the Dandy tradition of parading, thus providing a link between his own plots and the minstrel traditions. Harrigan began using the Dandy character embodied in the character Primrose in an early sketch entitled “Black Cinders.” In the sketch, Ike Primrose sings, “I am de leader of de fashion.” To which the chorus responds, “He’s the dandy coon.”²⁶⁷ The tradition continues in *Mulligan Guards Christmas*, where the Skidmores perform “The Skids are on Review” presumably with dance as the lyric indicates the steps. The song establishes the role of the Skidmores as it entertains.

Attention All! Carry Arms!

Now right shoulder shift.

Carry Again; salute men,

By golly! It’s a gift

So elegant, we all present,

At drill we never rest.

Carry again, a-ra-ta-ta-ta-ta,

See you’re proper dressed.²⁶⁸

The performative aspect of the song helps to create a visual reality in which the Skidmores salute, shift their guns in unison (or not, which would add to the humor), as

²⁶⁷ Harrigan, “Black Cinders,” Library of Congress Copyright Office Dram Deposits Readers’ Collection, box 13.

²⁶⁸ Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guards Christmas*, 39.

they perform their drill. The song, however, retains its Dandy origins as the singers proclaim:

Darkies neat, smiling sweet,
A la militaire,
Music loud, ain't we proud,
When marching by de mayer.
Yaller girls in perfect bliss,
Umph! Umph! Honey dew,
Throw dese dandy coons a kiss,
De skids are on review.²⁶⁹

Thus the song accomplishes two concurrent roles: it maintains the traditions (and therefore expectations of the audience) of the Jim Dandy Coon while neatly fitting into the framework and world of Mulligan Alley and the play's plot. I am particularly impressed with the rhyme of "militaire" with "mayer" turning a two syllable word into a single syllable, keeping in character and keeping true to the flavor of the song.

In the song entitled "In De Third Degree Full Moon" from *Mulligan Silver Wedding*, the Skidmores sing a comic song that also functions as a call to action. The unending struggle by the Skidmores to keep the Irish off the street cars, established in the first play of the series, here develops into a demand for the right of African American community to have a seat on those self same streetcars.

In de time of Babylon
All in de land of Nod,
Dey built de tower might high.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 40.

No Irish raised a hod,
Italians, and de Dutch
Kept Jabbering out of time.
Dey struck fur wages—quit de work
When half way to de moon.
In de by-laws of dis lodge,
You’ll find dis rule right dere.
Don’t you stand on de platform,
Of de one-horse bob-tailed car.
Get in and grab a seat;
Make white folks give you room,
Or—ex-communication
From de Third Degree Full Moon.²⁷⁰

Though written in minstrel-ese dialect, the Black community is not the object of the comedy of the song. Rather, the singers proclaim their own superiority over the other communities of the Ward (Dutch, Italian, Irish), while demanding rights “Make white folks give you room.” The price of not taking action is ejection from the order: “ex-communication from de Third Degree Full Moon.” Significant here, the African American singer(s) label all non-Blacks as White. Thus, for this one instance, Harrigan has taken a multiplicity of races and separates them into a Black/White dichotomy.

The primary nemesis of the Skidmores is the Irish, and the Mulligans in particular. In *Mulligan Guards Chowder*, the dialogue leading up to the song, “The Skids

²⁷⁰ Harrigan, *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*, 1881, Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits Readers’ Collection, box 15, 98.

Are Out Today” comically reinforces the anti-Irish sentiment. The stage direction describes “A small darkey boy with scotch kilts and black legs,” burlesquing their Irish enemies. Primrose addresses the Skidmores (here called The Full Moons), warning them against anything that might show respect to the Irish.

Capt. Primrose: Halt! Members, we are gwine over to the sacred soil of Jersey, to deco rate de Cuban General’s monument, Don Pasque, Pokamoke. He was a yaller man and one of our color, and de order from your comrades is sprinkle yaller flowers; nothing green. You know de full moon penalty for wearing green neckties or sprinkling green flowers. What is it?

Company: Death.

Capt. Primrose: And when you get de password, St. Patrick?

Company: (Bring guns to a charge) Erin go far.

The song that follows continues in the anti-Irish sentiment:

White folks is might jealous,

Look out dar in de flank.

Day turn dere noses way up,

At every darkey rank.

For skillful revolutions,

And tictacs every way,

By laws and constitution,

De skids are all o.k.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guard Chowder: A Humour Local Play in One Act and Six Scenes*, 1879, Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits Readers’ Collection, box 14, 17.

Again, note how the Irish are here labeled “White” although they had not yet assimilated into the “White” community. The Skidmores are essentially pitting themselves as darker skinned against all lighter skinned peoples, making the Irish, at least for the moment, White. The intentions of the Skidmores grow more menacing as the series progresses. By the fourth play in the series, *Mulligan Guards Surprise*, the Skidmores seek to eradicate the Irish entirely. The song, “The Full Moon Union,” presents the intent of the military troupe: “All razors out den cut about, De password’s erin isle.”²⁷² Primrose again leads his militia in a song to rally his Skidmores:

We’ve ordered all milesia [militia] out

It’s gwine to make a fuss

Steerage tickets very low

For de Irish exodus.

Belfast men, Corkonians

Oh hurry, hurry soon

And skip aboard de cunard line

And make way for de moon.²⁷³

The Skidmores envision an idyllic afterlife in which the Irish are put in their place. Here at last in Heaven, not just the Irish, but all Whites, are finally removed from the streetcars.

Professor Proctor’s telescope

Has penetrated mars,

He watchted de colored conductors

²⁷² Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guard Picnic*, 50.

²⁷³ Ibid.

On heavenly horsecars.
White folk try to get aboard
Dey're captured by dragoons
Employed by de government
Of elongated moon.

In the paradise presented in the song lyric, the Skidmores envision a joining of forces in which an eclipse will occur merely by the combined efforts of all Blacks.

Dar'll be a mighty dark eclipse
Next Easter Monday week
A mighty colored lecturer
In [illegible] will speak.
A hundred million darkies
Meet in de afternoon
Dey'll blacken up dis planet
From de darkness of de moon.²⁷⁴ (Harrigan, 51).

The Skidmore songs fall into two categories: those that express anti-Irish sentiment (“Skids are Out Tonight,” “The Full Moon Union,” etc.), and songs of celebration (“Citron Wedding Cake,” and “Where You Speck to Land”). The latter category of songs lends itself to dance, and like a contemporary square dance, include in their lyric the steps of the dance.

In Harrigan's slums all of the residents are given their due. His lyrics help to illustrate a crowded tenement world in which all of the underclasses subsist together. In

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 51.

one of most popular songs of its time, “McNally’s Row of Flats” from *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*, Harrigan delineates the cultural stew created by the masses living side by side.

It’s Ireland and Italy, Jerusalem and Germany,
Oh Chinamen and Nagers, and a paradise for cats
All jumbled up together in the snow or rainy weather,
They represent the tenants in McNally’s row of flats.²⁷⁵

This mixture of peoples is essential to the larger conflicts of the plays. The conflict between the Mulligans and the Skidmores is ever present. But over the course of the plays a varied collection of conflicts emerge almost exclusively between Irish and another community: Chinese, Dutch, or African American. The only apparent conflict between groups where Irish do not participate is through the occasional “racist” remark of Negro characters against Italians. The comments provide a glimpse into the racial hierarchy of the time, in which the Italians occupied the lowest rung on the social ladder.

A particular example of the condescending nature of the Negro characters against Italians (a community barely represented in the series) occurs in the song “South Fifth Avenue” from *Mulligan Silver Wedding*, which mentions this attitude of the African American community toward Italians, but only in passing.

I wish to scent my handkerchief
Passing dis saloon.
De vapor’s quite distressing,
From dat Itialian crew,
Dis padrone emigration
To South Fifth Avenue.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Harrigan, *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*, 30.

The song is a fine example of the Jim Dandy character in that it celebrates the airs donned by the singer, a mask of wealth, which reveals itself as the song progresses. The lyric recites a list of characters seen on “South Fifth Avenue” including “Alexander Furguson/De wealthy janitor.” Note that Alexander is a code word for the Jim Dandy (or Zip Coon) character—epitomized in the 1911 Irving Berlin hit “Alexander’s Ragtime Band.” Whereas it may be plausible for a janitor to be wealthy, the song seems to turn implausible with the characters of Pegram Danderlilly and “a colored senator.”

Dars Pegram Danderlilly,
De colored millionare,
Commissioner de colonize
For old Liberia.
Dats a colored senator,
Of de selected few
Aristocratic people
Of South Fifth Avenue.²⁷⁷

Harrigan’s inclusion of these characters lifts the song above the Jim Dandy minstrel song into a sphere of possibility. Despite the comic flavor of the song, the singer includes heroes of the African American community who give a verisimilitude to the lyric’s intent. In 1872 Hiram Rhodes Revels of Mississippi was elected the first “colored” Senator. Likewise, the colonization of Liberia remained in the news well into the 1880s when the song was published. Thus, an apparent racist song again reflected the attitudes of Harrigan’s actual neighborhood, remaining true to his Realism.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 83.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

Although the songs may not always mirror or forward the plot of the plays, they always remain true to character. In *The Mulligan Guard Nominee*, the plot concerns Dan's campaign for the position of Alderman for the ward. Toward that end Dan engages the community to rally around him, but to do so he must identify an opponent or enemy, Lochmuller, or to put it more broadly, the Dutch community. The song "Hang the Mulligan Banner Up" accomplishes two purposes. In it Dan identifies the opponent and in so doing, creates an "us" to oppose the "them."

Dan Mulligan the coming man,
So stalwart, bold, and strong,
He's always in the cause of right,
And never in the wrong.
He wants ye for constituents,
The white man and the black,
And should ye need a favor, boys,
He'll never turn his back.
Then hang the mulligan banner up,
So boldly to the wind,
Now give it room, the Mulligan boom,
Will lave the Dutch behind.
All Africans, Italian and Scandinavians,
Come rally round your leader boys,
Bold Daniel Mulligan.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guard Nominee*, 1880, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, 44.

The camaraderie suggested by the song's lyric in linking the African, Italian, and Scandinavian communities together is merely a ruse by Dan to garner the votes of the various groups—specifically the African American vote. The song serves the plot as a rallying cry of a nominee. Dan's actual intent is to do anything to get the vote of the Negro community, with no intention of following through on any promises.

“Locked Out After Nine,” from *Mulligan Guard Picnic* is interesting to note in that it speaks of a boarding house which contains Harrigan's collection of nationalities, but clearly leaves out African American, suggesting that, unlike the neighborhood, which harbors a cross section of races and nationalities, such boarding houses might not be interracial. Miss Doyle, the landlady, has a strict rule that all boarders must be home by nine or they will be locked out. The last verse of this comic situational song reads:

There was a row next day
The boarders all got drunk
Miss Doyle she got excited
And threw out every trunk
Hat boxes and valise
The shirts from off the line
Come out with all the lodgers
Because we got home after nine.
Then Slattery McConnigle
Gilligan and Dan O' Burk
Whaled the Scandenavian
And ostracized the Turk,

Policeman did appear
The tailor Rubenstein
Said "Take em in oh vat a sin
You're off your beat at nine."²⁷⁹

All are welcome in this boarding house except the Black community. Harrigan's hodgepodge is represented in the songs in name only. Although the plays occasionally include German musicians on stage, only the Irish and the African American characters actually perform songs, keeping with Harrigan's assertion that it is these two communities that express themselves in this way. Again, this supports Harrigan's Realism. If his understanding of the Seventh Ward was that only Irish and Blacks sang, his plays remain consistent to this truth.

The Dutch character Brimble appears in several of the works. And although he does not ever sing, he is a musician who is employed for various celebratory occasions. He shows the versatility of being able to perform for the Skidmores as well as the Mulligans, but the Dutch community remains mute as far as singing.

Shift in presentation of race

Nineteenth-century American theatre was rife with portrayals of the buffoonish stage Irishman that rivaled blackface minstrelsy in popularity. This portrayal reached its peak in the 1850s where, as Carl Wittke explains,

Irish plays exaggerated the absurdities of Irish character and used such Irish words as shillelagh, colleen, begorra, smithereens, and Erin go bragh, which promptly found their way into the American language. Comedy effects depended

²⁷⁹ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Picnic*, 99.

on the actor, his dialect, his gestures, and his appearance rather than on the lines of the play.²⁸⁰

Harrigan was among a handful of actors and playwrights (led by Boucicault whose stage Irishmen varied from pure stereotype to new forms of characterization) who recreated the stage Irishman from distinctly and aggressively stereotyped fools that began as early as 1689 with *The Irish Hudibras* by James Farewell²⁸¹ to characters who transcended their given roles. Harrigan did much to dispel these attributes of the stage Irishman, but never relinquished them entirely. His audience relied on particular antics by the characters and Harrigan catered to these expectations while injecting new motives to his stage Irishmen beyond simply a desire to drink or fight.

Likewise, Harrigan's Black characters maintained their minstrel personas with an extra layer of characterization without which Harrigan's plots would have been confined to skits rather than full stories. The characters Primrose and Puter, two of the most popular characters in the series, embodied the minstrel show staple of the end men Tambo and Bones. The following interchange from *Mulligan Guards Ball* illustrates the minstrel banter, but also serves the plot of the play.

Simpson: Brudder Puter. I'm highly gratified dat you're de only religious member of de Skidmore Guards dat would interest yourself for de welfare of de Skidmore Ball tomorrow night.

Puter: Since I was elected Chaplain of de regiment, you know I beat four Baptists and three Presyterians for de position. I've always advoted dancing as a pleasure,

²⁸⁰ Wittke, *Tambo and Bones*, 254.

²⁸¹ The argument may be made that the character Macmorris from Shakespeare's *Henry V* serves a similar function in depicting the stage Irishman as a buffoon, thus this characterization could be said to predate Farrell's characterization substantially.

so I accompanied de committee on decorations to see dat de ballroom was finished wid eclat.

Simpson: I've been so busy all day cleaning my uniform, I declare I forgot de name of de hall. What is de name, Brudder Puter?

Puter: Lyric Hall.

Simpson: Lyric.

Puter: Yes, Lyric. More stress on de Lye dan on de ric.

Simpson: Lyric Hall - dat's a good selection. I 'spect we'll have it decorated wid nice ingredients.

Puter: Oh yes. Dar's a large chromo of Abraham Lincoln to go over de door, and de floreal tributes are something gorgeous.

Simpson: I understand Leftenant Newlumber's sister Ruth is gwine to stand for de Goddess of Liberty when de Skidmores march in de hall.

Puter: She'll have to stand on a flour barrel.

Simpson: She can stand any place. Her brudder stood me up for fourteen shampoos and sixteen shaves. [Simpson is a barber.]²⁸²

The malapropisms, grammatical twists and puns are pure minstrel show, but Harrigan uses the interchange to show the relationship between the two men and to provide some exposition regarding the ball. Harrigan uses the Simpson/Puter banter throughout the series, anchoring the plays in the minstrel tradition, but never abandoning the plots and characterizations specific to the series.

Harrigan's characterizations are consistent over the course of the series in tone, rhythm of speech, and interpersonal relationships. Cordelia is always looking to improve

²⁸² Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Ball*, 23-24.

hers and Dan's social station. Lochmuller is consistently out to make a buck. The Skidmores are forever striving to oust the Irish community from streetcars. But along with the consistencies, Harrigan allows his characters to develop. An analysis of these developments provides insights into Harrigan's approach to Realism and, to a lesser degree, presentation of race.

The core conflicts in the first plays of the series surround the issue of race (*Mulligan Guards Ball*, *Mulligan Guards Chowder*, *Mulligan Guards Christmas*). The Mulligan Guards and the Skidmores are constantly at odds. This conflict shifts with the fourth play of the series, *Mulligan Guards Nominee*. With this play, the conflict between the Mulligan Guards and the Skidmore becomes secondary as new conflicts arrive, centering less on racial divide and more on gender divisions. Harrigan's shift is echoed in his stage persona Dan Mulligan. As Koger states, "[Dan's] racial prejudices gradually softened as he learned to cooperate with his Black and German neighbors."²⁸³

Racial conflict is not obliterated by any means, but it is relegated to lesser characters. The character Honora, introduced in *Mulligan Guard Picnic*, becomes the primary voice of racism. The role, played by the actor John Queen, became the comic racist whose ignorance provides a glimpse into the ridiculous attitudes of racism for racism's sake. As Koger states, "[Queen] depicted her as a silly female who loved to sing and recite rhymes for no particular reason. A fervent patriot as well as a loving mother, her Irish chauvinism often manifested itself as bigotry, particularly toward Blacks and Asians."²⁸⁴ Honora's role shows the ridiculousness of the pure racist.

²⁸³ Koger, "A Critical Analysis," 152.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 155-56.

To understand Harrigan's shift in racial representation, one need only look at the development of the popular character Rebecca Allup, played by Tony Hart. The two most popular characters of the series, understandably so, were played by Harrigan and Hart: Dan Mulligan and Rebecca Allup. Although Hart played other roles, his Allup was clearly the drawing card as Harrigan devoted more and more stage time in his scripts to Rebecca. From her introduction in *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, Rebecca Allup's character is defensive in the face of (anti-Black) racism. She will not accept racism passively and is quick to retaliate, albeit comically. In one scene, Allup witnesses the actor Maculy embracing Cordelia in melodramatic fashion.

Maculy (holding Cordelia in a melee): Oh, my wild flower of the wilderness, fly with me, your own Maculy Janles. Fly from this cruel ignorant African (attitude) Pompey flying from the Greeks.

Allup (Threateningly): Who's an ignorant African?

Plaxy: Who said we were Greeks?

Allup: Is said so, if I'm an ignorant African, you're Greeks.²⁸⁵

The scene is harmless and mildly comic, but it establishes Rebecca's feisty attitude. Even in this early appearance of Rebecca, she is not afraid to stand up for herself. When Maculy puts his arm around her waist, she slaps him and states: "Take your hand off me, white man. I'm a colored widow. Mrs. Mulligan, I'm ashamed. If Mister Mulligan was here, he'd be out on de street measuring blocks."

Rebecca soon became the dominant character, second only to Dan. This is of course due in large part to the universally praised performance of the role by Tony Hart. By the time of the third play, *Mulligan Guards Christmas*, Dan and Rebecca's scenes are

²⁸⁵ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, 18.

fairly evenly split. By the fourth play in the series, *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, Harrigan renames the character Rebecca previously referred to as “Allup.” By this point in the series the audience had become familiar with the character, and as I illustrate in chapter four, she had become one of the primary draws of the series.

Mulligan Guards Nominee is notable for the development of Rebecca in another regard in that for the first time in the series Dan Mulligan splits stage time almost equally with Rebecca. Prior to this play, Dan dominates the plays, with Hart playing a multiple of roles, with *Mulligan Guards Nominee* Hart is relegated almost exclusively to the role of Rebecca. Also, it is here that Dan and Rebecca share the stage for the first time in an extended sequence.

Rebecca is interesting in her role in Harrigan’s presentation of race. Her conflicts prior to *Mulligan Guards Nominee* are interracial (African American versus Irish), and more often than not, simply an elaboration on minstrel caricature. With this fourth play in the series Rebecca’s conflicts lie with a new character in the series, Caroline, a Negro woman from Haiti. A good portion of the first act of *Mulligan Guard Nominee* is given over to the squabbles of these two characters. This is the first point in the series that presents two women of African descent in conflict with each other. What would certainly add to the comedy of the situation is the fact that both of these characters were played by men.

Although Rebecca is quick to be offensive as her best defense when attacked or ridiculed, she is not without her faults. Rebecca lies easily when it suits her needs, overindulges in alcohol (as do many of the characters), uses opium at least on one occasion, and will break the law as the mood strikes her. When accused of stealing in

Act I of *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, she lies stating: “I’ve served ten days often from over excess of gin and joy, but when you cast de stigma of thief in my face, beware, I’m spotless as de snow, ‘dough I am black.”²⁸⁶

Rebecca’s character develops even further with the subsequent play, *Mulligan Guards Picnic*. In this play the intra-racial conflict between Rebecca and Caroline has shifted to inter-racial conflict between Rebecca and the racist Mrs. Dublin. This shift in character conflict suggests a shift in what Harrigan’s audiences deemed allowable. There is a sense that although the Mulligan Guards series was diverse in its presentation of a multitude of races, Harrigan tread lightly in regard to inter-racial conflict. The communities were at odds, but rarely did individual Black/White conflicts receive much stage time. By the fifth play this apparent caution was dissolving.

Likewise, racial pride takes on an added dimension in *Mulligan Guard Picnic*. Whereas characters, no matter their race, would often expound on the glories of their own particular race, those boasts were comic in nature and simply maintained the stigma of ignorance or fostered the stereotypes. Rebecca makes a boast in *Mulligan Guard Picnic* that is significant on several levels. She brags: “I love music. Dey say Piccaninny was a colored man. I mean de first mastodon fiddler.”²⁸⁷ This rumor that she perpetuates (or invents?) serves multiple functions in revealing the development of racial identity. Rebecca’s reference to Piccaninny is likely a reference to a performer in the immensely popular Haverly’s Mastodon Minstrels. Haverly essentially shut down many competitors with the opening of his enormous minstrel spectacle in 1879. Rebecca’s claim that the lead fiddle player was “colored” makes the performer the biggest star in the biggest hit of

²⁸⁶ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, 53.

²⁸⁷ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Picnic*, 45.

the day. Comic stereotype is thus replaced with racial bravado, with the added irony that Rebecca herself was being played by a White man—Hart.

A final note in the development of Rebecca's character appears in the final play of the Mulligan Guards series, *Mulligan Guards Surprise*. By this point in the series Rebecca is an equal to all others on the stage, including Dan. Although there is a distinct lack of equality between the different racial groups, racial hierarchy in regard to character and stage time no longer exists. In Act I of *Mulligan Guard Surprise*, Rebecca, McSweeney, and Dan are all having a drink and Rebecca states, "We're three of a kind."²⁸⁸ This statement is profound in its assertion of equality. The other characters do not object to the statement, but take it in stride. But the arc of Rebecca's character from her appearance in *Mulligan Guards Christmas* to here is remarkable in her development and freedom of expression.

Racism

The following passage from *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* is blatantly racist in its portrayal of offensive (particularly by today's standards) dialect, bold accusations, and name calling. From the offstage shouts of Dennis who thinks he has been imprisoned by "nagurs" to Mrs. Dublin's hateful contempt for Hog Eye (the Chinese launderer), the scene seeks to find comedy in its angry banter. I believe that Harrigan succeeds in this endeavor due to one fact: Hog Eye remains immune to the racism and retaliates with flirtation and invitation.

Hog Eye (At window): Welly goody nightee. Me stealee Ilish woman's close—
no blodee lookee. (Noise in loft.)

Dennis: Don't murder me, nagurs. Don't murder me.

²⁸⁸ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Surprise*, 35.

Hog Eye: Blackee man have muchee funee in Macee Sweeny's hayee loftee. No onee lookee I takee close. (Takes hold of line as Mrs. Dublin comes to window.)

Mrs. Dublin: Hello Chinaman!

Hog Eye: Howle do? Welly nicee nightee?

Mrs. Dublin: Welly nicee nightee—what are ye grabbing that pulley line for?

Hog Eye: One pair sockee-one under shirt bloger me.

Mrs. Dublin: Let go of that pulley—you Chinese thief you.

Hog Eye: No like. I'lee wantee sockee.

Mrs. Dublin: Let go of it. (Pulley line falls on stage) There goes my clothes in the mud.

Hog Eye: I catchee my close.

Mrs. Dublin: Drop it, you haythen you.

Hog Eye: No like dropee.

Mrs. Dublin: I own that pulley line. You come over from Chinee, you rat eater, and you put your hands on a dacent lady's property. Let go your houl of it.

Hog Eye: Me welly goodee man. Me likee you—me no likee frightee.

Mrs. Dublin: You're not half a man. You're a pagan. You eat your dinner with drum sticks. You're a monkey. You have a tail growing out of your head.

Hog Eye: No getee madee. Me likee you. Makee welly goodee wiffee. Aller same Melican, callee Missee Hog Eye.

Mrs. Dublin: You're a mongrel Assiatic. Would you propose the marriage lines to me? Why don't ye have whiskers on your face like a man? You baboon you.

Hog Eye: Welly nicee ladyee. Comee top side of house some time—smokee

pipe o' me. Aller same Chinaman, aller same Ilishman.

Mrs. Dublin: It's the rotten pipe you smoke. The neighbors are moving out of Mulligan Alley from the fume of it. The likes of ye coming to a free country, and walking around in petticoats, and calling yourself a man. Bah! Ye omadon ye.

Hog Eye: Welly goodee pipe smokee. Ilish ladyee smokee one pipe opium. See Ilish heaven soon up quick.²⁸⁹

Without Hog Eye's seeming passivity, the scene would venture into the realm of pure contempt and cruelty, but his imperviousness to Dublin's onslaught gives him the upper hand in this melee. The last word belongs to him, the victor of this round of the ongoing battle of racism in the series.

Racist comments abound in the series, often simple throw-away remarks that evoke no response: "White people are so fickle."²⁹⁰ "It's time you had that Zulu buried."²⁹¹ It's a world where such comments are commonplace; however, Harrigan allows such statements to blossom into entire scenes when they can be mined for their comic potential. The following segment from Act III of *Mulligan Guard Nominee* reveals a certain racial equality as Rebecca Allup, who is locked in her room on a boat, engages in a verbal battle with the extremely racist Irish Mrs. Dublin.

Rebecca: Open dis door—you false face.

Mrs. Dublin: I fear not the black squall overhead.

Rebecca: Beware woman; dat black squall full of lightning.

Mrs. Dublin: You're the bone of contention.

Rebecca: You're de remnants of an Irish stew.

²⁸⁹ Harrigan, *Mulligan's Silver Wedding*, 119-20.

²⁹⁰ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Picnic*, 5.

²⁹¹ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, 5.

Mrs. Dublin: Blackman, blackman, don't take me, but take that man behind the tree.²⁹²

Rebecca: Paddy, paddy take a clod, Up de ladder wid a hod.

Mrs. Dublin: Come down here to me.

Rebecca: You come up here to me.

Mrs. Dublin: Monkey monkey in a cell.

Rebecca: Eat de Irish, never tell.

Mrs. Dublin: You're a thorn in me bosom.

Rebecca: Yes I'm a blackthorn and you open dis door and I'll fill you full of briers.

Mrs. Dublin: Come down 'till I buther the floor wid you.

Rebecca: If ever dis keg of butter- (touches head) falls agin you you'll slip into sleep dat knows no waking.

Mrs. Dublin: Woolly head- flat nose-tunnel mouth I don't know-what is it?
Came up from the South.

Rebecca: Oh if I could get dis door open.²⁹³

As over the top or extreme as the conflicts appear, they stem from Harrigan's own observations of his neighborhood. In the previous scene Rebecca and Mrs. Dublin merely give a comic voice to a very real racism in New York City at the time. Harrigan frequently mines the Black/Irish conflict for humor; however, the first interracial conflict of the series existed between the German (Dutch) and Irish communities. As Moody explains, concerning the Mulligan and Lochmuller fracas that appears in *Mulligan*

²⁹² This is a spoof of the popular poem "Woodsman, Spare that Tree" by George Pope Morris.

²⁹³ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, 27.

Guards Ball,

The Mulligan-Lochmuller clash was not a stage figment; it came straight from life. Everyone on the Lower East Side knew the daily eruptions when the “impulsive Celt” met the “plodding Teuton,” and according to Harrigan his Gustav Lochmuller was modeled on a ‘bologna butcher’ on Pearl Street.²⁹⁴

The German/Irish discord is eventually overwhelmed by the more comic, thus more commercial, Black/Irish fights. Much of that shift is due to Hart’s masterful portrayal of Rebecca. However, Dan’s attitude toward the Germans never disappears; so deep is Dan’s hatred of the Germans that it even manifests in his subconscious. In *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, a sleeping Dan says, “Down with the Dutch.”²⁹⁵ He isn’t alone in his dislike for the Dutch. In the same play, Rebecca echoes Dan’s sentiments toward the Germans:

Allup: Mr. Mulligan, I admire an Irishman, but a German woman never can lay a hand on me.

Bridget: You call me a German! (Rolling up her sleeves.)

Allup: Yes; a German pretzel. (She jumps.)²⁹⁶

But as strong as the anti-Dutch sentiment is, the conflict between the Blacks and Irish provides the bulk of the interracial animosity of the series; an attitude that may reflect a certain racism held by Harrigan himself. On several occasions Harrigan carefully delineates how the use of the word “nager” is offensive to the Black community. In this scene in *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, Cinder, a reporter, and Snuff, a spy for Lochmuller, try to corner Dan through his use of the word. In Act II Dan has just finished checking

²⁹⁴ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 88.

²⁹⁵ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, 23.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

the naturalization papers of British immigrant Cromwell. Dan is running for Alderman.

Dan: His naturalization papers are correct. I think he should vote as well as the nager who never took out any papers at all.

McSweeny: Say nothing against the nager, Dan.

Cinder: I am sorry to hear the nominee speak disrespectfully of the African.

Snuff (Aside.): If they'd only get up a fight.

Dan: Did I say nager?

Cinder: I have reported it there.

Dan: Have you put it down for the newspapers that I said nager?

Cinder: Most assuredly, sir.

Dan (Aside to McSweeny): Will I lick him, Mac?

McSweeny (Aside.): Keep cool, Dan—easy.

Snuff: If they'd get up a fight, Lochmuller 'ud win.

Dan (Goes to Cinder takes book from him, then goes to C. followed by omnes.

To Cinder.): Did you write nager on that?

Cinder: Yes sir.

Snuff (Aside.): I've got him dead sure.

Dan (Glasses on.): Is it positive I could have said the word nager?

Cinder: 'Tis there. Stenografied.

Dan: The nager is 'ografied?

Cinder: 'tis reported as a fact for the scowl.

Dan (To group.): Gentlemen, did I speak disrespectful of the nager?

Omnes: You did, Dan. You did.

McSweeney: 'twas accidental.

Dan (Half sobbing.): Be seated gentlemen. Be seated. (Omnes go to seats. Dan to rostrum.) I desire the down trodden African American voter's forgiveness. The Skimore Guards are friends of mine. I am going to have them incorporated in the N.G's. National Guard.²⁹⁷

The scene is important to note for the ramifications of the use of the word "nigger." Because of the broad defense made by Mulligan and the fear of the implications of such a word, it is clear that the word "nager" was not simply common vernacular, but carried an overt offensiveness to it. However, Harrigan is guilty of the same crime as that which Dan is trying to sidestep. Often in his stage directions Harrigan refers to his Black characters as "nagers." By implicating his character's use of the same term, Harrigan is implicating himself. Thus, it seems apparent that there is a racist element within the person of Harrigan, as well as his characters.

The word "nager" (sometimes spelled "nagur") is fraught with vitriolic potential. The word may go unnoted in one scene then spur a fight in the next. In *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, the Irish Bridget lays her glass on the table and announces:

Bridget: I won't drink with a nagur.

Allup: Allow me to press it in your ear, I'm no nigger, I'm an esquimaux.

[Eskimo]

Bridget: You're a nagur! I'm ashamed of ye, Mr. Mulligan, you'd ax her to drink wid me!²⁹⁸

In *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, Lochmuller, when fearing bad luck after crossing a funeral

²⁹⁷ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, 7-9.

²⁹⁸ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, 25.

processional is corrected by his wife: “Mrs. Lochmuller: That was a nagur funeral. Don’t you know it’s good luck to cross a nagur funeral.”²⁹⁹ There are several possible reasons for the inherent cruelty of the statements and their frequency: Harrigan is reflecting his audience’s attitudes; he is mining the statements for their humor; or he is simply staying true to his characters’ attitudes.

At times, even the association with African Americans contains negative implications. This point is inconsistent in the series, as interracial business is conducted frequently throughout the series, but in at least one instance (in *Mulligan Guard Chowder*), the German Lochmuller is adamant that Mulligan not find out that he has rented his cellar to a “colored man.”

The prejudice toward Chinese characters (and to a lesser extent Italians in general) is much more consistent. Although there is interaction, and in one case a slight romance with Rebecca, the character Hog Eye in the Mulligan series is universally portrayed in a comically hostile light. As Koger states, “Harrigan typified the immigrant Asian as an opium-smoking, fast-talking clothes thief. His accent made him all but unintelligible and he had no redeeming social values to mitigate his negative qualities.”³⁰⁰ Harrigan’s portrayal of this hostility is two-pronged: through the comic dialect ladled thickly into the character’s speech, and through the antagonism of other characters toward the Chinese. Mrs. Dublin, ever the consistent racist, confronts Hog Eye in *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*: “Take all that’s left. If you had your way, you’d leave nothing in the country, but the plague and ship fever.”³⁰¹ Hog Eye’s response is practically incoherent without the clarification of Harrigan’s insertion of the word

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 15.

³⁰⁰ Koger, “A Critical Analysis,” 161.

³⁰¹ Harrigan, *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*, 123.

“indignant” as a clue to how it is to be performed: “Hog Eye (Indignant): Hop—loo—young—fong—me workee. Hop—loo—young—fong.”³⁰²

The characters duplicate Harrigan’s verbal portrayal of the Chinese in mockery; their use of Chinese dialect matches the phonetic pronunciations of the author. In *Mulligan Guards Chowder* Dan expresses his disdain for Hog Eye: “Dan: McSweeny if I had that fellow down here, I’d choke the rice out of him. (To Hog Eye) Say you stabbee me—I punchee you headee to morrow.”³⁰³ Consistent with Harrigan’s other interracial confrontations, Hog Eye does not simply let himself be abused. “Hog Eye: No sabee turk. (Blows water on Mulligan who gets brick throws and breaks glass in Hog Eye’s window. Hog Eye puts finger to nose.) You breakee you glassee you payee all in same sabee.”³⁰⁴ Ultimately, in this brief confrontation Hog Eye gets the upper hand, as Dan destroys property that belongs to himself and thus must incur the costs of replacing it.

When investigating the plays to determine the racial hierarchy of Harrigan’s *Mulligan Alley*, I find it interesting to note that although the balance may appear to be tipped in a particular direction, favoring the Irish most of the time, certain specifics emerge that suggest equality between the races. In *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding* Mrs. Dublin and Hog Eye are in a physical fight. The stage direction reads: “Bus. of fighting; Mrs. Dublin beats Hog Eye, puts him in horse trough, pumps on him; policeman enters alley gate, gets drink from back of “Wee Drop Saloon”, passed out to him, he exits after drink, laughing at fight.”³⁰⁵ It’s interesting that the law does not get involved with this struggle, but that might suggest that the conflict is not unusual, or perhaps, because Mrs.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid., 20.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 28.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 125.

Dublin has the upper hand, that the fight is acceptable.

Despite their dominance in the series due to the fact that Harrigan played the role of Dan Mulligan and was himself a Celt, the Irish are equal recipients of racist remarks and ongoing racism. As has already been mentioned, the modus operandi of the Skidmore Guards was to keep the Irish off the street cars. Primrose and Puter, the two leaders of the Skidmores, have made it their duty to oust the Irish or at least keep them in their place. As Onkey states, “Primrose and Puter see themselves as the real Americans and the Irish as the outsiders.”³⁰⁶ The hierarchy of the Ward is constantly in flux between the Irish and African Americans.

As Dan dons the “yellowface” of Chinese in his imitation of Hog Eye, so too does a performer in the *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding* put on “greenface” to become Irish. Dan receives a dose of his own medicine when witnessing the stage-Irishman of this show within a show. The character Crumbs comes onto a small stage and announces the next act in a variety show:

Crumbs: I am happy to announce the Louisiana Serenaders, who will perform in the auditorium. As their wardrobe is very costly, and the dressing rooms are newly whitewashed. Mr. Bryan McQuirk, the celebrated Irish character delineator, will now appear.

After a brief exchange, the scene continues:

(Curtain ascends. McQuirk appears in knee breeches, stick,³⁰⁷ sings Irish song “Roving Irish Blade.”)

Dan: He’s degrading the Irish character.

³⁰⁶ Onkey, “The Melee and the Curtain,” 10.

³⁰⁷ The stick would presumably be a shelaleigh, a common prop for the stage-Irishman.

Dennis: He's making game of me.

Dan: Get out of that. (Bus. of throwing popcorn at McQuirk, Dennis throwing, McQuirk keeps singing, when Dan throws basket, McQuirk bows, and exit, curtain descends.)³⁰⁸

In true Harrigan fashion, the scene ends with a fracas caused by interracial tension, or in this case due to the continuation of stereotypes that offend Dan's Irish pride.

Race is a prevalent theme in the comedy of Harrigan's work, but it relies on the audience's knowledge of racist tropes. Communities that aren't represented in the Mulligan series are still referenced as they serve a punch line or comic jest. One scene in *Mulligan Guard Chowder* jokes about the undesirability of Greeks and the greed of Jews in the course of a few throwaway lines. But the humor could only land if the audience has a foreknowledge of the stereotypes invoked:

Tommy: Pop, have you got a bite yet?

Dan: Have I? Bad luck to me Tommy, the flies on the Jersey coast here, would at [eat] the tattooed Greek.³⁰⁹

A few lines later, the Jewish tropes are exploited.

Tommy: Put of piece of red flannel on the hook, pop, that'll catch a fish.

Dan: No, Tommy. The fish'ud come around like a lot of Jews and look at it, they'd think it an auction flag.³¹⁰

One of the more popular "races" mined for their comic stage potential is Native Americans. "Dan: An inin's never happy till he's under a quilt."³¹¹ But analyzing the

³⁰⁸ Harrigan, *Mulligan's Silver Wedding*, 81.

³⁰⁹ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, 20.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid., 29.

placement of the different races on the social ladder, whether they are represented on stage or off, would clearly show the Italian community at the bottommost rung.

Early in *Mulligan Guards Ball* Tommy considers selling some old rags. He states: "I'll sell dem to Italians."³¹² Later in the same play Harrigan introduces the minor character Pedro Giovani. His first action is drawing a dagger on McSweeny when McSweeny confronts him. These two sequences succinctly illuminate Harrigan's characters' attitudes toward Italians. They represent a violent impetuous community that is easily deceived.

It's particularly informative that the African American community clearly sets themselves above the Italian community. Aside from an occasional remark from an Irish character, anti-Italian sentiment is almost always spoken by a Black character and the remarks are universally derogatory toward Italians. In *Mulligan Guard Surprise*, Puter states: "You all know why I went on de island. I cut an Italian and dats my brightest mark on de page of my history."³¹³ The intrinsic hatred toward the Italian community suggests a subtextual relationship between the two races that transcends anything witnessed on stage, as Italian characters don't appear in the series beyond brief appearances. In *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, after Rebecca has been arrested she states, "Frough me in de sewer. I ain't fit to live, dragged frough de streets like an Italian."³¹⁴ Again, this suggests a level of violence and degradation for Italian Americans with which the audience may be familiar, but this particular portrayal of race is not shown in any detail in the Mulligan Guards series.

³¹² Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Ball*, 20.

³¹³ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Surprise*, 85.

³¹⁴ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, 32.

As prominent as the issues around race are, particularly when they contribute to the comedy of the series, Harrigan does not exploit all such moments. One instance in particular is in *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* when Gus Lochmuller enters the playing area weeping with his face blackened from being trapped in the coal cellar.³¹⁵ Harrigan ignores a seemingly potent situation of a character turned Black. But as *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* is late in the series, Harrigan's comic and conflict focus rely more on gender, political, and socio-economic positioning than on exploitation of racial tropes. Harrigan instead chooses to center the plot around the comic potential of lawyers and the law.

So how does race in Harrigan's plays relate to his form of Realism? The texts of the Mulligan Guards series reveal a world where racism is commonplace and in which races intermingle with no clear demarcation as to a consistent hierarchy between the races. Based on texts alone, Mulligan Alley is peopled with a multitude of races that reflect the world of Harrigan's background. If Harrigan's Realism is reliant on audience expectation, drawn from stage-representations of race as well as the hodgepodge of ethnicities of New York City streets, then Harrigan seems to successfully combine this dual expectation, i.e. stage-Irishman fused with the New York Irishman. And although his portrayals of Chinese and Italians are drawn in broad strokes, creating depictions on the page that are little more than sketches at best or cartoons at worst, his Irish and Black characters (and to a slightly lesser degree, German characters) capitalize on audience expectations and reflect the city in his day.

The depictions of race in light of Harrigan's Realism shown through the written words of his plays provide insight into the contemporaneous notions of Realism, however, this realization of Harrigan's Realism is textual only. Chapter four investigates

³¹⁵ Harrigan, *Mulligan's Silver Wedding*, 32.

how the text was brought to life and how the portrayal of the races must be addressed to completely understand the meaning of Realism in Harrigan's day.

Chapter Four: Performance Analysis of the Mulligan Guards series

In the 1870s and 1880s, two of New York City's most prominent papers, *The New York World* and *The New York Post* focused their reviews of entertainments on a "higher class" of theatre and opera from such venues as Wallack's and Haverly's Lyceum Theatre. Despite the exclusion from their reviews of any of Harrigan's Mulligan Guards series, they were unable to maintain perfect ignorance of the phenomenon so that by the final incarnation of Dan Mulligan on stage, *Dan's Tribulations*, even these papers had to recognize what the rest of New York had already embraced wholeheartedly. In April, 1884, following the opening of *Dan's Tribulations*, *The Post* printed the following:

The events depicted are, it is almost needless to say, wholly preposterous, but the scenes are nevertheless made wonderfully lifelike by the earnestness of the performers and their complete mastery of the characteristics of the types which they undertake to portray. The types are low certainly, and figure in scenes which are constantly in flagrant violation of good taste, but the performance, in a strictly theatrical sense, is good, and managed on thoroughly sound principles. It is this fact alone which entitles it to notice. The actors are selected carefully on account of their fitness for the parts which they play, strict attention is paid to the smallest details, and on every side there are abundant evidences of intelligent supervision. That the tenement house drama has any positive value in itself is extremely doubtful but sincerity and capacity in management are rare qualities which ought not to be allowed to pass without a word of recognition.³¹⁶

Despite the distasteful subject matter and the low level of the theatre itself, the popularity of Harrigan's series by all levels of society made his "tenement house drama" impossible

³¹⁶ *The New York Post*, April 8, 1884, 3.

to ignore. The critic reluctantly admires Harrigan's Realism as it portrays characters that are "wonderfully lifelike by the earnestness of the performers and their complete mastery of the characteristics of the types which they undertake to portray." He recognizes how Harrigan catered the roles to fit the actors and "their fitness for the parts which they play," and Harrigan's "strict attention is paid to the smallest details," both key components to his dramaturgy. A probable motivation for the critic to review *Dan's Tribulations*, was the growing presence in the audience of a wealthier patron. In fact, within the first year of the appearance of the first Mulligan Guards full length play, audiences from every strata of New York society embraced the comedies and made them the most popular series of their time.

This chapter examines the series, particularly the performances and audiences in regard to Harrigan's creation of his own brand of Realism and his depiction of race. With evidence gleaned from newspapers, images, and critical writing on the plays, as well as through clues within the text, I reconstruct the look and production requirements of the plays and their audiences and analyze them in terms of race and Realism.

To reiterate: Harrigan's Realism is grounded two spheres: audience expectation of character portrayal and "real life" detail infusing the works from the scenery and costumes to the accents and performances of the actors playing the variety of personas of the plays. Harrigan's goal was not a duplication of New York City transferred to the stage, but rather a detailed entertainment which was digestible to the audience. Harrigan's never-ending struggle to capture the look and the sound of New York is well-documented in chapters two and three. This chapter measures Harrigan's effectiveness in attaining his goals.

A fundamental component to Harrigan's Realism was his up-to-the-minute depiction of his city. For example, within a year of the invention of the telephone, Harrigan's *The Telephone* premiered, capitalizing on this latest craze. The omnipresent militias that peppered the city are well-represented by the Skidmores and Dan's own Mulligan Guards. Politics, favorite pastimes (picnicking in New Jersey), ferrying up to Albany, all made it into Harrigan's comedies. As Moody states: "They simply acquired a new setting, a panorama of the Lower East Side, as if the back wall of the theatre had been cut away, opening to a view of Corlear's Hook, Cherry Hill, Baxter Street, or Five Points."³¹⁷ This chapter shows that Harrigan succeeded exceedingly well in his approach to Realism. Both the critics and audiences alike universally praised the "slice of life" depictions of his America brought to life on the stage of the Theatre Comique.

In 1880, in the review for *Mulligan Guards Nominee*, the critic for the *New York Herald* pointedly illustrates how Harrigan's is a singularly American setting. The critic focuses on the new character Cromwell, a British tourist, emphasizing his outsider status.

Last night an Englishman, made up like Mr. Edmund Yates,³¹⁸ was thrown across this strange web of the under stratum of our metropolitan life. He was not funny, however, showing that his temperament is as far outside the consciousness of the author as the American man seems to be. It is altogether a strange act in the great comedie humaine of our cosmopolitan city. It is tenement house farce crossed with First ward³¹⁹ opera, and its jumble of types and characteristic incidents, each one possible enough, may be taken by the philosopher as showing the wildly

³¹⁷ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 78.

³¹⁸ Yates was a British novelist and dramatist at the time of Harrigan's Mulligan Guard series.

³¹⁹ The First Ward was on the southern-most tip of Manhattan in what is today Battery Park. It was surrounded on three sides by water and was known for docks and dockworkers.

grotesque side of the agglomerating and assimilating process which is so distinctive of our national life.³²⁰

Significantly, the critic emphasizes Harrigan's inability to capture the voice of the British outsider as the author is specifically New York City centric, but he admires "the agglomerating and assimilating process which is so distinctive of our national life," thus validating Harrigan's approach to writing. In this review as in others Harrigan is praised for his representation of American. Indeed, the Realism of Harrigan's comedies drew upon his American audience's perceptions of themselves and their America.

Writing, Rehearsal, and Casting

Harrigan helmed all of his comedies as director, producer, manager, and star. He believed that a single vision must drive the piece to make it effective, similar to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*. In an unidentified clipping, Harrigan states:

The only possible way to produce plays truthfully and valuably is to have one intelligent and observant mind control everything down to the least detail. A good play must be placed before the public by a man who knows the value and use of every constituent connected with a theatre. The cheapest super[numerary] must be looked out for and taught. Every light that is thrown must be gauged by one dictator. His power must be as supreme as the general of an army, and he must dare to exert the same authority and have everything done to suit him. If he gets an actor on his stage who insists upon being arbitrary he must either discharge the actor or resign himself. I could give the best play I ever wrote to some man who did not understand me or had not the ability to make people do as he wished and my play would fail miserably. It is the exertion of this one man

³²⁰ *New York Herald*, November 23, 1880, 4.

power that secures the best results. It is in stage directorship our theatres are often deficient. A capitalist, a carpenter, a business manager cannot produce plays.³²¹ To that end, Harrigan not only wrote the dialogue and lyrics for his comedies, as well as star in them, but he also supervised the set building, hunted down costumes, and directed the plays in a meticulous fashion. The fact that his cast remained constant suggests that his demands on the actors were tolerated—perhaps too, because Harrigan’s actors were paid for rehearsals—a rarity in that day.

Only the music was created without the scrutiny of Harrigan. Harrigan and Braham would converse about the context and tone of the songs, but they worked separately on them. Harrigan would pen lyrics then hand them over to Braham who would set them according to his own taste. But like Harrigan, Braham had an instinct for the structure of an entertainment. He never wrote two songs in the same meter that would follow each other in piece. Likewise, he tailored the keys and ranges of the tunes to the actors who would be performing them. This attention to the needs of the piece as a whole echoes Harrigan’s own obsessive approach to building his plays.

A newspaper may not approve of the subject matter or persons being depicted (see the *Post* review that starts this chapter), but how those characters and their situations are presented was always recognized as accurate portrayals of New York types and lively entertainment. Harrigan’s Irish were particularly praised for their detailed realization. Howells writes in 1886:

Mr. Harrigan instinctively repeats the same personages in his Mulligan series. In fact, nothing could be better than the neatness, the fineness with which the stages

³²¹ Unidentified clipping in the Library at the Players Club on Gramercy Park, New York City.

of character are given in Mr. Mulligan's Irish people; and this literary conscientiousness is supplemented by acting which is worthy of it.³²²

Harrigan was so meticulous about the world of his plays that he would have models of the sets built before he wrote a word of dialogue. No aspect of the production was left to chance. He worked out the fight sequences as carefully as the dramatic scenes or the precision marching of the Skidmore Guards (an element that came to be expected in every chapter of the series). The construction of the script was the most difficult part of Harrigan's many tasks as he found the development of a plot arduous. But upon completion of the script, he gloried in the rehearsal phase: "The third phase, staging and rehearsing, was invariably the longest and for him the most exciting."³²³ It was in the rehearsal room that Harrigan shaped the intricately realized productions from the madcap antics of falling mannequins to the explosion aboard a ferryboat.

Productions of plays, particularly melodramas, in the mid to late nineteenth century increasingly depended on special effects as the selling points of the productions. In 1889 Henry James criticizes the state of the theatre.

There is evidently a corrosive principle in the large command of machinery and decorations—a germ of perversion and corruption. It gets the upper hand—it becomes the master. It is so much less easy to get good actors than good scenery and to represent a situation by the delicacy of personal art than by "building it in" and having everything real. Surely there is no reality worth a farthing, on the stage, but what the actor gives, and only when he has learned his business up to

³²² Howells, *Harpers Monthly* 73, 316.

³²³ *Harper's Weekly*, February 2, 1889, 98.

the hilt need he concern himself with his material accessories.³²⁴

Although Harrigan did incorporate spectacle into his comedies, the thrust of his stage work centered around performance and character development. To that end, when developing his plays he knew that he had to create an extraordinary troupe of talent, and history has shown that he succeeded. The creation of the plays was merely the first stage. The casting of those plays was of paramount importance. As chapter one illustrates, Harrigan's choices in performers was not limited to his outstanding co-star, Hart; the entire company was universally regarded as the finest in their fields.

To fully realize his own approach to theatre, built on his theory of casting as the most important element of the actualization of Realism, Harrigan built his troupe of actors from scratch, beginning with Tony Hart. "The characters portrayed in my plays were new to the stage; in consequence it became necessary for me to create a new school of actors."³²⁵ The continuity of casting allowed Harrigan to develop characters that emerged from the specific strengths of the performers who played the various roles. In this way, Harrigan solidified his own brand of Realism, one in which his actors mastered their "types." "It was essential that I should make the performers, whom I gathered about me by gradual acquisitions, thoroughly appreciate these new types of realistic East Side characters." Harrigan's philosophy regarding the character/actor bond reflects Howells' prescription for what an actor's duty is: "[The actor] hasn't a decent respect for his art unless he be ready to render his part as if the whole illusion depended on that alone and the accessories didn't exist. The acting is everything or it's nothing."³²⁶ Harrigan would no doubt agree that in order to achieve his desired illusion, the actor had to embody the

³²⁴ James, *The Scenic Art*, 231.

³²⁵ Harrigan, "Holding a Mirror Up to Nature": 505.

³²⁶ James, *The Scenic Art*, 231.

role, which is why he honed each character according to the gifts of the actor playing the role. The marriage of actor and character was praised in Harrigan's pieces, as evidenced by the reviews for his comedies. He demanded this cohesiveness between the actor and the types he was creating, which in turn were based on his observations of daily life. Harrigan was pedantic in rehearsal so as to recreate the reality of his observations of daily life. This was the core of his Realism, which was inseparable from that of the philosophy of Realism of his critics and audience. Harrigan's portrayals neatly coincided with conceptions of the types of roles in minds of the viewers of his plays. Thus, when Johnny Wild donned blackface and became any number of Black characters, he was speaking the words that Harrigan supposedly overheard on the street, but also was embodying what would be an acceptable "stage Black" by the audience. The two characteristics: actual speech, spoken by the transparently artificial blackface performer would seem contradictory, but the apparent opposites add up to a form of Realism that was fully actualized in the performances of Harrigan's comedies. Harrigan's Realism and his presentation of race were not contradictory.

A program labeled "Original Company 514 Broadway," referring to the address of the Theatre Comique, contains 39 photos (eight of which appear to be performance photos or costumed poses). All of the actors in the photos are White (and only seven are women).³²⁷ But this fact does not erase the Realism of multi-racial performance, for the audience accepted this all-White troupe as any number of different races through a mutual contract of performer and audience. If the performer signals "Black," or "Chinese," or "Dutch," or "Irish," the audience accepted this as the truth of the moment.

This is not to say that Harrigan did not employ Black actors. As early as 1873

³²⁷ Oversized folder at NYPL Billy Rose Theatre Collection MWEZxxx n.c. 4564.

Harrigan and Hart performed with a young African American as the photo below attests. In the photo Hart (on the right) appears as the captain of a platoon of one (Harrigan is on the left).³²⁸



Figure 4.1 “Mulligan Guards Ball”

The young man in the photo was a performer named Morgan who worked with Harrigan for years in San Francisco and the west coast. Concerning the original “Mulligan Guards Ball” sketch in 1873, an article in the New York World states: “As [Harrigan and Hart] marched down the street in regalia they were followed by a colored man bearing a target. This latter fellow’s name was Morgan, whom Harrigan had picked up in Crosby Street, and who was looked upon as a mascot. He went to the Pacific coast later with Harrigan

³²⁸ <http://www.musicals101.com/News/mulligan.jpg>, accessed November 20, 2007.

and played with him here for years afterwards.”³²⁹ But Morgan’s role was more prop than actor in that there is no evidence that he ever had a speaking role, effectively a “spear holder,” or in the case of the photo, a target holder.

In examining Harrigan’s representation of the stage Negro, insofar as he directed the plays, his African American characters departed from their minstrel counterparts in that Tony Hart and others who played the black characters, were not as cartoonish in their appearance. Photographs and illustrations of the Mulligan Guards plays show a relatively non-exaggerated portrayal of Blacks, whereas minstrel presentation upheld a standard outlandish representation in makeup and dress—even when performed by Black performers. So too, the Irishman, when depicted in minstrel shows or burlesque, was an exaggerated character portrayed in the garb and appearance of audience expectations. In 1908 William Winter writes concerning the Irish attributes of John Brougham of the actor’s “dash, buoyancy, joyous freedom and gallant manliness that always wins the heart of youth.”³³⁰ The Irish characterizations are shallow and harmless, however, the expectations for Black comic (minstrel/burlesque) representations contained underlying subtextual inferences of subjugation, while the Irishman’s appearance maintained a tradition of comic attributes. Stephen Watt asserts: “In blackface, however, just as parts of the minstrel’s body were exaggerated—mouth, eyes, lips, that figured other, more intimate anatomical exaggerations—so, too, were notions of blacks’ libidinous appetites that needed to be constrained. Not so with the Irish, for the most part.”³³¹ Harrigan’s Black characters, while occasionally given the rhythms and banter of minstrel sketches, were not drawn in exaggerated strokes, but rather with an attempt toward literal imitation

³²⁹ *New York World*, June 3, 1894, 5.

³³⁰ Winter, “Juba and American Minstrelsy,” 98.

³³¹ Watt, “Irish American Drama,” 106.

of African Americans.

Interestingly, there is a suggestion that Harrigan's comedies may have been preceded by minstrel acts as the opening part of the program. In an interview with Anne Yeamans for an obituary for Harrigan in 1911, Yeamans states: "The performances opened with an act by black-faced comedians."³³² If this is true, the audience was subjected to a contrast between the traditional blackface comedy in which the highly stylized exaggeration of the makeup would have been dictated by the genre, and the less exaggerated depiction of the Blacks of Harrigan's world. The juxtaposition of the two portrayals would only heighten the difference between what Harrigan was attempting and what had come before him.

Production Values

In order to ascertain the effectiveness of Harrigan's Realism and examine the role of race in his Mulligan Guards series, I have gathered clues from various sources to determine how Harrigan's comedies looked in performance. In the same interview in which Yeamans mentions the black-faced comics, she also notes that, "After each scene there would be a shift, and a couple of singing and dancing people or jugglers would entertain until the next scene from the Mulligans."³³³ Yeamans's explanation illuminates one of the questions regarding an evening's entertainment at the Theatre Comique: how were scene changes conducted and how did they affect the flow of the storytelling? Thus, these brief entertainments "in one" explain why an audience would endure the wait.

We know that dummies were used in the famous crash through the ceiling in *Mulligan Guards Ball*. In that same obituary Yeamans states:

³³² New York Public Library, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Locke Robinson scrapbook #236, 125.

³³³ Ibid.

So we go to singing and dancing again, when of a sudden, in the middle of our fun, the chandelier begins to waver, and then there is a crack and the floor above breaks and all the negroes fall through on our heads. Dummies there were, to be sure, but it made a fine curtain. All covered with white stuff we were I shouldn't say it made a fine curtain for there were no curtains then.³³⁴

From the interview we know that a chandelier was used. A crack in the floor indicates that the set was literally a box with a top on it. Likewise, the play used no curtain. This is reinforced in a quote in the *New York Herald*: “The curtain never falls during the performance.”³³⁵ It raises the question of where the acts-between-the-set-changes took place. Did they perform in front of a set being changed? Sometimes the clues leave more questions than they answer.

Set changes were apparently an ongoing problem for Harrigan's comedies. A review for *Squatter's Sovereignty* complains, “The waits between the acts were tediously long, and these marred to some extent the crisp, rattling effect of the play.”³³⁶ These extended interruptions help to explain why Harrigan's plays clocked in at three hours according to reviews of the time. However, the plays continued their enormous success despite the pauses in action. A review for *Mulligan Guards Nominee* honors the immense amount of energy packed into the play:

To see Harrigan and Hart and their forty followers working double heats, crashing through glass; wiping the stage with each other, destroying their clothing, dancing till they steamed, singing till they howled, jobbing till they fought, fighting till they made friends, and at last going up in a steamboat explosion—to see all this,

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ *New York Herald*, November 23, 1880, 4.

³³⁶ *New York Times*, January 10, 1882, 4.

though it takes three hours, is to understand that energy is in the business.³³⁷

The picture below shows the extent to which Harrigan's plays exploded with energy.³³⁸

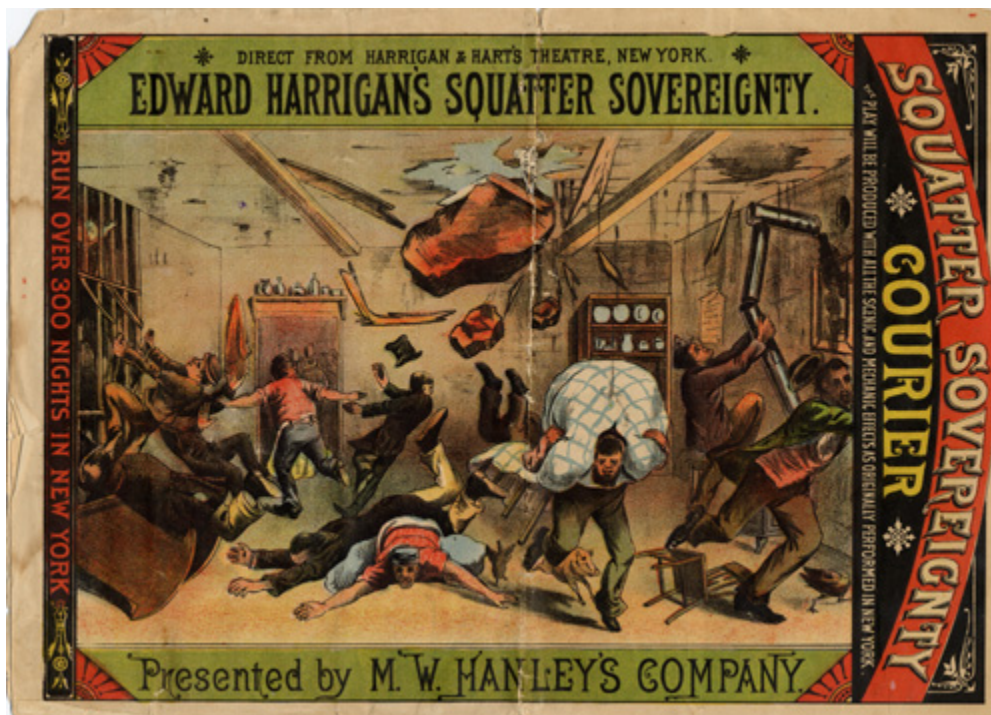


Figure 4.2 “Squatter Sovereignty”

The play, *Squatter's Sovereignty*, is obviously capitalizing on Harrigan's grander effects: the crash through the ceiling of *Mulligan Guards Ball* and the explosion of the ferry in *Mulligan Guards Nominee*. The illustration is packed with action and if judged by itself, it may come across as nothing more than spectacle for spectacle's sake, in fact the print along the right side of this poster for a touring production emphasizes that “play will be produced with all the scenic and mechanic effects originally performed in New York.” But by 1882, audiences were well aware that Harrigan's comedies provided character first with such comic moments as depicted in the illustration merely punctuating the

³³⁷ *New York Herald*, November 23, 1880, 4.

³³⁸ http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/University_Library/exhibits/broadway/images/squatter1sm.jpg, accessed September 22, 2008.

comic action (always at the end of an act). A few other clues of how the production might look are suggested by the poster. The chickens and pig(?) at the bottom of the image suggests live animals on stage (this is explored more thoroughly later in this chapter). And the general chaotic frenzy hints at Harrigan's staging of fight scenes, in which he doesn't necessarily emphasize a single locale of focus in such scenes, but rather has a number of actions taking place simultaneously.

Audiences expected the comedy of chaos that was a staple in Harrigan's work. Moody states regarding the series: "the greatest stage effects occur when not a word is being said."³³⁹ Every play in the Mulligan series contains a scene of seemingly random chaos through explosions, collapsed roofs, fires, raids, even lightening storms complete with lightening. But every one of these incidences was not only believable, but not uncommon in New York City at the time, remaining consistent with Harrigan's approach to Realism. The following example of one such moment illustrates the detail with which Harrigan approached these effects. Moody describes a particular effect from Harrigan's, *The Major*. The title character tosses his cigar but into a pile of shavings and:

Explosion. Business of roof effect. Smoke seen ascending through roof.

Fireworks then seen through windows of factory. A large battery is then exploded and the omnes [the Negroes on the roof] each of whom are attached to wires are seen by audience to ascend until hid from view by sky borders. The roof splits in pieces. The front of the factory sinks through the stage, and the debris of roof crashes and falls to the stage amidst smoke and fire. Heads, limbs, and bodies of omnes seen by audience descending from sky.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ Moody, *Ned Harrigan*, 321.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

Note the importance Harrigan places on the wires attached to the characters and the attention he pays to what is seen by the audience, at all times maintaining the illusion he is trying to create, and to how that illusion will be received by the audience.

Despite his obsession with depicting New York as he observed it, Harrigan was not shy about inserting plausible, but extreme circumstances such as the aforementioned. As is stated above, he was also fond of using animals in his plays. In reference to *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* the *New York Herald* describes such: "There are many other comical occurrences in the play, such as the introduction of a most dilapidated old horse on the stage."³⁴¹ His plays included monkeys, rats, a bear, horses, chickens, even a giraffe. An examination of the various stage directions provides a detailed list of the impressive menagerie and extensive props that were necessary for a Mulligan Guards play.

Harrigan's stage directions are specific in their intent of stage action and raise questions as to how he was able to achieve the various effects. An example of this is in scene seven of *Mulligan Guards Christmas* which reads as follows:

Rat works on from L. to R. Puter sings a hymn. Sim joins in. Rat crosses and Omnes pelt at it. Business...All sit and pig business on table, Pig gets down and goes off...Set [for a reel] formed again—Enter Caroline Williams—She attacks Puter—Primrose tackles her and a scrimmage ensues—during which enter Lochmuller and six butchers with cleavers. General melee and curtain.³⁴²

One wonders how the rat and the pig effects were accomplished. But their presence certainly adds comedy and disorder to the plot, no doubt delighting the audiences that

³⁴¹ *New York Herald*, February 22, 1881, 5.

³⁴² Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Christmas*, 74.

witnessed the antics. One supposes that that in addition to actual live animals such as dogs, chickens, and horses, Harrigan must have incorporated some device or puppetry and/or costumed actor to convey the existence of the rest of the menagerie (giraffe, bear) demanded by the Mulligan Guards scripts. But the question is raised that if puppetry were incorporated, how does that affect Harrigan's Realism?

Mulligan Guards Christmas has a disproportionate share of animal comedy. In addition to the rat/pig episode, Harrigan also describes the following: "Elephant puts trunk in window, into pail which stands by window, and squirts over darkeys, who exit in stairway, carrying turkey."³⁴³ Two pages later a stage direction reads: "after giraffe puts head in and eats turkey Allup enters."³⁴⁴ It's unlikely that the plays used real animals in such moments and the outrageousness of these circumstances, while humorous, again tests the Realism of the plays if indeed Harrigan's Realism is defined as circumstances culled from his own observations of city life combined with audience acceptance and expectations.

The dissolution of Realism is evident in several stage directions. For instance, if the desired illusion of the plays is to present a self-contained world in which the characters are not aware of an audience, that illusion is broken when the character acknowledges the presence of the audience such as in the following segment from *Mulligan's Silver Wedding*. Cordelia thinks she's dying from drinking rat poison, which was actually alcohol that had been purposefully mislabeled. Dan joins her.

Cordelia: I've drank the rat poison in the bottle.

Dan: What bottle?

³⁴³ Ibid., 42.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 44.

Caroline: Dis bottle.

(Gives bottle, which she takes from table to Dan.)

Dan (Winks at audience): Cordelia we'll die together.³⁴⁵

Dan's wink at the audience dissolves any fourth wall created by the illusion of the play. However, such behavior was not uncommon in nineteenth-century drama at the same time as the Mulligan series, through the use of asides. So Harrigan was not above shattering the illusion, but perhaps the illusion was not part and parcel with his Realism. Nowhere does Harrigan (or Howells for that matter) state that Realism demands ignorance of an audience as witness to the proceedings. If indeed Harrigan was merely "removing the back wall of the theatre," in essence showing the audience itself, or a version of itself, then wasn't the audience a participant in the creation?

Likewise, Harrigan was comfortable with putting in "business" that would add comedy, but could not possibly be drawn from observations. In at least one version of the *Mulligan Guards Ball*, Primrose appears with a white eye (as opposed to a black eye) after falling through the ceiling, which makes a clear comic statement about race. In *Mulligan Guards Christmas*, Dan has fallen down chimney and is covered with soot. Allup enters, sees Dan, and shouts, "A ghost!"³⁴⁶ The soot, presumably black, is not the traditional color for a ghost (white). Either the appearance of a ghost at the time was black or perhaps a Black person's ghost is black as a White person's ghost is white. If this is the case, then Harrigan again forsakes what might be considered accurate (if the appearance of ghosts could ever be accurate one way or the other) for the sake of comedy.

³⁴⁵ Harrigan, *Mulligan's Silver Wedding*, 118.

³⁴⁶ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Christmas*, 45.

The locale in which Harrigan will not compromise his Realism even when the comic potential seems apparent is when he would have to reveal the actual race of his black-faced actors. In a comic scene in *Mulligan's Silver Wedding*, Harrigan passes up on a potentially and uniquely comic moment. Captain Primrose (Black), who is being initiated into the secret order entitled the Third Degree is pounded with a bag of flour to which he responds: "Capt. Primrose: Brudder Puter, dis bag will make a white man out o' me. It's full of flour."³⁴⁷ The suggestion that this African American character could be transformed into White lays the groundwork for a potentially comic piece of business. Shortly after, when Primrose is scrubbed down with soap and water, allowing the perfect opportunity to reveal Johnny Wild's true complexion underneath. Despite the possible comic results, Harrigan passes up the opportunity. "(Capt. Slips into tub, gets up with back to audience, full of soap. Moons take off plank and horse, and tub R.1.E.)"³⁴⁸ With his back to the audience and having been washed, the comic potential of revealing the White actor under the cork is passed up. Instead, after an extended sequence of initiation which involves tossing Primrose in the air on a blanket, Puter, here the leader of the Third Degree, orders Primrose put into a trunk. Unbeknownst to the order, Edgar (a White man) is hiding in the box.

Puter: Place him in de mystic closet.

Moons: 'Tis well. (Place Capt. In feed box r.h. music stops on organ. Moons seated.)

Puter: Be seated—till I read my lecture. (Noise of fight in box. R.H. Through Puter's speech) Members, of de third degree, we have dis night initiated brudder

³⁴⁷ Harrigan, *Mulligan's Silver Wedding*, 102.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

Simpson Promrose, to de exalted position of de third degree.

Edgar (in box): Murder—murder—(opens box with Claude Mellnotte (costume) dress in hand. Capt. fighting him with bandage off.)

Moons: A white man—a white man. (Seizing Edgar, drags him from box)³⁴⁹

Harrigan remains true to the nature of the characters by keeping race a constant. Race, however, is fundamental in playing the final comic beat of the scene.

Interesting to note in the stage directions of this particular sequence is the instruction that “music stops on organ.” This suggests that Braham’s music underscored the scenes (or at least this scene). The Mulligan series required a full pit orchestra, but there is also ample evidence in the stage directions of the plays that musicians appeared on stage as well. In *Mulligan Guards Christmas* a stage direction reads: “Musicians on balcony pick up instruments.” In *Mulligan Guards Surprise* a stage direction mentions the piano in the corner. This raises the question as to whether the band for the songs was visible all the time. Or was it visible only in certain scenes where musicians are naturally present?

Theatre itself is represented in the series. In *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*, scene three takes place at the Criterion Concert Hall complete with a miniature stage. An examination of the on-stage audience reactions in this scene offers clues as to possible audience reaction to Harrigan’s plays. When Clarinda and Edgar perform their love scene the audience in the play interrupts the action every few moment with applause. These interruptions may very well reflect the type of responses found in Harrigan’s comedies. If the action is constantly interrupted, the audience is an active vocal collaborator in the evening’s entertainment, deciding spontaneously how they are

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 105-106.

enjoying (or conversely disliking) the performance by audibly providing feedback to the performers. This collaboration between performance and audience enhances the understanding of what Realism was in its day. Unlike performance now when musical numbers or scenes are applauded at their conclusion, or most commonly, the entire piece applauded at its close, this constant reinforcement of approval or disapproval erases the fourth wall, acknowledging the presence of an audience at all times. And although this was a common practice for performances in all genres at the time Harrigan's plays premiered, it is significant that this practice extended to what was regarded as Realism.

Immediately following the applause punctuated performance, the scene dissolves into a fight between the two performers. Edgar runs through the on-stage audience with Clarinda behind him. The stage direction states: "Seizing him front; omnes on chairs; Dan and Dennis keep omnes back, shouting don't interfere with the play."³⁵⁰ Again, the stage directions suggests behavior that was not uncommon, considering Harrigan's propensity for culling actions from his daily experience. Thus, audience reaction reaches a level of participation in the performance that obviously isn't mentioned in the scripts. Likewise, newspapers were unlikely to note such reactions if indeed they were commonplace. However, it was common for reviewers to mention the hat throwing and raucous behavior of the gallery. One reviewer even notes the babies in the audience.³⁵¹

The metatheatrical element in Harrigan's plays heighten the illusion of a reflection of Harrigan's New York in which musicians, theatre going, and performance are part and parcel of daily life. Such was also the case with the songs of Harrigan's plays. Characters burst into song at moments when they seemed appropriate rather than a

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 91.

³⁵¹ *The Theatre*, December 1887, 443.

more contemporary approach to musical theatre wherein characters sing to reveal their inner thoughts or where songs simply amplify the emotions of the plays. However, the songs of Harrigan's plays are just as carefully worked out as the dialogue and plots. In fact, Harrigan wrote the lyrics prior to Braham's contribution of music.

Although not every Harrigan/Braham song reflects the scenes and situations of their placement within the comedies, many of them do comment on the moments in which they appear. For instance, in *Mulligan Guards Ball*, "The Gossips Down on Gossip Row" appears in a scene in which women are gossiping. As chapter three shows, Harrigan's songs are commonly just as integrated into the plots as any Rodgers and Hammerstein song.

And like the Rogers and Hammerstein model, Harrigan integrated dance into every one of his Mulligan Guards series. Like the music and theatre of the neighborhoods, dance was common to daily life and Harrigan inserts it almost casually into his plots. The plot of *Mulligan Guards Ball* hinges on the dance. And Harrigan's characterizations are enhanced by their opinions and approaches to dance. The following exchange reveals the subtle racism between characters in discussion of dance.

Honora: I go wid Mrs. Mulligan and you jig dancers and high kickers must make room for me when I forward four and cross over. (Dancing to and fro)

Simpson: Hold on. Hold on. Come down to business. Dis ain't no dancing academy. I don't want any Paddy-will-you-now in my shop. Get out de washing.³⁵²

Honora, the embodiment of anti-Black racism, uses dance "jig dancers and high kickers" to elevate herself and her style of dance, "forward four and cross over," over the African

³⁵² Harrigan, *Mulligan Guards Ball*, 33.

American style of dance. Simpson, the anti-Irish racist returns the volley by putting a stop to the “Paddy-will-you-now” style of dancing.

Frequently, Harrigan would present a group of characters with a number that serves as an introduction. This is particularly true of the Skidmores (and their other names: The Full Moons, and The Third Degree). The following segment from the lyric for “The Skidmore Masquerade” illustrates not only how the number serves to introduce the Skids, but also suggests how the dance that accompanied the dance was configured.

Oh ladies, oh gemmen/Come now, come wid me/We’ll dance until de
morning/Sweet and merrily./Dandy colored couples/Elegant and grand/Moving to
de music./Of Paddy Gilmore’s band./Right and left.

Such skipping and tripping,/A sailing frough de air/Connoisseurs in dancing,/Am
ready to declare./We’re longing, its funny/To see dem darkies wade/And gluchy
through a schottische/At de Skidmore masquerade.³⁵³

In the sheet music, there is an instrumental section that calls for a “galop,” presumably the dance of the gallop,³⁵⁴ which was a popular lively dance similar to the polka, often written in waltz time. The lyric emphasizes the “Jim Dandy” characterization in all of his “high faluting” (a phrase used in the lyric) ways suggesting a level of elegance that aspires to grandiosity. Phrases such as “skipping and tripping,” “sailing frough de air,” and “schottische,”(a slower form of polka), all imply particular movements within the song helping to recreate the look of the performance. With the inclusion of these specifics, the song is self-reflexive, explaining itself as it is performed, thus adding to the metatheatrical tendency of Harrigan and Braham’s group numbers. Considering the

³⁵³ Ibid., 23.

³⁵⁴ There is also a reference in the music to the use of a “pop gun,” a specific detail that also adds to the understanding of how the song appeared in production.

highly specific racial makeup of the performers of this number, the Skidmore Guards, it is also interesting to note that the band for the song, as referenced in the lyric is Paddy Gilmore's, obviously an Irish name. Irish music is their music. The community is intermixed musically, much in the same way that the Mulligans would hire German musicians for the entertainment at parties.

One of the most popular Harrigan and Braham's songs was "Dat Citron Wedding Cake" from *Mulligan Guard Surprise*. Again, the lyric delineates how the song was presented by describing the steps and attitude. Like "The Skidmore Masquerade," this song capitalizes on the "Jim Dandy" characterizations, creating an air of false sophistication. The following lyric, the chorus which is repeated between verses, describes movement that emphasizes a parade-like attitude to show off the attire and elegance of the performers. Again, it is a Negro ensemble that sings the song.

All perambulating/De carpet I declare/Stylish colored walkers/Escorting of de fair/Philander over shoestring/And Isabella flake/Walk in satin slippers/For dat citron wedding cake/Waltz away darkies so gay/A la society quiet au faut/Julia and Mary, sweet ale shay/Waltz to the music wid/Elegant song.³⁵⁵

The song, which is not a waltz at all, but rather in common time, evokes a certain modishness lyrically, but is purely a catchy uptempo tune musically. The disparity between music and lyric reinforces the comedy of the moment, providing subtextual insight into the phoniness of the Skidmores in their false aspirations toward a higher class. Thus, the song, highly entertaining in its own right performs a subtler function of allowing the audience to laugh at the Skidmores' airs without the Skidmores' knowledge of their own self-parody.

³⁵⁵ Harrigan, *Mulligan Guard Surprise*, 93.

Scenery

Stagecraft in the nineteenth century developed a level of sophistication that kept pace with audiences' hunger for more and more special effects, as were not expected to rely on their imaginations in regard to the world of the play. In reviews of plays the scenery was often praised for its detail and specificity of locale. The image below is from the London production of Boucicault's *The Octoroon* at the Adelphi Theater in 1861. The set is three-dimensional and functional in its use of stairs, windows, stage decoration including chairs and tables. Theatre had moved beyond simple painted flats.



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Figure 4.3 “The Octoroon”

In response to this trend, Henry James complained of the direction in which he saw theatre moving: “Scenery and decorations have been brought to their highest perfection, while elocution and action, the interpretation of meanings, the representation of human

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http://www.josephhaworth.com/images/Fellow%20Actors/Dion%20Boucicault/Dion_Boucicault_slave_market_scene_from_The_Octoroon-BW-Resized.jpg, accessed February 16, 2009.

feelings, have not been made the objects of serious study.”³⁵⁷ Harrigan’s approach to theatre craft was the opposite of that which James was complaining. His dramaturgy began with “the representation of human feelings.” They were the core of his entertainments, but this is not to say that Harrigan did not participate in the tendency toward attempting the “highest perfection” of scenery and decorations. As is stated above, Harrigan created his plays with a model of his set at hand with which he could visualize characters and actions prior to writing the plays. The set provided a world in which Harrigan could contrive the actions and interactions of his characters.

Steele Mackaye writes regarding stagecraft at the time:

In the mechanics of stage setting the greatest law is that which RUSKIN applied to architecture, “Appropriateness, utility, fidelity.” Thus, for example, the artisan makes a library scene of impossible painted bookcases, and the furniture of a parlor such as is displayed in an ordinary shop-window. Another artisan presents a ballroom by crowding together as much handsome furniture and useless decoration as the scene will contain. A true artist will have real books and the paraphernalia of scholarship in the one case, and only the furniture and decorations which good manners and common-sense allow in the other.³⁵⁸

As attested by the stage directions, Harrigan might appear to follow Mackaye’s second type of artisan – the one who tends toward overcrowding, but in fact Harrigan decorated his stages with that which would make his settings palatable. The following is the description of the stage set for the opening scene of *The Mulligan Guards Ball*:

A neat apartment in Dan Mulligan's house. A neat breakfast table L.H.

³⁵⁷ James, *The Scenic Art*, 165.

³⁵⁸ Daly, “American Playwrights on the American Drama,” 99.

Tablecloth, dishes, bread, a supper plain. A stove and pipe, oven in stove L.H. in front of mantelpiece. Bureau with drawers. Mirror at back R.H. three chairs at table, plain rocker R.H. rag carpet. A rolling towel hanging on B.F.L of door under which is a washstand, soap and pitcher of water. A cuspidor R.H.C. at back, pipe tobacco in cupboard. L.H. dishes and etc. in cupboard. Washing in bureau drawer. A clothes rack on B.F.L. of door over washstand. A candle on bureau. A lighted candle in candlestick on table. Needle, thread in cupboard L.H. Mulligan's black coat hanging at back on clothes rack. Violin on mantel.³⁵⁹

Whereas it may seem overcrowded, Harrigan incorporates the detailed elements decorating the stage. Harrigan's demand for "appropriateness, utility, fidelity" was realized in the sets of Charles Witham whose designs were universally recognized for their success in attaining Harrigan's goals. A review for *Mulligan Guards Nominee* states: "Charles Witham has painted entirely new scenery for *The Nominee*, and the local scenes are the best we have noticed since Boucicault's *Streets of New York* [1869] at the Olympic."³⁶⁰ The scenery rises to the same level of specificity that Harrigan demanded of his actors. Attention to every aspect of the production contrasts a rising trend in theatre of the day in which the set or effects were all that mattered.

The following illustration shows the detail with which Witham imbued his sets. The picture depicts the fire that ends the first half of *Mulligan Guards Chowder*. On the left is Hog Eye's "Chinee Laundry" with Hog Eye upstairs throwing his possessions out the window. Firemen are spraying a hose (a devise used in several of Harrigan's comedies). A woman and man are fighting, presumably Dan and Cordelia. Upstage on

³⁵⁹ Harrigan, *The Mulligan Guards Ball*, 3.

³⁶⁰ *Spirit of the Times* November 27th, 1880, New York Public Library, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Locke Robinson scrapbook #236, p. 5.

the second floor, an African American woman (Rebecca Allup) is throwing pots and pans down. Like the illustration for *Squatter's Sovereignty* above, this illustration is important in understanding the organized chaos that was one of Harrigan's signature dramaturgical devises.



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Figure 4.4 “Scene 2nd Mulligan Alley”

As with the illustration for *Squatter's Sovereignty*, the illustration depicts a variety of actions that are happening simultaneously, characteristic of the closing scene of many of Harrigan's acts. The image illustrates several characteristics of the set: the set is three-dimensional and functional, the second story is utilized, as are its windows, doors and shutters. The detail of the images also suggests that the stage was made of planking, the

³⁶¹ Harrigan, *Squatter Sovereignty*, 1881, Library of Congress Copyright Office Drama Deposits Readers' Collection, box 15, opposite page 13.

stairs were functional and props (such as the barrel on stage right) were utilized. Adding to the comic effect of the scene is the fact that the fire hose actually works, allowing Harrigan's signature comic chaos another messy detail.

As the plays had no curtain, the scenery set a tone for the audience before a word of dialogue was uttered.³⁶² The detail and faithfulness to New York architecture, particularly that found in the Seventh Ward was self-evident to the audience and was praised as such. A review for *The Major* in 1884 states: "Witham never painted with more photographic fidelity."³⁶³ Despite the fact that the Comique operated on a budget that did not approach those of the uptown theatres, the sets compared favorably with these wealthier theatres: "The scenery is better than usual. A view of the City Hall. The Sun office and French's Hotel would do credit to Wallack's or the Union Square Theatre."³⁶⁴ The scenery for Harrigan's comedies served as the window through which the audience entered the illusion of the world of the plays, and they were praised as such: "The perfection of the stage management, and the completeness with which the scenic effects are produced upon a stage scarcely larger than an ordinary parlor again puzzle the shrewdest professionals."³⁶⁵ Unlike other productions of his time, particularly melodramas, Harrigan's sets served the character interaction presented on the stage, rather than the characters serving the great scenic effects.

Audience analysis

The caption for the illustration below from Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* of January 17, 1874 reads: "Interior of the Grand Duke's Theater - The audience during the

³⁶² By the time Belasco was producing plays twenty years later, curtains were used between scenes and at the end of acts. Belasco, *The Theatre Through Its Stage Door*, 83.

³⁶³ *New York Spirit of the Times*, September 3, 1884, 6.

³⁶⁴ *Sun*, November 23, 1880, 5.

³⁶⁵ *Spirit of the Times*, November 27, 1880, 6.

performance of the thrilling spectacle of the march of ‘The Mulligan Guards.’”³⁶⁶ The image provides a number of insights into the audience of Harrigan’s work prior to the opening of the first full length comedy of the series. As I have stated, the first audience for Harrigan and Hart consisted mostly of Irish Americans. The illustration clearly shows this to be true, but it is significant that this particular performance was probably not being performed by Harrigan and Hart. The Grand Duke’s Theater was a slapdash space run by boys in the bowery, described by Sante as: “This house, located in the basement of dives first, was operated by a youth gang called the Baxter Street Dudes, led by one Baby-Face Willie.”³⁶⁷ Such theaters were common in the Bowery area of New York City; contrived so as to be rebuilt after rival gangs destroyed them with some frequency. The gangs in this area of the city were primarily Irish American, and their makeshift theaters were a centerpiece of their social gatherings. The tradition of such theaters can be traced at least as far back as Benjamin Baker’s *A Glance at New York* (1848), in which Mose the fireman (a precursor to Dan Mulligan), played by Frank Chanfrau was introduced as a character and in which, as Sante states: “New York’s fascination with itself was first explicitly realized on the stage.”³⁶⁸

The performance in the illustration was probably “acquired” by these boys and reproduced in their own theater, a tradition not uncommon in that day. But despite the fact that this illustration does not reproduce a production of the Mulligan Guard skit as directed by Harrigan, it does show the makeup of the audience: universally male, young, and dressed alike in plaid trousers, jackets, and caps—the garb of the character Mose. Likewise, the militia on stage is dressed exactly how the militias of New York dressed: in

³⁶⁶ Frank Leslie’s *Illustrated Newspaper* of January 17, 1874.

³⁶⁷ Luc Sante, *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 90.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

uniform, with headpieces and striped or plaid trousers. Like the audience of all of Harrigan's Mulligan Guards plays, the characters on stage reflect the audience.

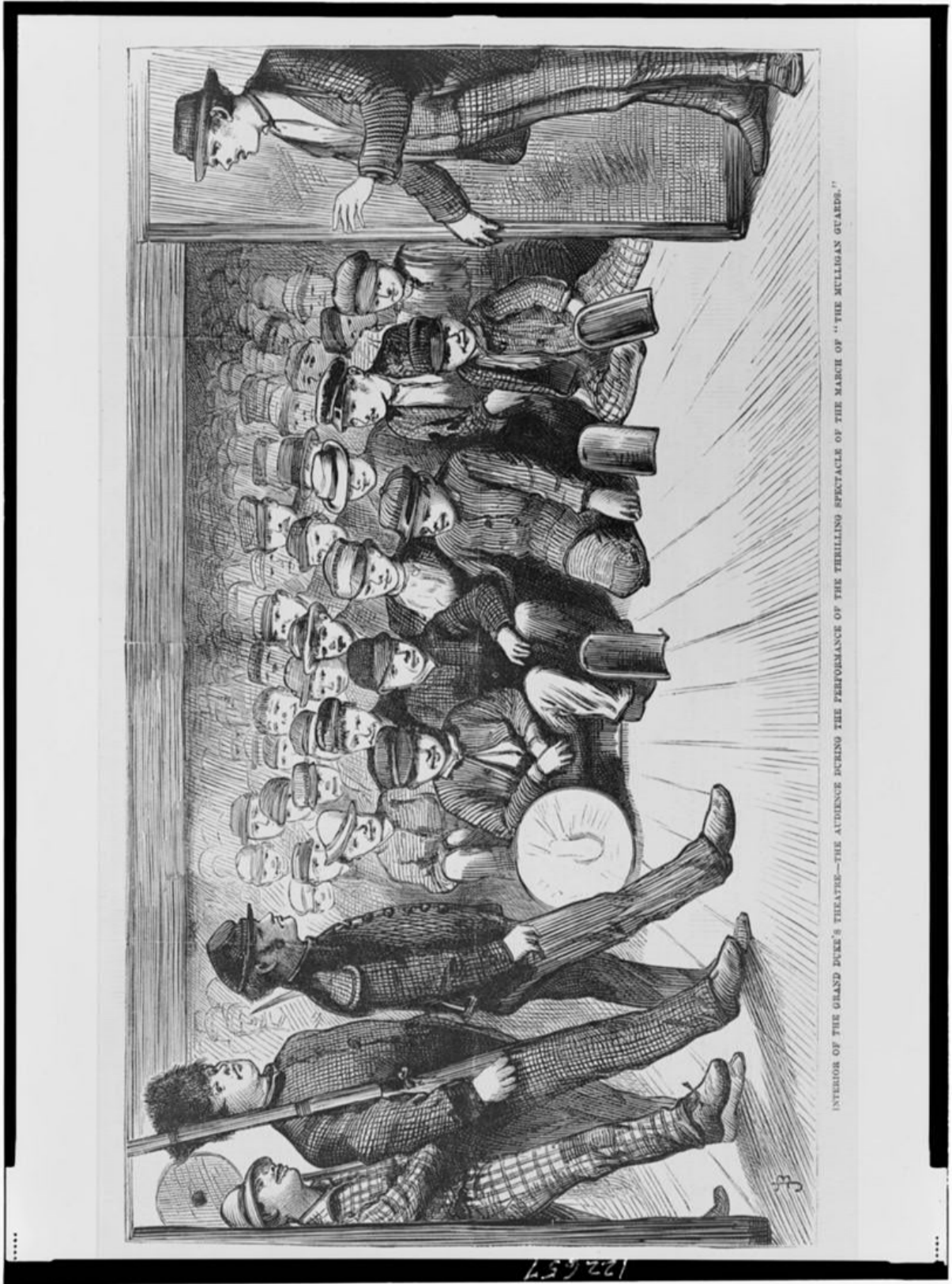


Figure 4.5 “The March of the Mulligan Guards”

While the plays received lauds from the papers of their times, those same reviews often analyzed the audiences of Harrigan's comedies. The effectiveness of Harrigan's plays in regard to their popularity becomes apparent through audience analysis, as noted in reviews for their size and the variety of patrons that spanned the poorest classes of the city to the richest. An examination of the audience can determine a play's (or in this case a series of plays) ability to resonate with a collective society or not.

Whether through his Realism, his comedy, the universality of his characters, star power, or some other elusive draw, Harrigan's plays were undeniably popular; growing more so with each succeeding chapter. An advertisement for *Mulligan Guards Ball* dated the Sunday after the play opened touted the social makeup of the audience: "Musicians, invited guests, colored and white senators, distinguished ladies and gentlemen of 'Celtic' and 'African' origin by a carefully selected auxiliary."³⁶⁹ The ad identifies a bi-racial audience of "Celtic" and "African" origin. The audience was, therefore, in its entirety, non-White in that Irish were not sufficiently recognized as White at this time, but a distinguishing factor was maintained by the fact that African American audience members were relegated to the uppermost levels of the theater.

The diversity of the audience soon shifted presumably through word of mouth, although some critics at the time took credit for the growing recognition. The *New York Times* states: "It is, we think, the sound merit and genuine humor of the Mulligan plays—merits which have been pointed out in these columns from time to time—which have brought these into favor with the well-to-do public."³⁷⁰ A humorous, if snide, review in the *Spirit of the Times* debunks the *New York Times*' claim for the growth in popularity of

³⁶⁹ *New York Herald*, January 19, 1879, 9.

³⁷⁰ *New York Times*, February 22, 1881, 5.

the series.

The little theatre is overcrowded at every performance with audiences that are both fashionable down-stairs and popular up-stairs. We observe with delight that the daft creature of the Times modestly thinks that his notices may have had something to do with the attendance of the fashionable people at the Comique.

As the first notice of the Times appeared during the run of the third volume of the *Mulligan Guards*, and as most of the best people of the city had already seen the previous volumes, the Times lunatic is as wrong in his dates as in his opinions.³⁷¹

For whatever the reason, by the time *Mulligan Guards Surprise* opened on February 16, 1880, there was a distinct shift in the audience. While the Black and Irish components still occupied the majority of the seats at the Theatre Comique, the audience now included a large population from the more affluent uptown crowd. The *New York Times* review notes not only the presence of the wealthier society, but also the presence of female audience members, which implies an entertainment of a level that rose above the bawdy, raucous music hall fare popular with Irish (male) audiences of the time.

It was a noticeable fact also, that the orchestra was filled by a grade of persons much higher than that usually seen at this theatre—quite a first-night audience, in short, made up, too, in a large measure, of ladies.³⁷²

The critic is drawing a distinction between usual Irish entertainments (as might be expected by an author named Harrigan) and the *Mulligan Guard* comedies. More typical of Irish entertainments at the time were music halls and vaudeville. Both of these entertainments provided inexpensive distraction for the lower classes of the day. As

³⁷¹ *Spirit of the Times*, February 21, 1880, 6.

³⁷² *New York Times*, February 18, 1880, 5.

McLean states:

Vaudeville, then, provided that esthetic encounter that immigrant and rural segments of the population longed to make with the urban civilization that was absorbing them. Not just the business or professional man, but a wide spectrum of technicians, clerks, artisans, managers, and housewives sought to share in the symbolic enactment of success.³⁷³

The distinction was that these entertainments did not cross over into the wealthier society of uptown. As the *New York Times* observes in its review of *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* in 1881,

It is a fact worth noting, however, that the select portion of this theatre was occupied-as it is now always occupied-by a class of persons who were not wont, a short time ago, to frequent down-town places or houses dedicated to the tenth muse of "variety."³⁷⁴

Again, Harrigan's plays (and theatre) are compared favorably with the wealthier, highbrow Wallack's Theatre uptown.

The shift in the crowds of the Mulligan Guards series was not due to any apparent social pressure that the plays were "must see" productions, but as Sidney Rose states in his analysis of Harrigan's plays, the wealthier class of audience came for the simple fact that they wished to be entertained.

While it is true that the majority of the audience at the Park Theatre be termed "third class," it is also the fact that no theatre in New York drew a more miscellaneous clientele. "Society" had not yet recognized the Harrigan plays as

³⁷³ McLean, *American Vaudeville as Ritual*, 11.

³⁷⁴ *New York Times*, February 22, 1881, 5.

formal “Functions” and attended them without ceremony in a spirit of high adventure. It was only with the higher criticism of the literatureurs that a larger leaven of the social elect in full regalia began to patronize these performances.³⁷⁵ Critics seemed to delight as much in analyzing the audiences of Harrigan’s plays as they did in the plays themselves. *The Sun* notes: “Probably there were \$5,000 in sealskin sacques and diamonds valued at \$50,000 in the parquet last evening, while bell boys and boot-blacks enjoyed the fun from their eyrie in their shirt sleeves.”³⁷⁶ The critics were clear in observing not only the presence of the ladies and gentlemen of affluence, but also of Harrigan’s bread and butter crowd of what would now be considered blue collar workers: “unsurpassed by any theatre in New York, [The Comique was] filled with deputations from the uptown clubs, rows of ladies from Murray Hill laughing as loud as the newsboys in the gallery, and Irish Aldermen in the front rows out-applauding the Italians in the boxes.”³⁷⁷

Borrowing from Tony Pastor’s strategy to keep his vaudeville entertainments family-friendly, Harrigan’s entertainments, although rough in their characterizations, are non-vulgar. As early as 1872, his sketch comedy is recognized for the absence of impropriety, as a critic for the *Clipper* notes: “Obscenity, vulgarity and profanity are carefully expurgated from the performances, which insures the continued attendance of the fair sex, who already represent a large portion of the audiences.”³⁷⁸ Thus, Harrigan’s plays appealed not only to the “Dan Mulligan’s” in the audience, but to the “Cordelia’s” as well.

³⁷⁵ Rose, “Edward Harrigan and His Plays,” 87-88.

³⁷⁶ *Sun*, November 23, 1880, 5.

³⁷⁷ *Spirit of the Times*, April 7, 1883, 6.

³⁷⁸ *The Clipper*, December 14, 1872.

The runs of the plays in the series are irrefutable proof of the popularity of the series. In a day when a healthy run for a show was 30-40 performances, the Mulligan Guards series had incomparable success. The lengths of the original runs are as follows: *Mulligan Guards Ball* (56 performances), *Mulligan Guards Chowder* (112 performances), *Mulligan Guards Christmas* (104 performances), *Mulligan Guards Surprise* (104 performances), *Mulligan Guards Picnic* (120 performances), *Mulligan Guards Nominee* (104 performances), *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* (80 performances), *Cordelia's Aspirations* (176 performances), and *Dan's Tribulations* (64 performances). No other plays came close to the Mulligan series in the length of their runs. The only close competition was the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, whose first production in the United States, *The Pirates of Penzance*, ran at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in 1879 for 91 performances.

In 1880 the three newest Mulligan Guards plays (*Mulligan Guards Surprise*, *Mulligan Guards Picnic*, and *Mulligan Guards Nominee*) were the three longest musicals in New York City of that year. By this second year of the series, the plays spread in popularity far beyond the shirt sleeve crowds of downtown to include the wealthier uptown population. It is interesting to note that as Harrigan's audience changed in its diversity, so too did Harrigan's plots. The early plays of the series rely heavily on racial comedy: juxtaposing stereotypes of Irish, Negro, and Dutch. These lower three classes dominated the comedies as much as they dominated the audiences. As the audience began to show a level of wealth and uptown sophistication, Harrigan's comedies followed suit by spoofing these communities to a greater degree than he does in the early plays. The concept for *Cordelia's Aspirations* relies entirely on the interplay of upper

and lower classes as those aspirations consist of wanting to live a life of luxury.

The newspapers at the time emphasized the “American-ness” of the plays and the audience: “a thoroughly American audience in our first thoroughly American theatre, giving the Comique a genuine Knickerbocker house-warming.”³⁷⁹ As a venue for self-reflection, the Theatre Comique, home to the Mulligan Guards series, offered the audience a look at itself, not only on the stage but in the diversity of the audience. In fact, audiences of Harrigan’s comedies saw the characters on stage reflected in the audience not only by types, but in costume as well. Moses reports: “On many nights in the ‘eighties, one could see companies of militia marching to the Harrigan theatre and occupying front rows; political clubs voted to have their annual outing at the Harrigan play.”³⁸⁰ The militia occupying the front rows of the theatre saw themselves reflected in the militia enacted on the stage.

Even when the theatre moved “uptown” from its Bowery location, the audience remained diversified, comprised of the spectrum of peoples that New York City had to offer.

The Park is the largest theatre in which the Comique company have yet played, and it was packed with the most representative New York audience ever assembled. Brokers and bootblacks, dudes and newsboys, members of the Union Club and the Hounds Club, the beauty and fashion of Murray Hill and the Fourth Ward³⁸¹ sat side by side and indulged in the same laughter and applause.³⁸²

Like Shakespeare did in the late sixteenth century, Harrigan succeeded in creating a

³⁷⁹ *Spirit of the Times*, September 3, 1881, 4.

³⁸⁰ Moses, “Edward Harrigan,” 25.

³⁸¹ The Fourth Ward occupied the space that is now called the Lower East Side, bordered by the East River and the Bowery.

³⁸² *Spirit of the Times*, January 10, 1885, 6.

theatrical piece that appealed to an entire cross section of the local population. Unlike Shakespeare's Globe, however, the groundlings in this case were relegated to the upper tiers of the theatre and the wealthier class occupied the orchestra. The original issue of the periodical, *The Biographer*, dated May, 1883 featured Edward Harrigan, highlighting the popularity and diversity of his audience:

All sorts and conditions of people are represented in the audience of the Theatre Comique, New York. The gallery and the boxes are occupied by persons of the opposite extremes in social position, and the accommodations, intermediate between these are filled by people belonging to the middle classes of society. In this particular of its being a resort favored by all classes, the Comique is unique among the theatres of the metropolis.³⁸³

The popularity of the series is clearly evident, but how was his form of Realism received? Chapter two focuses on Harrigan's near obsession with creating theatrical pieces that drew their form, sound, and look from the observations made by the author. To measure his success in achieving this personalized Realism, the reviews offer a scale with which to weigh the outcome of his attempts.

The earliest hint of Harrigan as Realist (or in this case a Naturalist) appears in *The Sun* in August, 1879 in the review of *Mulligan Guards Chowder*, the second chapter in the series. *The Sun* compares Harrigan to the naturalist Zola. "Mr. Edward Harrigan is a Hibernian Zola, and the 'Mulligan Guards Chowder' is his *Assommoir*."³⁸⁴ Largely considered one of Zola's masterpieces, *L'Assommoir*, published in 1877 depicts the working class population of Paris and is unflinching in its portrayal of alcoholism. The

³⁸³ *The Biographer*, Issue 1, 1883: 62.

³⁸⁴ *The Sun*, August 12, 1879, 3.

novel solidified Zola's reputation and popularity internationally, and was itself the source material for stage productions in America by both David Belasco and Augustin Daly in 1879. The critic for *The Sun* connects Harrigan in the choice of subject matter (working-class), but in this instance also links Harrigan to Zola in the former's use of mimesis, offering a glimpse of New York to New Yorkers. The label "Naturalist" was pinned to Harrigan due as much to his choice of subject matter as his depictions. A review for *Mulligan's Silver Wedding* bemoans the fact that "uptown" dramas do not offer the same Naturalism as Harrigan's comedies do.

They are, in a sense, the American drama of South Fifth-avenue, and we with that our drama of upper Fifth-avenue were as unconventional and natural. The Mulligan plays are based upon the same plan as Zola's Rougon Macquard novels—if that irascible and tasteless naturalist (who does his best occasionally to destroy all true, vital, significant ideas of realism) will permit us to make a so broad comparison.³⁸⁵

Like Zola's novels, Harrigan's plays offer a "tranche de vie," or "slice of life," or as the *New York Times* states six months later in its review of *Mulligan Guards Surprise*, "As in the other pieces, 'The Surprise' includes three or four local scenes, which appear to have been drawn from real life."³⁸⁶

The grittiness of Harrigan's depictions on occasion designated him a Naturalist by critics, but he was most frequently labeled a Realist. The Realism, as recognized by the critics, was however, confined to the characters and scenery, usually ignoring the performances and plots. In fact, the plots and humor are cited as weaknesses to the

³⁸⁵ *New York Times*, February 22, 1881, 5.

³⁸⁶ *New York Times*, February 18, 1880, 5.

overall Realism. “The ‘Mulligan’ plays, as already stated here, are rough and rollicking farces, chiefly interesting for their pictorial realism, and, though over-boisterous in humor, excellent of their kind.”³⁸⁷ For the critics, Realism was linked to the illusion of actual life. Howells praises the effectiveness of the illusion, as it almost removes the viewer from the theatre entirely. “In certain moments of Dan’s Tribulations the illusion is so perfect that you lose the sense of being in the theatre: you are out of that world of conventions and traditions, and in the presence of the facts.”³⁸⁸ Howells in fact is the first to recognize the ability of the actor (in this case Harrigan himself) as contributing to the overall effect of the illusion: “Mr. Harrigan is himself a player of the utmost naturalness, delicate, restrained, infallibly sympathetic; and we have seen no one on his stage who did not seem to have been trained to his part through entire sympathy and intelligence.”³⁸⁹

Ultimately, the critics recognize what Harrigan is trying to accomplish in his approach to Realism and deem him successful.

They contain scenes which, though drawn from the slums and dealing with the vulgarities of life, are fresh, piquant, and realistic, and, while not ambitious, they reach the point at which they aim. On the whole, they represent the comedy of low life with a sort of shoulder-hitting truthfulness which is, from its own standpoint, quite worthy of praise. They are, in a sense, the American drama of South Fifth-avenue, and we wish that our drama of upper Fifth-avenue were as unconventional and natural. The Mulligan plays are based upon the same plan as Zola’s Roguon-Macquart novels-if that irascible and tasteless naturalist (who does his best occasionally to destroy all true, vital, significant ideas of realism) will

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Howells, *Harper’s Weekly* 73: 316.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

permit us to make a so broad comparison.³⁹⁰

Although Harrigan was not unique in his subject matters, he was recognized as the master of portrayal of these subjects. His reputation grew, not only among scholars such as Howells who anointed him an American Realist, but among audiences and critics who were experienced his accurate portrayal of types. The audiences, whether from his own neighborhood of origin or the uptown sophisticates, universally embraced the comedies and characters created by Harrigan. One obituary for Edward Harrigan, who died in June, 1911, states:

Ned Harrigan was a portrayer, an engraver of types as he found them actually. Such policemen, bowery girls, Irish women, darkies, dandy coons, ragged, dirty singing children and puttering old men! These were not coined for Harrigan plays, but seized alive and spliced to the mundane drama, the irresistible comedy he patched together splendidly for the heart expansion of a narrow, smally, largely illiterate and roistering community, and they delighted the highest intelligences as well as the happy go lucky amusement seeker from everywhere.³⁹¹

Harrigan's characterizations of American types solidified his renown as an American artist. Harrigan's obituary in *The New York Times* states: "America has produced nothing more national, more distinctly its own, than these plays of the Irish in New York."³⁹²

Harrigan's Realism was not simply accepted by the audience of his day, but defined stage Realism to America.

Despite the emphasis of this chapter on Harrigan's Realism, the author's

³⁹⁰ *New York Times*, February 22, 1881, p. 5.

³⁹¹ "Actors Loyal to Clan: Never Forget Great of Their Profession Though Public Proves Ungrateful: Team of Harrigan & Hart" Obituary *Chicago Ill. News*, June 10, 1911, NYPL Billy Rose Theatre Collection Harrigan Papers, Box 9, Folder 16, p 63.

³⁹² *New York Times*, June 7, 1911, 8.

presentation of race was intrinsic to his portrayals. The fact that no one questioned Harrigan's portrayals of any race is significant when praise for his Realism is so omnipresent. The lack of reference to racial presentation is as significant as the specifics that are singled out in that their absence suggests acceptance. Whether it is the use of blackface to portray African American or the various jargons and dialects to signify the multitude of nationalities, Harrigan's plethora of types are readily accepted by critics and audiences alike.

Conclusion

American musical theater frequently returns to New York City as an inspiration and locale. With rare exception, musicals such as *On the Town* (1944), *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *West Side Story* (1957), *Hello, Dolly!* (1964), *The Life* (1997), and *Avenue Q* (2003) to name a few, do not try to depict a New York City in its essence, but rather utilize the city as a setting for their non-Realistic storytelling. Two relatively recent musicals—*Rent* (1996) and *In the Heights* (2007) attempt to show specific neighborhoods of the city using a vocabulary that reflects the communities of those neighborhoods (the East Village and Washington Heights respectively). But as with Harrigan’s Mulligan Guards series, these musicals do not duplicate these neighborhoods in all their grittiness, rather they capture a sound and look that reflects the neighborhoods with a population drawn from these same neighborhoods. As Moses states: “There was no conscious feeling on the part of Harrigan that he was depicting the inner spirit of any special character; he put his characters against a New York background, and they were a part of the picture, not thrust into it. Without them, the picture was not; without New York they were not.”³⁹³ Harrigan’s New York City was primarily the characters he presents.

Harrigan’s creation of Mulligan Alley was an idyllic realm that ultimately did not, for it could not, depict the Lower East Side that would be captured on film by Jacob Riis less than two decades later. Whereas Harrigan’s world was controlled chaos, Riis showed the world a realm of unabashed poverty and misery. Harrigan was clearly not attempting to mine this desolation for entertainment value. Rather, he wanted simply to present a variety of detailed portraits in a setting in which characters could interact for the purposes of amusing an audience. His Lower East Side, while not a work of pure

³⁹³ Moses, “Edward Harrigan,” 181.

imagination, only resembled the actual. So the question arises: Is Harrigan's Realism at all duplicative or is it perhaps the rendering of a reality that the author and audience want to (or pretend to) be actual? As much as Harrigan is touted as presenting basically a photographic image of the Lower East Side, indeed, reviews, images and the texts speak otherwise. Although reviewers praised the authenticity of characterization and dialogue as well as the setting, the Mulligan Guards series does not reek with the enormous poverty, disease, hunger, and filth that epitomized the Lower East Side of the time. In fact it would be difficult to find comedy in such material as life on the Lower East Side had to offer. What Harrigan (and Jonathan Larson in *Rent* and Lin-Manuel Miranda in *In the Heights*) did do was offer the audience an alternative to the actual: an idealized version of the New York in which Harrigan worked and was raised with details culled from the city that did reflect the neighborhood. The Realism therefore is a mutual contract between the audience and author to agree that this world presented on stage is indeed a plausible version of the real thing.

And how does race fit into this scheme? What Harrigan presented on stage was a variety of races peopling the same locale. Harrigan capitalized on his audience's knowledge of several things concurrently, based on a host of assumptions. He assumed that his audience was familiar with the neighborhood being presented in his work. He relied on their foreknowledge of the types that might inhabit that area and depended on his audience's ability to translate his own depictions through the lens of their own experience to accept these fictional counterparts as authentic (at least for the three hours of stage time it took to present the plays).

Likewise, he used the medium of theatre and its own history in America and exploited the tropes of race that were omnipresent at the time of his theatrical training through to the period in which he reached his greatest successes, again assuming his audience was familiar with this history. The tropes and stereotypes were mined as a launching point for his own depictions of race; in other words, his characterizations of race did not end with the stereotypes, but served as primer for his more complex portrayals. Entertainments such as minstrelsy were gutted and reassembled to serve the purposes of Harrigan's plots. Again, Harrigan expected his spectators to be familiar with those same traditional entertainments with which he himself was familiar. Race, therefore, relied on foreknowledge on the part of the audience, but only as a starting point from which Harrigan's characters were unveiled.

Another question that emerges from this investigation is: Is Harrigan's Realism compatible with his presentation of race? Assuming for a moment that Harrigan *is* trying to create a stage presentation that is no more than a mere replication of life in the Sixth Ward, does his transparently inaccurate portrayals of nearly half his characters fit into his self-prescribed scheme? If the answer to the first question is "yes," then the answer to the second question must be "no." Therefore, one can assume that Harrigan's presentation of race is acknowledged by the author as part of his contract with the audience to be accurate for the duration of the piece, not a duplication of life on the streets of New York City.

I suggest that Harrigan's presentation of race cannot be disentangled from his approach to Realism. The contract between audience and author includes the acceptance and trust on the audience's part that what appears on the stage is consistent with the

world that the author has carefully doled out play by play. This is the world of Mulligan Alley which imitates the Lower East Side, but does not duplicate it. Since Harrigan's Realism was only self-labeled as such in hindsight, his application of his own concept of Realism included a particular brand of race.

At no point was Harrigan trying to reinvent the world, rather he presented a world that was meant to echo New York. In effect, he was showing his audience versions of themselves in amusing situations for the purpose of entertainment. As Amy Kaplan states, "Realism does not jar readers with the shock of otherness, it provides a recognizable mirror of their own world."³⁹⁴ The readers in this case are Harrigan's audience members and Harrigan's role in presenting his own form of Realism "gives amusement to everybody capable of being pleased by the production of dialogue and situations which reproduce the familiar in a series of acts skillfully telling a probable story brimful of fun."³⁹⁵ The key word here is "familiar," not "identical."

Harrigan was initially speaking to a working class population, the first community to recognize the entertainment value that was being presented at the Theatre Comique. That audience readily embraced the plays that resembled the speech and look of their own neighborhoods, much like the Irish community flocked to the comedies of the Bowery B'hoys that offered a version of themselves that resembled but did not duplicate themselves. The audience for the Mulligan Guards series quickly grew to include middle and upper class patrons. As I have shown, the audiences of Harrigan's comedies included a diversified cross-section of New York that juxtaposed the newsboys with the

³⁹⁴ Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism*, 23.

³⁹⁵ Harrigan, *The Biographer*, May, 1883: 62.

diamond studded Fifth Avenue matrons; Irish and German and African American, in short a microcosm of New York City at the time.

Kaplan's observation applies to the perception of race as well. I want to single out the phrase "shock of otherness" as a key concept in both Harrigan's Realism as well as his presentation of race, merely by absence of shock in his characterizations. To shock the audience with the unfamiliar would shatter Harrigan's illusion. Realism and racial representation are not based on mimesis, but rather on maintaining a very specific illusion. This acceptance of characters for who they were included by necessity the understanding that when Tony Hart came on stage as Rebecca Allup, he was indeed Rebecca Allup, a fictional character whom the audience understood was a man in women's clothing. This was not mimesis of an actual person, but part of the contract between the audience and the performer. There are certain key elements that must be present in the illusion, the first and foremost of which was presenting a polished, sanitized, digestible world that avoided at all cost the "shock of otherness."

Had Harrigan's Realism or race shocked his audience it would have undercut the effectiveness of his stories. His dramaturgy relied on another type of shock to punctuate his self-admitted flimsy plots: the shock of his comically violent special effects. The fire that erupts at the end of Act I of *Mulligan Guard Chowder*, the explosion in *Mulligan Guards Nominee*, or the ceiling collapse of *Mulligan Guards Ball* were immensely important to Harrigan's play structure. These were the moments of shock on which he depended. Had he been innovative in his casting or stylized in his dialogue or settings, the climactic moments of his plays would have been much less emphatic. Such forays away from Harrigan's carefully constructed acceptability would have diverted attention

away from these moments. Likewise, Harrigan was at all times maintaining a comfort level for his audience. He fed his audiences a meal with which they were familiar, not too rich, not too unusual: essentially the theatrical equivalent of comfort food.

The “shoulder hitting truthiness”³⁹⁶ for which Harrigan was praised emerged from fostering familiarity which the audience felt for the antics and characters on stage. The dialogue resembled the rhythms and tropes of those heard on the streets of New York. It served a dramatic function and thus could not merely be a recording of overheard dialogue, but rather as a function in developing character and plot. Likewise, the sets spoke the truth of appropriateness for the audience: a setting that fit the actions and characters. The structures rang true to the world being presented, but they did not capture the dire decrepitude of the real thing.

Harrigan presents material (his plays, his characters, his fictional world), and maintains “truthful treatment”³⁹⁷ (to reiterate Howells definition of Realism) of this material in keeping a firm grip on how the material is presented. Characters remain true to the reality of the plays while echoing the details and types of the neighborhood he was portraying. The circumstances, although given to slight extremes at times, are inherent to the world being offered for consumption. Nothing highlights this consistency more than to regard the plays in sequence. Although only the texts remain, thanks to Harrigan’s detailed stage directions, newspaper accounts, reflection on the experiences by observers and participants in these plays, a consistent picture emerges from the cumulative effect of the series in which Harrigan is clearly creating a world that follows a prescribed set of

³⁹⁶ *New York Times*, February 22, 1881, 5.

³⁹⁷ Howells, *Criticism and Fiction*, 73.

rules. By that I mean that he maintained attitudes, speech patterns, quirks, and relationships that remained stable throughout the series.

What drew me to investigate Harrigan's race and Realism was the statement I've already quoted, "A negro cannot be natural on the stage. He exaggerates the white man's impersonation of himself and thus becomes ridiculous."³⁹⁸ I was intrigued by this assertion from a man touted for his Realism. If indeed he was a Realist, how could he justify the cross-racial presentation? What makes a White portrayal of Black more "natural" than a Black playing a Black? The questions raised by this seeming discrepancy led me to investigate the role of race and realism in the series and led to unexpected answers: Realism does not mean duplication or mimesis; race lies in the eye of the beholder.

After the Mulligan Guards series, Harrigan's biggest hit was in 1891 with *Reilly and the 400*, his last musical to run over 100 performances. Once the city developed into a complexity that superseded the bounds of his contained world in which the "types" were of a limited scope, Harrigan could no longer keep up with his own medium. Harrigan's successes lay in his depiction of a New York City that had a limited number of ethnicities. An unidentified obituary states,

At the height of [Harrigan's] success New York still was comparatively a homogeneous city, most of whose resident theatre-lovers might find amusement in his genre work. But taste changed as the city grew with diverse new elements of humanity and as native dramatic art broadened, until even so clever a man as Harrigan could find no public for his particular creations, though an artist he

³⁹⁸ *New York Morning Telegraph*, June 21, 1903, Townsend Walsh scrapbook of Harrigan memorabilia, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.

remained to the last, and to the last, before his retirement, he always found acceptance as an actor.³⁹⁹

In a sense the city outgrew Harrigan. As Harrigan's Realism was a reflection on his own history (as I illustrate in chapter one), as well as in his daily observations, the obituary's assertion is valid to a point. Although Harrigan continued his examination of the city on a daily basis, as fame removed him from the squalor of the characters of his popularity, his observations were less likely to be those of one of the people. Rather, he himself became the outsider as his economic stature grew. Essentially, his life became that of Dan's in *Cordelia's Aspirations*, where the Mulligan's move to an upper class neighborhood. But rather than return to his roots as Cordelia and Dan did, Harrigan remained no longer a part of the neighborhood of his youth.

To that end, Harrigan's Realism was no longer the public's Realism. In an ever expanding definition of American and with the audience's exposure to a greater and greater variety of stage personas, what the audience accepted and expected on stage no longer matched that of Harrigan. A necessary part of Harrigan's Realism was a mutual understanding of the "ism." And by the end of the playwright's career, that no longer was the case.

At the core of Harrigan's art were the characters with whom Harrigan's audience could identify. In the obituary for Harrigan in the *Record-Herald* in Chicago, the author identifies the conditions that attracted the crowds to Harrigan's plays – the presentation of race and the particular form of Realism made Harrigan, in his heyday, the most popular writer of musical theater in New York City, the capital of theatre in America at the time.

³⁹⁹ Harrigan papers, box 9, folder 16, page 44.

Natural scenes, local incidents, fidelity to actual conditions, the sayings and doings of a real life of which we personally know by contact or observation, an unforced portrayal of types of character that may easily be more comical in the everyday world than in its mimic counterpart, a bona fide Irishman, a prime article in Irish women, a dyed-in-the-wool negro, and a jolly mob of lesser lights of the same general persuasions, in a rollicking jumble of ludicrous incident, rough-and-tumble fightings, violent breakdowns, hurrah singings of most popular melodies original to these representations—this is about what the thousands turn out to see, and this is a Harrigan play.⁴⁰⁰

⁴⁰⁰ “What a Harrigan Play Was,” obituary Chicago Ill. *Record-Herald*, June 11, 1911, NYPL Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Harrigan Papers, Box 9, Folder 16, 64.

Appendix A – Song List

Pamphlet found in Box 2, Folder 14 of the Edward Harrigan Papers in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the New York Public Library Lincoln Center.

NOTE: This list does not correspond with Jon Finson's list which is much more comprehensive.

SONGS OF THE
GREAT SKETCH AND CHARACTER ARTISTS
HARRIGAN AND HART

MUSIC BY
DAVE BRAHAM
Price, 50 Cents Each

Published by Wm. A. Pond & Co, 18 West 37th St., New York

Aldermanic Board, The
All Aboard for the M.G.P.
A Night Cap, A Night Cap
As We Wander Through the Orange Grove

Babies on Our Block
Baxter Avenue
Beauty of Limerick
Black Maria, O. The
Blue and Gray, The
Boodle, The
Bootblack
Bunch o' Berries, The

Cash, Cash, Cash
Castaways, The
Cahrleston Blues, The
Clara Jenkins' Tea
Cobwebs on the Wall
College Days

Danny By My Side
Dat Citron Wedding Cake
Dip Me in the Golden Sea
Denny Grady's Hack
Dolly, My Cumpled Horn Cow
Don't You Miss the Train
Down in Gossip Row

Eagle, The

Eily Machree
Emancipation Day
Extra, Extra

Family Overhead, The
Fire in the Grate
Forlorn Old Maid, The
Flirting in the Twilight
Full Moon Union

Gallant Sixty-ninth, The
Get Up Jack, John Sit Down
Ginger Blues
Going Home With Nelly After Five
Golden Choir
Gliding Down the Stream
Great Four Hundred, The
Grogan the Masher

Hang the Mulligan Banner Up
Hats Off to Me
Have One With Me
Heigh Ho, Lingo Sally
Hello, Bab-by
Henrietta Pye
Ho Molly Grogan
Hurry, Little Children

Idol of My Heart
I'll Wear the Trowsers, Oh
I'm a Terror to All
I Never Drink Behind the Bar
I Really Can't Sit Down
Isabelle St. Clair
It Showered Again
I've Come Home to Stay

Jim Jam Sailor Superfine
John Riley's Always Dry
Jolly Commodore, The
Just Across from Jersey

Knights of the Mystic Star
Knights of St. Patrick

La Plus Belle France

Last of the Horgans
Little Daughter Nell
Little Green Leaf in our Bible
Little Hedge School, The
Little Widow Dunn, The
Locked Out After Nine

Maggie Murphy's Home
Maguires, The
Major Gilfeather
Market on Saturday Night, The
Man That Knows It All, The
Midnight Squad, The
Miranda, When We Are Made One
Mirror's the Cause of it All, The
Mister Dooley's Geese
Molly
Mordecai Lyons
Mountain Dew, The
Mulberry Springs
Mulligan Braves
My Dad's Dinner Pail
My Dad's Old Violin
My Little Side Door
My Molly is Waiting for Me
Miss Brady's Piano-Fortay
Money the God of the Purse

Never Take the Horseshoe from the Door
No Wealth Without Labor

Oh, Dat Low Bridge
Oh, He Promises
Oh, Girly, Girly
Oh My, How we Pose
Old Barn Floor, The
Old Black Crow, The
Old Bowery Pit, The
Old Feather Bed, The
On Board The Muddy Day
On Union Square
Our Front Stoop
Over the Hill to the Poor House
Owl, The

Paddy and His Sweet Potteen

Paddy Duffy's Cart
Pat and His Little Brown Mare
Please to Put That Down
Plum Pudding
Poverty's Tears Ebb and Flow
Put on Your Bridal Veil

Regular Army, O
Rest, My Darling
Roderick O'Dwyer

Sailing on the Lake
Salvation Army, Oh! The
Sam Johnson's Colored Cake Walk
Sandy Haired Mary
School Days
Second Degree Full Moon Union
She Lives on Murray Hill
Silly Boy, The
Singing at the Hallway Door
Skidmore Fancy Ball
Skidmore Guards
Skidmore Masquerade
Skids are on Review
Skids are out To-day, The
Skids are out To-night, The
Slavery Days
Slavery's Passed Away
Soldier Boy's Canteen
Song of the Free
Sons of the Temperance
South Fifth Avenue
Strolling on the Sands
Sunny Side of Thompson Street
Sway the Cot Gently
Sweet Mary Ann
Sweetest Love

Take a Day Off, Mary Ann
Take My Arm on the Other Side
Taking in the Town
That's An Old Gag With Me
They Never Tell All That They Know
Third Degree Full Moon Union
Tu-ri-ad-i-lum
Toboggan Slide, The

Tom Collins
To Rest Let Him Gently be Laid
Trooper's the Pride of the Ladies, The
Turn Verein Cadets, The

Uncle Reilly
Up at Dudley's Grove
U.S. Black Marines

Veteran Guard Cadets

Walking for dat Cake
We're all Young Fellows, bran new
Wheel the Baby Out
Whist! The Bogie Man
When the Clock in the Tower Strikes Twelve
When the Trumpet in the Cornfield Blows
Where the Sparrows and Chippies Parade
Waiters' Chorus

You're the Idol of My Heart

Appendix B - Sample Lyrics

The following selected lyrics were chosen for their popularity, their insight into Harrigan's portrayal of race, or their characterization.

"The Mulligan Guard"

Verse 1

We crave your condescension,
We'll tell you what we know
Of marching in the Mulligan Guard
From Sligo ward below.
Our Captain's name was Hussey,
A Tipperary man,
He carried his sword like a Russian duke,
Whenever he took command.

Chorus

We shoulder'd guns, and march'd, and march'd a-way,
From Baxter Street, we march'd to Avenue A,
With drums and fife, how sweetly they did play,
As we march'd, march'd, march'd in the Mulligan Guard

Verse 2

When the band play'd Garry Owen,
Or the Connamara Pet;
With a rub a dub, dub, we'd march
In the mud, to the military step.
With green above the red, boys,
To show where we come from,
Our guns we'd lift with the right shoulder shift,
As we'd march to the bate of the drum.

(Repeat Chorus)

Verse 3

When we got home at night, boys,
The divil a bite we'd ate,
We'd all set up and drink a sup
Of whiskey strong and nate.
Thin we'd all march home together,
As slippery as lard,
The solid min would all fall in,
And march with the Mulligan Guard.

"The Babies on Our Block"

If you want for information
Or in need of merriment.
Come over with me socially
To Murphy's tenement.
He owns a row of houses
In the first ward near the dock,
Where Ireland's represented
By the babies on our block.
There's the Phalens and the Whalens
From the sweet Dunochadee,
They are sitting on the railings
With their children on their knee.
All gossiping and talking
With their neighbors in a flock
Singing "Little Sally Waters"
With the babies on our block.
'Oh little Sally Waters
Sitting in the sun
A-crying and weeping for a young man;
Oh rise, Sally, rise,
Wipe your eye out with your frock":
That's sung by the babies
A-living on our block.

Verse 2

Of a warm day in the summer
When the breeze blows off the sea,
A hundred thousand children
Lay on the Battery;
They come from Murphy's building,
Oh, their noise would stop a clock!
Oh, there's no perambulatory
With the babies on our block.
There's the Clearys and the Learys
From the sweet Blackwater side,
They are laying on the Batt'ry
And they're gazing at the tide;
All royal blood and noble,
All of Dan O'Connell's stock,
Singing "Gravel, Greeny Gravel"
With the babies on our block.
"Oh, Gravel, Greeny Gravel,

How green the grasses grow,
For all the pretty fair young
Maidens that I see";
Oh, "Green Gravel Green,"
Wipe your eye out with your frock":
That's sung by the babies
A-living on our block.

Verse 3

It's good morning to you, landlord,
Come now, how are you today?
When Patrick Murphy, Esquire,
Comes down the alleyway
With is shiny silken beaver,
He's as solid as a rock,
The envy of the neighbor boys
A-living on our block.
There's the Brannons and the Gannons
Far Down and Connaught men,
Quite easy with the shovel
And so handy with the pen;
All neighborly and friendly,
With relations by the flock,
Singing "Little Sally Waters"
With the babies on our block.
'Oh little Sally Waters
Sitting in the sun
A-crying and weeping for a young man;
Oh rise, Sally, rise,
Wipe your eye out with your frock":
That's sung by the babies
A-living on our block.

"John Riley's Always Dry"

Verse 1

I have an old companion,
John Riley from Tralee;
In fair or cloudy weather.
John Riley's seen with me.
His heart is like a mountain,
His honor ye can't buy,
But elbow bending is his fault,
John Riley's always dry.

Chorus

Bass's ale by the pail
He would order Rosanna to go out and buy;
Dublin Stout he would shout,
Keep drinking and never say die;
Whiskey prime, gin and wine,
He would hand down a bottle and merrily cry:
"Mv Rose Ann, fill the can,
For honest John Riley's dry.

Verse 2

It's ev'ry morning early
John Riley's out of bed,
Sure never a feather bolster
Lies under Riley's head:
It's when the arm is rising,
So eager and so sly.
He slips out for his bitters, boys,
John Riley's always dry.

(Repeat Chorus)

Verse 3

His father often told him,
When John was but a youth,
That ev 'ry' mortal Riley
All died from whiskey drouth;
Of course it is a failing.
The poor man can't deny,
'Tis but a freak of nature, boys,
John Riley's always dry.

(Repeat Chorus)

Verse 4

What puzzles all the doctors
John Riley's ever met
Is fresh or salty water
Can't make John Riley wet.
Sure he must have the liquor,
Rum, brandy gin or rye.
And should he miss the bottle, boys.
John Riley'd surely die.

(Repeat Chorus)

“The Golden Choir” from “The Muddy Day” (1883)

Oh! Members of de congregation here,
De preachers gwine to talk to you,
Aristocratic colored folks coming to de fair,
Oh! Blow dat organ do.

Chorus

Oh! Blow, oh! Blow, don't you go,
But stop and shout old Gabriel's praises higher;
I'll tell you what to do
When you leave your pew,
To sing in de golden choir,
Some sunny day
We'll fly, fly away,
Wid gladness and joy we'll never tire,
On a silver cloud,
Above the crowd,
We'll sing in de golden choir. (includes dance music after the chorus)

2nd

Oh! De sun it rises up and de sun goes down,
A burnin in de heavens blue;
Astronimists teaches us dat de moon am round.
Oh! Blow dat organ do.

3rd

When a rainbow in de sky on Judgment Day,
Den Gabriel's trumpet's gwine to blow,
Oh! Awful wicked colored folks, gwine to pray,
Oh! Blow dat organ do.

4th

Oh! De wires on de harps am golden chords,
We're hanging on to glory like glue;
Oh! Peter wid a hatchet and Jonah wid a sword,
Oh! Blow dat organ do.

5th

Oh! Little colored children laugh and roar,
And holler for de wandr'ing Jew,
And avaricious nigger dat calls for any more,
Oh! Blow dat organ do. (Edison Sheet Music Collection, Box 9. Library of Congress)

“Isle de Blackwell” in the burlesque “A Celebrated Hard case”
(presumably Blackwell’s Island was a prison)

Come gather ye Cracksmen and Gonofs so fly,
Oh Macers and Bracers, Shoplifters draw nigh,
I’ll warble a ditty as the chorus you swell,
Of the bloaks doing time on the Isle de Blackwell.

Chorus

With my one two and three four then all in a line,
To the shoeshop and quarry each bloak must keep time,
We work like a turnk then back to our cell,
Such a grand institution is the Isle de Blackwell.

2nd

Oh! There is a darling who’s surgar galore,
He hypothecated to Canada shore,
The boodle was heavy so he trip’d up and fell,
Singing Moody and Sankey on the Isle de Blackwell.

3rd

Now there is a faker ‘tis a pity he’s here,
Was nabbed by a hiker a shoving the Queer;
His people are nobby, on the avenue they swell,
He’s a family skeleton on the Isle de Blackwell.

4th

There’s Scotty our keeper we all know his snoot,
He collars the old Togs then hands out a suit;
Striped like a zebra then good bye farewell—
We’re regular boarders on the Isle de Blackwell.

“The Mulligan Braves”
From *Mulligan Guards Chowder*

Here comes the noble mulligan braves,
From Manhattan’s wilds and caves
In red war paint wild and loose,
Big gossoon and wee papoose.

Chorus.
Old fill the beer,
Heap big chief,
Like old fiery sitting bull.
Westward-ho, away we go,
Wild injin can’t get full.
Tommyhawks and boie knives,
Cleavers, clubs and hickory staves,
Come live on air, cut your hair,
Join the Mulligan braves.

2nd
Now then, boys, the Indian yell, (notice that injin isn’t used, but the correct
pronunciation)
For New York City where we dwell.
Scalps we take in ever fight,
Sleep all day and scout all night

Chorus

3rd
We hunt the cayote and the cat,
Led by big chief, shoot the hat;
Big reservations in the park,
We powwow there all in the dark.

“The Skids are on Review”
From *Mulligan Guards Chowder*

What means dis great commotion?
Broadway is full to-day,
Of coons and yaller laides,
Just hear dat music play.
De spangled banner waving,
De red, white and de blue
De people talk along de walk,
De skids are on review.

Attention All! Carry Arms!
Now right shoulder shift.
Carry Again; salute men,
By golly! It's a gift
So elegant, we all present,
At drill we never rest.
Carry6 again, a-ra-ta-ta-ta,
See you're proper dressed.

Chorus:
Darkies neat, smiling sweet,
A la militaire,
Music loud, ain't we proud,
When marching by de mayer.
Yaller girls in perfect bliss,
Umph! Umph! Honewy dew,
Throw dese dandy coons a kiss,
De skids are on review.

2nd
Dar's people on the housetops,
A hanging on de roof,
To view dis colored regiment,
We're pets and dats de proof.
De Germans all excited,
De Irish should 'Hurroo'
Now bye bye all, we got de call,
De skids are on review.

Attention all! Carry arms!
Now come to a trail,
Carry again! Salute men!
Keep back with dat pail. (Bus.)
Arms support! Keep her taut!
At drill we never rest;

Carry again, a-ra-ta-ta-ta-ta,
See you're proper dressed.

Chorus

3rd

Now watch de regulation,
How every foot comes down,
It am de pedal movement,
Dat covers all de ground.
De instep high, de heel protrude,
Wid bixby on de shoe,
We're de doves de ladies loves,
De skids are on review.
Attention all! Carry Arms!
Ready aim and fire.
Carry again! Salute men!
De S.G's never tire.
Charge baynot, (bayonets) guard yourself,
At drill we never rest,
Carry again, a-ra-ta-ta-ta-ta-
See you're proper dressed.
Chorus

3rd Degree Full Moon Union
From *Mulligan Silver Wedding*
In the days of chivalry,
So many years way back,
In all de nightly tournaments,
De warriors were black.
When dis order was laid out,
De darkies greatest boon
Was to be a gallant knight, sir,
In de Third Degree Full Moon.

Chorus
Dis order grand.
All hand in hand,
Step forward, den let go,
All pose when on Broadway,
And den bow very low.
Den doff your tile—smile awhile,
Den scratch like a baboon.
Den draw your swords,
And kill de frauds
In de Third Degree Full Moon.

Jine! Jine! Fall into line,
And seek for de mystery
Climbing de clouds so high.
Jeruselum never say die.
Hear Gabe's trumpet a blowing.
Trabbling de brassy bussoon.
Oh! Der is a band
In dat glorious land
Of de Third Degree Full Moon.

Go send de Bible through
When Noah build de ark
De passengers were colored folks,
Noble men of rank.
All de sailors on de ship
And de captain, was a coon;
Everyone a member
Of the third degree full moon.

In de time of Babylon
All in de land of Nod,
Dey built de tower might high.
No Irish raised a hod,

Italians, and de Dutch
Kept Jabbering out of time.
Dey struck fur wages—quit de work
When half way to de moon.

In de by-laws of dis lodge,
You'll find dis rule right dere.
Don't you stand on de platform,
Of de one-horse bob-tailed car.
Get in and grab a seat;
Make white folks give you room,
Or—ex-communication
From de Third Degree Full Moon.

“Skidmore Fancy Ball”

Oh, here we go so nobly oh!
De Colored Belvidere,
A number one, we carry a gun,
We beat the Fusileers.
You talk about your dancers when we hear the cornet call,
We wing and wing, de dust we sling,
At de Skidmore Fancy Ball.
Now right and lef, just hold your bref,
We're bon ton darkies all,
De fat and lean get in and scream
At de Skidmore Fancy Ball.
Oh, halleluyah, glory, oh,
Now balance down the middle,
I tell you what gue hah! It's hot,
Like gravy in de griddle;
All forward four, all on de floor,
Jest spread out through de hall,
Oh, every Coon's as warm as June
At the Skidmore Fancy Ball.
De supper's served at one G.M. by Brown de Catoroar,
Fat Turk and Goose, oh cut me loose,
Just lem me in de door.
De char's reserved for ladies' umbrellas in de hall,
Dar's etiquette in every set,
At de Skidmore Fancy Ball.
Den hands around, keep off de ground,
We're bon ton darkies all,
Get in and sail, do hold your trail
At de Skidmore Fancy Ball
Oh every hat dat dey get at, dis Colored Coterie,
Will cost a half, you needn't laugh,
Oh help de Millishee.
We're gwine down to Newport just next summer in de fall,
So follow suit and contribute,
At de Skidmore Fancy Ball.
Oh waltz away, and mazurka,
We're bon ton darkies all,
Sweet Caledone, it gives a tone
To de Skidmore Fancy Ball.

“The Skids are Out Today”

Oh, brighten up your iniforms,
Put sweet oil on your har.
Oh, tell your colored neighbors,
Go tell it everywhere.
Dis great or-gan-iz-a-tion
De cream la cream, they say
March on for mancipation,
De Skids are out to-day.

Chorus:

Plumes flying, wenches sighing,
Children cry, ha-ha;
Stop dat cart; don't you start;
Do you hear me, sar.
Whew! Whew! Darkies,
Ain't we hot que hay?
Goodness sake, dey take de cake,
De skids are out to-day.

2nd

Go spread de news promisc'ous
Bid your girl, ta-ta;
Jest tell her we're a-coming,
And please to bring her ma.
Hang out de starry banner,
And let de music play;
Tell blue sue and hanner,
De skids are out t0-day.

Chorus

3rd

White folks is might jealous,
Look out dar in de flank.
Day turn dere noses way up,
At every darkey rank.
For skillful revolutions,
And tictacs every way,
By laws and constitution,
De skids are all o.k.

Chorus

Yaller boy wid ice water

To help you to a wet;
An' ready wid a duster,
To brush de apple-et.
Fat wenches like de ocean
Swing heavy on mass-ay
And keep time to de motion
De skids are out to-day. (MGChow)

“Hang the Mulligan Banner Up”
From *Mulligan Guard Nominee*

Dan Mulligan the coming man,
So stalwart, bold, and strong,
He’s always in the cuase of right,
And never in the wrong.
He wants ye for constituents,
The white man and the black,
And should ye need a favor, boys,
He’ll never turn his back.

Chorus

Then hang the mulligan banner up,
So boldly to the wind,
Now give it room, the Mulligan boom,
Will lave the Dutch behind.
All Africans, Italian and Scandinavians,
Come rally round your leader boys,
Bold Daniel Mulligan.

2nd

For energy and constancy
A liberal minded man,
Old Caesar never had the pluck,
Of Daniel Mulligan.
Had he lived in ancient Rome,
Oh history would have cried
That an Hibernian Caesar, boys,
Wid honors easy died.

3rd

Now concentrate each delegate,
Oh rally, rally all,
Sure once again wid might and main,
We’ll take de city hall.
When in the aldermanic chair
Bold Daniel takes his seat,
We’ll capture all the patronage,
And bastings for to ate. (MGN, 44)

“Mulligan’s Promises”
From *Mulligan Guard Nominee*

I’m faithful to my party
I’m true as yellow gold,
I promise all my workers
Fat offices untold.
I’ll make ye superintendant
Of the Coney Island Beech,
I promise that we’ll never take
Anything out of your reach.

Chorus
Oh he promises, he promises,
Daniel Mulligan,
Ye’ll all be sure of a sinecure
From our next alderman,
Oh he promises, he promises,
He never told a lie,
We’ll live at aise
Do as we plaze
And labor we’ll defy.

2nd
From duty I won’t falter
I’ll ne’er forget a friend,
If your neck’s in a halter
My influence must end.
I’ll promise ye a pudding,
But you must keep it dark.
I’ll have ye count the sparrows busy
Flying in Cen-ter-al Park.

3rd
Whenever ye get collared
For breaking of the peace
Oh come around and see me
I’ll fix ye with the police.
I’ll give ye all a position
And ye’ll give me the laugh,
I’ll make you towel inspector
On board of the free swimming bath.

4th
I’ve gifts for all ye people
And that’s no idle boast,

I promised Mike McCaffrey
Inspector of lamppost.
Cornelius Mc. ONamare
I've promised to employ
To keep the goats from chewing up
The wall of the old reservoir.

“ The Skidmore Masquerade”
From Mulligan Guard Nominee

Oh ladies, oh gemmen
Come now, come wid me
We'll dance until de morning
Sweet and merrily.
Dandy colored couples
Elegant and grand
Moving to de music,
Of Paddy Gilmore's band.
Right and left.

Now ev'ry lady love
Cologne on your handerckief,
Look out for you gloves
Now all back again.
You colored gentlemen
So gentle as a zephyr
And cooing as a dove,
Corners all up and down.
Swing your lady round,
Next young man, do all you can
To keep de sand
Amoving on de ground.
Hands around,
Keep on de bound.
Halleluzah, hang promenade
Juberlallah, jubilee,
Oh can't you come wid me
To do highfalute Skidmore masquerade.

2nd

Sweet custard, and mustard
On sandwiches of ham,
Ladies fingers crushed
And marmalade and jam.
Oh sugar molasses
I've cream and lemonade,
All red hot on de table
At de Skidmore masquerade.

3rd

Such skipping and tripping,
A sailing frough de air
Connoisseurs in dancing,

Am ready to declare.
We're longing, its funny
To see dem darkies wade
And gluchy through a schottische
At de Skidmore masquerade.

“Full Moon Union”
From Mulligan Guards Picnic

Strike de gavel pass de word
Fill de secret cup.
Get ready for de sacrifice
Quarter moons look up.
File in regulation dar
Brother sing in time
Prepare de black celestial har
To become a half a moon.

Chorus
De second degree it's one, two, three,
And den swim in dis style
All razors out den cut about,
De password's erin isle.
De feet up high, oh let 'em fly,
De trouble over soon,
Just when you're elevated
To de half of a full moon

2nd
Climb, climb climb de highest steeple
Oh sail way up in a balloon
Its dar you'll hear de colored people
Shouting glory in dat fiery moon.
Lodge number one of ohio
Resolved dat man or beast
Of celtic Irish extraction
Must keep back in de east.
De west am overcrowded now
Dere isn't any room
Cept for colored cultered folk
Disposed towards the moon.

3rd
We've ordered all milesia out
It's gwine to make a fuss
Steerage tickets very low
For de Irish exodus.
Belfast men, Corkonians
Oh hurry, hurry soon
And skip aboard de cunard line
And make way for de moon.

4th

Professor proctors telescope
Has penetrated mars,
He watchted de colored conductors
On heavenly horsecars.
White folk try to get aboard
Dey're captured by dragoons
Employed by de government
Of elongated moon.

5th

Dar'll be a mighty dark eclipse
Next Easter Monday week
A mighty colored lecturer
In _____ will speak.
A hundred million darkies
Meet in de afternoon
Dey'll blacken up dis planet
From de darkness of de moon.

“Locked Out After Nine”
From *Mulligan Guards Picnic*

I'm stopping at a house
Kept by Misses Doyle
The rules for all the boarders
Are furninst all the while.
Two meals a day we get
We set down in a line
Every man in bed at eight
Or locked out after nine.
There's Slattery McGonnigle
Gilligan and Dan O' Burk
A Scandenavian fisherman
A Norwegian and Turk.
Four Lady's and a child
That's christened "baby mine"
Every man in bed at eight
Or locked out after nine.

2nd

The six days walking match
Held at Madison Square
The boarders all determined
In a body to go there.
We shouted hip hurray
O'Leary looked so fine
Murphy's watch it stopped at eight
We got home after nine.
Slatterly McConnigle
Kicking at the hallway-door
The ladies and the babies
For Mrs. Doyle did roar
We woke the neighbors up
The tailor Rubenstein
Said valk away my Irish friend
You're locked out after nine.

3rd

There was a row next day
The boarders all got drunk
Miss Doyle she got excited
And threw out every trunk
Hat boxes and valise
The shirts from off the line
Come out with all the lodgers

Because we got home after nine.
Then Slattery McConnigle
Gilligan and Dan O' Burk
Whaled the Scanendavian
And ostrazied the Turk,
Policeman did appear
The tailor Rubenstein
Said "Take em in oh vat a sin
You're off your beat at nine."

Wear the Trousers Oh
From Mulligan Guards Surprise

Years ago in sweet May
I married my Cordelia
A happy wife and a happy life
Our marriage was no failure.
When we were wed these words I said
Oh take my home oh
But bear in mind ye'll always find
I'll wear the trousers oh.

Chorus
I'll wear the trousers, trousers oh
I'll wear the trousers oh,
Every man do all ye can
To wear the trousers oh.

2nd
We sailed way to merica
My troubles did begin sir
Her relations fine all in a line
To my house was let in sire.
She welcomed them like gentlemen
I couldn't tell them go
From that day out you'd hear her shout
I'll wear the trousers oh.

3rd
Her cousin mat, her Uncle Pat
They wore out my new braces
Her Aunty Nan, her nephew Dan
They kept me in the traces
Her Granny dear so full of beer
At night carouses oh
When I complain me wife exclaims
I'll wear the trousers oh.

4th
Me spirits up no bite or sup
Will I drink or ate sir
Me wife or me must master be
To night I'll know me fate sir
I'll take a fall out of them all
Me blood arouses oh
Home rule for me, my wife shall see

I'll wear the trousers oh.

“Citron Wedding Cake”
From *Mulligan Guards Surprise*

Come along you children
Oh dars music in de air
De marriage bells are ringing
Oh come from everywhere.
Everyone’s invited
For old acquaintance sake
Come and eat a chunk sar
Of dat citron wedding cake.

Chorus
All perambulating
De carpet I declare
Stylish colored walkers
Escorting of de fair
Philander overshoestring
And Isabella flake
Walk in satin slippers
For dat citron wedding cake
Waltz away darkies so gay
A la society quiet au faut
Julia and Mary, sweet ale shay
Waltz to the music wid
Elegant song.

2nd
Dars raisons in de middle
De crusts as white as snow
Just like dat Bible pyramid
Dey baked it very slow
Come love get you ready
De parson am awake
An putting on his glasses
To view dat wedding cake.

3rd
Dars spiders on de ceiling
And horseflies on de wall
And when de party’s over
Dem insects gwine to fall
Dey’ll eat up all de leavings
What a fuss dey’ll make
Fighting for de balance
Of dat citron wedding cake.

4th

De bridegroom mighty nervous
Much more so der de bride
O golly don't she tremble
When he is by her side
When you go to bed sar
You'll dream until you wake
Just place beneath de pillow
A chunk of wedding cake.

“Where you Speck to Land”
From *Mulligan Guards Surprise*

Good people of de Afric race
From Dan to Berbashee
Time rolls on until it flops
Agin eternity.
Den de question will arise
Like soapsuds in your hand
And put it to you fair and square
Whar you speck to land.

De fishermen of Gallilee
Dey war no roustabouts
Dey caught de biggest kind of shad
And silvery purple trout
But when dey baitied on de hooks
You all must understand,
Day if dey fell into de sea
Dey didn't spect to land.

De young bride sails upon de sea
Of angry married life
De groom gives up all nonsense
To please his colored wife
Den dar comes a baby.
Just like a dutch brass band
It makes you stop and ponder
Whar you spect to land.

“South Fifth Avenue”
From *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*

We’re leaders of the fashion,
Prime colored quality,
Recognized where ‘er we go
As elite society.
At all de great receptions
It’s come along, oh, do,
And ornament de mansions on
South Fifth Avenue
(Strolling leisurely.)

Wid Caroline and Nell
Gentlemen of color,
Oh, every one a swell,
Pretty little yallow girl
Like a drop of dew,
Lean upon your sweetheart, love,
On South Fifth Avenue.

Chorus
Goodness, Mister Johnson,
Who is dat on de car?
Dats Alexander Furguson,
De wealthy janitor, ah! Ah!
Oh, dars Susannah Mangle,
Good evening to you Sue,
Come love and meander,
Down South Fifth Avenue.

Dars Pegram Danderlilly,
De colored millionaire,
Commissioner de colonize
For old Liberia.
Dats a colored senator,
Of de selected few
Aristocratic people
Of South Fifth Avenue.

Oh dear me, Mister Puter
Just loan me your cologne
I wish to scent my handkerchief
Passing dis saloon.
De vapor’s quite distressing,
From dat Itialian crew,

Dis padrone emigration
To South Fifth Avenue.

I'll leave you on de corner
I think it's gwine to rain.
T'would mortify me very much
To have you wet your cane.
On dis pedestrianism
Refreshes me and you,
Especially while walking
Down South Fifth Avenue.

“Slavery Days”

From the skit of the same name 1876

I am thinking today,
Of dem years that passed away,
When they tied me up in bondage long ago:

In Old Virginny state,
It was there we separate,
And it filled my heart with misery and woe.

They took away my boy,
He was his mother’s joy,
From a baby in a cradle we him raise:

Oh dey put us far apart,
And it broke de old man’s heart,
In dem agonizing cruel slavery days.

Chorus

Dey never come again,
Let us give our praise to him,
Who looks down on whar de little children play:
So ev’ry night and morn,
We will pray for dem dat’s gone,
In dem agonizing cruel slavery days.

Still my mem’ry will steel o’er,
To dat dear old cabin floor,
When de shadow of de sun came peeping in.
At night when all was dark,
We would hear de watchdog bark,
And we’d listen to de murmur of de wind.

It seem to say to me,
“You people must be free,”
For de happy time be coming, Lord be praised!
For then we would weep and moan,
For our souls were not our own,
In dem agonizing cruel slavery days.

Chorus

I am very old and feeble,
And our life am nearly done,
I have traveled in the roughest kind of road:

Through sickness, toil, and sorrow,
I have reached the end at last,
And I'm resting by de wayside with my load.

Forget now and forgive,
Has always been my guide,
For dat's what de golden Scripture surely says,
But our mem'ry will turn roun',
For our souls dey were tied down,
In dem agonizing cruel slavery days.

Chorus

Appendix C

The Mulligan Guard Ball by Edward Harrigan

Cast

Dan Mulligan (Irish)
Wallsingham McSweeney (Irish)
Gustavus Lochmuller (Dutch)
Simpson Primrose (African American)
Palestine Puter (African American)
Tommy Mulligan (Irish)
Mr. Clinton (African American)
Lafayette (African American)
Brigham Slopover
Roderick O'Dwyer
Pizarro Push
Gussie Lochmuller (Dutch/Irish)
Goldstein
August Bimble (Dutch)
Mr. Strongarlic
Jimmy Sullivan
Cordelia Mulligan (Irish)
Bridget Lochmuller (Irish)
Kitty Lochmuller (Dutch/Irish)
Honora Dublin (Irish)
Miss Reilly
Cleopatra McSweeney
Maggie Kearney
Mulliganites, Neighbors, Skidmores, Guards, etc.

Synopsis

Act One

- Scene 1: Home of the Mulligans. "The Pitcher of Beer"
Scene 2: A Local Street. "Ball Gossip"
Scene 3: Simpson Primrose Barber Shop.
Night Before the Ball
A Family Mix Up

Act Two

- Scene 1: Back Room of the Wee Drop Saloon.
"Down in Gossip Row"
The Meeting of the Mulligans
"The Little Widow Dunn"
Scene 2: A Local Street. "The Skidmore Fancy Ball"
Scene 3: The Harp and Shamrock Hall.
"The Mulligan Guard's Ball"
"The Babies on our Block"
Downfall of the Skidmores

Act Three

- Home of the Mulligans.
"The Wedding Anniversary"
"Our Front Stoop"

Act One

Scene 1

A neat apartment in Dan Mulligan's house. A neat breakfast table L.H. Tablecloth, dishes, bread, a supper plain. A stove and pipe, oven in stove L.H. in front of mantelpiece. Bureau with drawers. Mirror at back R.H. three chairs at table, plain rocker R.H. rag carpet. A rolling towel hanging on B.F.L of door under which is a washstand, soap and pitcher of water. A cuspidor R.H.C. at back, pipe tobacco in cupboard. L.H. dishes and etc. in cupboard. Washing in bureau drawer. A clothes rack on B.F.L. of door over washstand. A candle on bureau. A lighted candle in candlestick on table. Needle, thread in cupboard L.H. Mulligan's black coat hanging at back on clothes rack. Violin on mantel. Mrs. Dublin, a Cork Irishwoman, enters door in flat at back with a basket.

Mrs. Dublin

(Calling)

Mrs. Mulligan! Mrs. Mulligan! ...She's not in. Ah well, I'll wait. Primrose, the nagur barber, must be doing a fine trade. I have here over a dozen dirty towels. That's thirty-five cents, and if Mrs. Mulligan would give me her washing, I'll make enough to cover the floor at the Mulligan Guard's Ball tomorrow night.

(Enter Cordelia from L.H. door, going R.H. to Mrs. Dublin.)

Cordelia

Good evening, Mrs. Dublin.

Mrs. Dublin

Good evening, Cordelia. Excuse me if I come in atop of the supper table.

Cordelia

No harm. Dan is not home from the gas house yet.

Mrs. Dublin

Poor man, he must be tired shoveling gas all day.

Cordelia

Sit down.

(Sitting L.H. at table)

Mrs. Dublin

Thank you.

(Sitting in rocker R.H.)

Cordelia

The poor man works hard wheeling smoke and weighing coke.

Mrs. Dublin

If it wasn't for Daniel Mulligan the divil a light we'd have in the city.

Cordelia

T'would be a dark day for the city if the gas house men went on a strike.

Mrs. Dublin

I see.

Cordelia

What have you in the basket?

Mrs. Dublin

Some washing for Primrose the barber.

Cordelia

I'm so worried over the Mulligan Guard's Ball. I won't have time to dip in the suds.

Mrs. Dublin

If I could get your washing, I'd go to the ball myself.

Cordelia

You can go wid me.

Mrs. Dublin

Can I? Can I, Cordelia?

Cordelia

You can. The Ball will be very crowded and you can arrange my hair, have an eye on my fan and bouquet, and watch the trail o' me dress, and see that no one steps on it, while I'm promenading.

Mrs. Dublin

Cordelia, you overcome me. I haven't been to a ball since Piper Doyle died.

Cordelia

There's a few collars and shirts in the lower drawer there.

(Points to bureau.)

Get them and take them to the wash, while I look over my butcher's and grocery book.

(Going to cupboard R.H.)

Mrs. Dublin

All right, Cordelia.

(Going to bureau, taking out drawers and washing, placing things in basket.)

Cordelia

(At book that she took from mantel and sits in chair.)

I have my silver wedding day after tomorrow.

Mrs. Dublin

Twenty-five years of wedded bliss.

Cordelia

Yis, Daniel and I have lived happily and we're getting on in the world. A small mortgage on these three houses to pay off.

Mrs. Dublin

Ye'll do it, ye will.

Cordelia

We will wid the help of God and economy.

Mrs. Dublin

(Coming down with basket.)
I'll be at the silver wedding.

Cordelia

(Rising, going to Mrs. Dublin)
Of course. Would you mind going down to the market and grocery for me?

Mrs. Dublin

Wid pleasure, Cordelia.

Cordelia

I want to lay in some things for the celebration.

Mrs. Dublin

Yis, m'am.

Cordelia

Go to Lochmuller's, the butcher.

Mrs. Dublin

He lives downstairs.

Cordelia

Yis. A good tenant.

Mrs. Dublin

I hope so.

Cordelia

Get me seven pounds of corned beef - brisket piece.

Mrs. Dublin

I've corns on me teeth from ateing it.

Cordelia

Then go to the grocery, and get me three pounds of Indian meal, or mush for stirabout.

Mrs. Dublin

I've at so mush mush, I can't stirabout mush.

Cordelia

My husband is a vegetarian.

Mrs. Dublin

I thought he was a Corkconian.

Cordelia

No, he's from Tipperary.

Mrs. Dublin

The boys of Tipperary, light and airy. No sport on land or sea can equal the Tippararee.

Cordelia

That's so, Mrs. Dublin. Now get me two bunches of thyme. Hurry! Hurry!

Mrs. Dublin

You can't hurry time. There's only one man can do that, and that man's a judge.

Cordelia

Now take the books.

(Bus. giving to Mrs. Dublin)

And hurry back.

(Gives pitcher to Mrs. Dublin)

Fill the pitcher wid beer for Dan's supper.

Mrs. Dublin

All right. I'll attend to it.

(Puts pitcher under shawl and pantomimes to Cordelia that no one will see it, and exits door in flat, leaving basket of washing on stage near bureau)

Cordelia

(Going to stove to teakettle)

The tea is steaming, and I have a nice supper for Daniel.

(Opens oven of stove, places it on top of stove. Goes to table. business, herself at table.)

Dan Mulligan enters door in back flat wearing a cap and working clothes, carries dinner pail. Hangs dinner pail on rack at back, takes off cap, hangs it up at back, goes to wash basin at back where towel hangs.)

Dan

Good evening, Cordelia.
(At basin)

Cordelia

Good evening, Daniel.

Dan

(Wash, business of hands)
Fine weather outside. You have scented soap.

Cordelia

Yis. 'Twas sint by Primrose the barber.

Dan

I shave there when my razor's dull.
(Bus. of towel.)

Cordelia

Sit down.

Dan

(Sits, after placing one leg on chair.)
I will. I'm hungry.
(Takes up loaf of bread, looking at it, after sitting at table.)
I thought I told you to buy the bread at the Pianno Bakery.

Cordelia

(Bus. at table.)
They charge ten cents at the Johanna Bakery. And I get this for five at the grocery.
(Tommy Mulligan enters door in flat, neatly places derby hat on bureau.)

Tommy

Hello, Pop. How are you, Mother?
(Cross to table, sitting)

Cordelia and Dan

Good evening, Tommy.

Dan

I told your mother not to get the brew at the Johanna Bakery but the Pianno Bakery.

Tommy

(Eating bus.)

No the Johanna or the Pianno, Pop. But the Vienna. And if I don't get Vienna, I want toast.

Dan

(Lifting bread)

I've told your mother you would ate that.

(Putting it down on table.)

Tommy

I'd rather tackle a mahogany sandwich.

Cordelia

(Bringing teakettle from stove)

That'll do, the pair o' yeas.

(Pouring out tea in separate cups and going to stove with teapot.)

Drink your tea. I want to go out and buy your father a pair of galluses.

(Sitting down at back of table.)

Tommy

You're gallus enough now. Eh, Pop?

Dan

Tommy, I saw the day before you were born when the ould Mulligan Guards that was christened after me would come down to my saloon in Jackson Street.

Tommy

How did you lose that saloon, Pop?

(Dan takes three lumps of sugar, one at a time, places them in his bowl of tea.

Cordelia sees it, and takes sugar bowl away on third lump of sugar. Then Dan continues:)

Dan

Well, I had twenty barrels of whiskey in the place and it was a very hot day in summer and when I closed up the saloon, I forgot to close the window. And in the morning the sun beamed in on the whiskey and they caught fire, and burnt the place up.

Tommy

It must have been pretty hot whiskey.

Dan

Hot? Why, when a man would take two drinks of that whiskey, I'd have to turn the hose on him.

Cordelia

Ah! Don't mind him, Tommy.

Tommy

Pop, you've swelled my head for two or three weeks with that kind of chin.

Dan

If you'd go to bed early, the swelling would go down.

Tommy

That's all right. Was the place insured? Did you have a policy on it?

Dan

(Holding bowl down to stage)

The policy office downstairs was burnt out, too.

Cordelia

Don't mind him, Tommy, he's joking.

Tommy

(Takes tickets from pocket.)

Pop, I've sold twenty tickets for the Ball. And I've got the young Mulligans together and we're going in uniform.

Cordelia

Won't that be nice, Daniel.

Dan

Have you the money for the tickets? If you have, give it to me. And I'll turn it over to the treasury.

(Bus. Kicks Tommy's foot who looks at Dan)

Tommy

I haven't got it yet, but I'll collect it after the ball and give it to you. Some of the old Mulligans need sugar pretty bad.

Cordelia

Sugar? Are they fond of sugar, Tommy?

Dan

Cordelia: the sugar we mean don't come from New Orleans but it comes from Washington, M.C. where it's made by the yard.

Cordelia

Sugar by the yard? Did I ever hear the like of it.

Tommy

I did, ha ha. He means money, Mother. Why don't you tell her. What do you want to be slinging taffy for, all the time.

Cordelia

Taffy? Tommy, no sir, you'll not ate any taffy. It destroyed the teeth of Mrs. Brady's boy entirely.

Tommy

There isn't a young fellow, or a young girl in the neighborhood, but what will be here, and that's a compliment, Pop.

Dan

(Points over his shoulder to coat on rack.)

There's that double-breasted frock coat o' mine on the nail there.

(Pointing to coat on nail)

Fix the buttonhole so as I can wear my bouquet next Sunday.

Cordelia

(Roses, going to cupboard for needle and thread. Takes coat down from peg, sits, sewing R.H. in rocker.)

Daniel, won't you wear the ould Mulligan Guard's soldier clothes at the Ball? Id' like ye to. They become you so well.

Tommy

No, Mother, there's no uniform to be worn - only what the young Mulligans wear. We're all young fellows together, and we don't want any Millers with us. The old-timers in uniform would give the hop away.

Dan

Look here, Tommy, there's two of the ould guard - Walsingham McSweeny and Jerry Gilmartin. They wanted me to ax a favor of ye.

Tommy

If it's a borrow, my finger's up.

(Bus. of finger)

No sugar without the Colat.

Dan

No. They wanted me to tell ye that they were pioneers in the ould guard before the war, and they've saved the battle-axes and Russian hats. And they want to march to the Ball ahead of the Young Mulligans.

(Bus. looking at Cordelia and whispering over table to Tommy.)

Lave them go. I owe McSweeny five and Gilmartin ten. 'Twill aise me up.

Tommy

All right, Pop. They can go, but I wan 'em sober.

Dan
I'll guarantee that.

Tommy
(Bus. of cigar from his vest pocket.)
Have a cigar.

Dan
I don't mind.

Tommy
(Passing cigar.)
Here you go - a Henry Clay.

Dan
I'll smoke it like Daniel Webster.
(Lighting cigar from candle that he takes from table. Cigar with powder in it blows out.)

Tommy
Ha, ha, ha.
(Down L.H.)

Dan
My, my.
(Holding cigar C. of stage.)

Cordelia
(Coming C. downstage, leaving coat on chair.)
Daniel, are you hurt?

Tommy
What's the matter, Pop?
(Lights cigar)

Dan
Oh: oh: oh: first class, Tommy.
(Cross to Tommy, hand out)
Put it there.
(Bus. shaking hands with Tommy)
You had me that time.
(Aside)
But that's an ould gag wid me.

Cordelia

What was it, Daniel?

Dan

(to Cordelia)

Nothing, Cordelia, only Tommy gave me one of those blue light cigars, and there's more Havana than Connecticut in it. And it didn't agree in the mix, so it evaporated.

Cordelia

(Going to sewingon chair)

Oh!

Dan

How's that, Tommy? She'd never drop if it was hailing tombstones.

(Going to closet R.H., getting pipe and tobacco. Tommy goes L.H. Dan lights pope at candle.)

Tommy

Mother, is my plaid pants fixed for tomorrow night?

Cordelia

Yis. I put a patch on 'em.

Tommy

That settles it. I don't wear my plaids.

(Aside)

I'll give Goldstein the tailor, a standup for a new suit, and charge it to the old man. I'll get toga somewhere. I can't get married in these.

Dan

(Smoking pipe at table)

What are ye going to have for supper the night of our Silver Wedding?

Cordelia

Lave that to me, Daniel.

Dan

I will, Cordelia.

(Tommy goes to table, get a puff of smoke from Dan's pipe. Dan goes to rocker R.H. Cordelia goes to table, clearing away debris of supper.)

Tommy

There goes that pipe again. Mother, that's the reason I haven't fetched Kitty Lochmuller up to the house lately.

Cordelia

Kitty's a real nice girl, Tommy. And her father has never said a word about the bill that's standing.

Dan

(At rocker)

You'll have to give the bill a stand off to meet the interest on our mortgage.

Tommy

The bill is all right, Mother, but what I'm kicking is this. Every time I fetch Kitty up here, he lights that funnel he calls a pipe. He fills it wid Navy tobacco and what's the consequence, she says, Tommy, I want to go home, when I haven't chinned five minutes.

Dan

(Rising from rocker)

Listen here, I'm not kidding you now, Tommy. What do you have the house for when Mary O'Brien calls? Have ye no head on ye at all, at all? Hasn't her father, John O'Brien the contractor thousands of dollars? Hasn't he a contract to put a wall around New York to keep the bums from falling overboard? Wasn't he a member of the ould Mulligan Guards and a friend of mine? And didn't Mary send you her Albany wid her picture in it? She loves the ground you walk on.

(Cross R.H.)

Tommy

Oh, cheese cheese.

Cordelia

(Takes cheese from table)

I've a small bit left, Tommy, and Orange County, too.

Tommy

Oh, I don't want any cheese, Mother.

Cordelia

I though ye axed for it.

(At table bus.)

Tommy

(Goes center)

Say, Pop, Mary O'Brien's a nice girl. She's a lady, but there ain't no style about her. Now I'm a single young fellow, and if I ever marry, I'll marry Kitty Lochmuller.

(Octavius Lochmuller, a German butcher, opens door, stands looking in, holding string of sausages.)

Dan

(Going to Tommy C.)

Tommy, understand me. The name of Mulligan will never be varnished wid the name of Lochmuller, the divil a drop of Dutch blood will ever enter the family, and I want you to understand. That goes.

(Cross R.H.)

Tommy
Kitty Lochmuller's a lady.

Lochmuller
(Aside.)
You bet your sweet life.

Cordelia
(At table.)
And Kitt's father's a nice man. And we owe him a bill.

Lochmuller
(Showing bill)
Und I vill get it, too.

Dan
Lochmuller's a friend of mine.

Lochmuller
(Aside.)
Maybe.

Tommy
Cos he is, ain't he putting up all de German flags for de Ball?

Dan
(Cross to Tommy)
He'll do no more for the Mulligan Guard Ball than I will.

Tommy
I know it, but what do you sour on Kitty for?

Dan
(Angrily.)
I sour on no one, Tommy, but before I'd see you throw yourself away in a Dutch family, I'd tie a stone around me feet and anchor off the Battery.

(Business.)
And I'm not too ould but what I could lick any Dutchman.

Lochmuller
(Quickly laying sausages on chair R. of table, coming quickly down to L.H.)

Mister Mulligan, I'm nothing but a German and you have insulted my Katrina. So now, make up your words good.

(Preparing to fight.)

Cordelia

(Running to Lochmuller)
Oh, Mister Lochmuller!

Tommy

(Crosses R.H. to Dan)
Hold on, Pop.

Dan

(Angrily and pugilistical)
Tommy, will you second me?
(Business)

Tommy

Hold on, don't you know we owe him a bill?

Lochmuller

(Bus. with Cordelia)
He insulted my Katrina.

Cordelia

Don't, Mister Lochmuller.

Dan

(to Tommy)
Coax him down in Murphy's back room and lock the door on us. I'll make him wear more porous plasters.

Lochmuller

I want my fifteen dollars.
(Holding bill.)
He can't insult my face and rub it out too. I want my money.

Tommy

(Crosses to Lochmuller)
Mr. Lochmuller.

Cordelia

(Crosses to Dan.)
Daniel.
(Dan, walking up and down stage, followed by Cordelia imploringly.)

Tommy
Pop didn't refer to you. He was talking about Lochmuller the shoemaker.
(Cross to Dan.)

Cordelia
(Cross to Lochmuller)
Yis, yis.

Tommy
(to Dan)
I'm giving him a stiff for the fifteen.

Dan
I tumble. I drop, Tommy.

Lochmuller
I'm a German. My father fought by de Franco-Prussian war. I'm not afraid, Mrs. Mulligan.

Cordelia
You're mistaken, my husband was speaking of the shoemaker.

Tommy
Come here, Pop.
(Bringing Dan down by the hand)

Cordelia
Come, Mr. Lochmuller.
(Bringing Lochmuller by hand toard Dan.)

Tommy
Mr. Lochmuller, Pop's a friend of yours.

Dan
Yes.
(Breaking away, leaps in air R.H.)
But I can lick him.

Lochmuller
(Bus. of fighting gestures.)
Maybe. I'm not afraid.

Tommy and Cordelia
Stop it, stop it.
(Tommy aat Dan, and Cordelia at Lochmuller)

Lochmuller

Tommy, I respect your father, Mr. Mulligan, and all de old and de young Mulligan Guards. And I'm going to take my wife and Katrina to the Ball tomorrow night.

Dan

(Aside to Tommy)
I'll lick him after the Ball.

Tommy

(Bus. of bringing Dan over.)
Come, shake hands.

Dan

I will.
(Puts hand out.)
Lochmuller, there's my hand.

Lochmuller

(Hand business)
Und dare's mine. Hold on, we can't fight. You give me de grip - we belong by de same Lodge.

Dan

You have my word. Dimocrat to Dimocrat, I won't quarrel in the house. Sit down. I want to speak to you.

Lochmuller

All right.
(Sitting L.H. of table.)

Tommy

I'll go dress. I think I'll take in the Comique. Mother, have a light in the hall tonight. So long, Pop.
(Exit door R.H. after taking hat from bureau.)

Dan

Over the river, Tommy.
(Sits on the sausages that are on chair R.H. of table)
Heavens, I've sat on the bow-wow puddings.
(Laying sausages on table.)

Lochmuller

Oh, dot's nothing. Dem is second hand bolognas. I sell dem to Italians.
(Enter Mrs. Dublin and women neighbors.)

Dan

Good evening, Mrs. Dublin.

Honora

Good evening, Cordelia. I brought the neighbors to talk about our sewing circle at McSweeney's Wee Drop Inn.

Cordelia

Have a glass of beer.

Dan

Here's to the pitcher of beer, that cheers a poor man after his day's work.

SONG: THE PITCHER OF BEER

I'M A FRIEND TO THE POOR MAN, WHERE'ER I MAY ROAM,
NO MATTER WHAT COUNTRYMAN HE;
OH, COME SHARE MY LOAF, AND THE MEAT ON THE BONE,
I'VE A GRAMACREE WELCOME FOR THEE;
EACH NIGHT IN THE WEEK, AND WEEK IN THE YEAR,
WITH A HEART AND A CONSCIENCE THAT'S CLEAR;
I'VE A FRIEND AND A GLASS FOR TO LET THE TOAST PASS,
AS WE DRINK FROM OUR PITCHER OF BEER.

Chorus

EACH NIGHT IN THE WEEK, AND WEEK IN THE YEAR,
WITH A HEART AND A CONSCIENCE THAT'S CLEAR,
I'VE A FRIEND AND A GLASS FOR TO LET THE TOAST PASS,
AS WE DRINK FROM OUR PITCHER OF BEER.

OH, THE CHILD IN THE CRADLE, THE DOG AT THE DOOR,
THE FIRESIDE SO CHEERFUL AND BRIGHT;
OLD FOLKS AT THE TABLE WITH PLENTY GALORE,
FOR TO WELCOME YOU IN WITH DELIGHT;
THEIR BLESSING THEY GIVE, IT'S LONG MAY YOU LIVE,
AND SO MERRILY GLIDE O'ER EACH YEAR,
THEN THEY HAND YOU A GLASS FOR TO LET THE TOAST PASS,
AS WE DRINK FROM OUR PITCHER OF BEER.

Chorus

OH, GOOD HEALTH AND GOOD NATURE, WHEN BROUGHT SIDE BY SIDE,
OUR CHAMPIONS OF REAL MERRIMENT;
OH, ANY POOR CREATURE, THE WORLD FAR AND WIDE,
NE'ER BEGRUDGES THE PENNY WELL SPENT;
FOR A DROP OF THE MALT, HE COULD NOT FIND A FAULT,
WITH THAT SAME WHICH TURNS SORROW TO CHEER;

GET A FRIEND AND A GLASS FOR TO LET THE TOAST PASS,
AND DRINK FROM YOUR PITCHER OF BEER.

Chorus

OH, BE SOCIAL AND MERRY, FOR LIFE'S BUT A DAY,
YOU'LL DIE AND LEAVE OTHERS BEHIND;
TO FRET AND TO WORRY, TO SIGH AND TO PRAY,
WHEN RELIEF THEY COULD EASILY FIND;
IF THEY'D DRAW UP A CHAIR, AND DRIVE AWAY CARE,
HAVE A FRIEND WITH HIS PIPE SITTING NEAR;
TELL A STORY OR TWO, LET IT BE OLD OR NEW,
AND DRINK FROM THEIR PITCHER OF BEER.

Chorus

(Dance and Close into a Local Street in One)

Act One
Scene 2

A Local Street.

Enter Tommy Mulligan R.H. in change of dress - tight trousers, stub-toed shoes, a jacket and a derby hat, high collar.

Tommy

(Looks at watch.)

Half-past seven, and here's Kitty on time.

(Kitty Lochmuller enters L.1.E., dressed neatly.)

Kitty

Good evening, Tommy. Have I kept you waiting long?

Tommy

No, Kitty. I didn't think I could show up on time.

Kitty

Why, what happened?

Tommy

I'll tell you, Kitty. I shot my mouth off down at the house. I told the old man I was going to marry you. Just then your old man comes in and it looked as though there'd be a scrap, but I fixed it.

Kitty

In what way?

Tommy

Well, my old man said the Dutch were no good, but it doesn't make any difference. I'm twenty-one and he can't give me any big Casino. I'm going to marry you, all the same, if we have to skip to do it. Does your Mother know anything about it?

Kitty

No. And my Father wants me to marry a Swiss warbler.

Tommy

What? One of them Dutch canaries that chirrup in the Atlantic Garden till the moon's down.

Kitty

Yes, he's a Leiderkranzer, and Mother, because she's Irish, wants me to marry Walsingham McSweeny, because he's from the same part of Ireland with her.

Tommy

McSweeney. Well say, Kitty. Listen. I'm going to take you down to the Comique tonight. There's a corking bill on, and tomorrow night we take in the Mulligan Guard Ball. Of course you'll go.

Kitty

Will I go! We've taken in the Merry Glides. The Lonesome Social. The Gentleman's Songs of Cork Row. The silence and fun.

Tommy

They keep silent so they can have some fun.

Kitty

The old residenters and we don't miss the Mulligans.

Tommy

Not much. It's going to be a honey cooler. We're going to have a cologne fountain in the ballroom with spray.

Kitty

My Father and Mother are going, and Mother and I and all the young girls are going over to Cleopatra McSweeney's, the dressmakers, to try on our new dresses before the ball.

Tommy

She lives with McSweeney over the Wee Drop Saloon.

Kitty

Yes, meet me there, and we'll go to the Ball together.

Tommy

The young Mulligans start from there in uniform.

Kitty

That's nice.

Tommy

And we meet there in McSweeney's to pay the band, give out the badges, and see about the order of dancing.

Kitty

Oh.

Tommy

Are you going to work tomorrow?

Kitty

I've got to. Big job in the shop - coloring sunflowers. Three hundred girls to work.

Tommy

Knock off early tomorrow, will you?

Kitty

Sure.

Tommy

I've got a scheme by which we can get married easy, and fix it all right with the old folks.

Kitty

Before I'd marry McSweeny or the warbler, I'd go live out. I can get fifteen dollars a month, if I want to be a French nurse.

Tommy

That's good enough for a Guiney. I'll make a lady of you. My boss is going to give me charge of all his trucks when he opens his new factory in Chicago.

Kitty

Will you have to go there?

Tommy

Maybe.

Kitty

A new country.

Tommy

New countries make new men. Say, do you know of any young girl, a friend of yours, that can keep her chin and no give away what I'm going to say?

Kitty

Yes. Maggie Kearney, the hairdresser, keeps a little shop over Primrose the barber. She's a dear friend of mine.

Tommy

I'll tell you how we'll fix the snap. We'll go down to Maggie's now, and we'll talk it over with her about standing up with you tomorrow night.

Kitty

We can't get married at the Ball.

Tommy

Hold on, let me get to the end of the story. We go to the Ball together, don't we?

Kitty

Yes.

Tommy

And during intermission, we'll go to Judge Welsh's house. He lives right next door to the hall. Tommy Fagan will stand up for me, and Maggie Kearney for you, when we're married.

Kitty

Get married by a Judge?

Tommy

Cert. If we wait till next day, we can't get married at all. Besides, it gives a young fellow popularity.

Kitty

That's so.

Tommy

We'll go to Yonkers on our wedding trip. Then we can get a room in Henry Street. It's more quiet than Cherry - no so many trucks in it.

Kitty

Oh, Tommy!

Tommy

I suppose the gang will give us a shiveree.

Kitty

What's that?

Tommy

A serenade - a tinkettling.

Kitty

That ain't funny.

Tommy

When we're married, they can give me a can-can. I won't kick.

Kitty

On our way to Maggie's, let us walk by Mary O'Brien's. I want to let her see you with me.

Tommy

Cert. Hold on till I see how I'm fixed.
(Bus. cross L.H.)

There's the price of the theatre tickets and a half a dollar for two stews.

(Bus. takes Kitty's arm)

Come on, Kitty. I'll draw me hundred out of the Bleecker tomorrow. Vanderbilt ain't a marker.

Kitty

Oh, Tommy!

(Both exit L.1.E.)

(Enter R.1.E. Simpson Primrose, a dandy barber, and Palestine Puter, a clerical Negro, wearing side Dundreary whiskers⁴⁰¹.)

Simpson

(With cane.)

Brudder Puter. I'm highly gratified dat you're de only religious member of de Skidmore Guards dat would interest yourself for de welfare of de Skidmore Ball tomorrow night.

Puter

Since I was elected Chaplain of de regiment, you know I beat four Baptists and three Presyterians for de position. I've always advoted dancing as a pleasure, so I accompanied de committee on decorations to see dat de ballroom was finished wid eclat.

Simpson

I've been so busy all day cleaning my uniform, I declare I forgot de name of de hall. What is de name, Brudder Puter?

Puter

Lyric Hall.

Simpson

Lyric.

Puter

Yes, Lyric. More stress on de Lye dan on de ric.

Simpson

Lyric Hall - dat's a good selection. I 'spect we'll have it decorated wid nice ingredients.

Puter

Oh yes. Dar's a large chromo of Abraham Lincoln to go over de door, and de floreal tributes are something gorgeous.

Simpson

⁴⁰¹ Dundreary was a character in My American Cousin. His sideburns were traditionally long and bushy and a wore a mustachio.

I understand Leftenant Newlumber's sister Ruth is gwine to stand for de Goddess of Liberty when de Skidmores march in de hall.

Puter

She'll have to stand on a flour barrel.

Simpson

She can stand any place. Her brudder stood me up for fourteen shampoos and sixteen shaves.

Puter

Be charitable, Brudder Primrose. He owes six months' pew rent now, and it cost a dollar a day for a carpenter to widen dat pew so his fat sister could sit in it, but religion teaches us dat it's easier for a hump-back camel to enter de eye of a needle den it am for a fat woman to enter a pew.

Simpson

Yes, I collide wid you. But do we take supper at de Ball or after de Ball?

Puter

De supper am after consideration. When we get to de Ball we will consider whether we go after de supper or --

Simpson

De supper will never come after us.

Puter

Well, Delmonico's am too far away from de hall, and intermission comes about one o'clock and de victuals am very bad den in a restaurant, and I got a friend dat keeps a grocery store, and if de Guards will condescend we will march down in a body and munch a few crackers and cheese.

Simpson

Hold on, Brudder Puter. I respect you as de Chaplain of my company, but beware of scandal.

Puter

Captain Primrose, I'm astonished. Scandal, as a leading Baptist and grand-dispenser in de colored Secret Society of Full Moons--

Simpson

Hold on. Dar's whar de scandal comes in. Moons - moons. Do you 'spect de Skidmore Guards is gwine to sit down to crackers and cheese? Moons. Moons. What do you take us for? Tramps?

Puter

I'm sorry I angered you, Captain, but you don't understand. De ancient order of Full Moons is a secret colored society to prevent de Irish from riding on horse cars.

Simpson

That's different. Can I join de order?

Puter

I'll propose you at de next meeting.

Simpson

I'll join. What's de name of de band we got?

Puter

De El Dorado reed string military cotillion brass band.

Simpson

Dat's a hot band. I expect to see you dance.

Puter

I will, if I can leave dis bunion at home.

Simpson

Come down to de shop. I'll take dat bunion out.

Puter

No. It's too old now. I left some washing in your shop yesterday.

Simpson

I give it out to Mrs. Dublin.

Puter

Thank you. I'll call for it soon.

Simpson

Good day, Brudder Puter, you'll know when I'm coming in de ball. I'm going to take a bath in Florida water for I start. Good evening.

(Exit L.1.E.)

Puter

I don't care a cent how he comes. Get me to walk three blocks from where I want to go. I must see dat sick sister Rebecca Allup tonight, and I don't like to walk frough Mulligan Alley 'fore dark.

(Business)

Whar's my tobacco?

(Feeling inside pocket, shows red undershirt.)

De lining od dis coat's gone. I must go into Dwyer's tailor shop and have it fixed while I wait.

(Business. Takes out letter.)

From de Ball committee. What's dis?

(Reads.)

Brudder Palestine Puter. Lyric Hall has been seized by de Sheriff for rent due the owner.

(Aloud.)

Too bad.

(Reads.)

The committee am forced to take another hall call de Harp and Shamrock.

(Aloud.)

Dat's an Irish hall. Dare ain't a full moon can go in dat hall widout trouble.

(Reads.)

Notify de members of de Skidmore Guards dat de date remains de same, and of de change of hall. Coach directions. Horses head up Bleecker Street, tails toward de Bowery.

(Aloud)

Well, now I must hurry. It's business.

(Starts for R.1.E.)

(Dan Mulligan enters first, bumps against Puter, looks at him. Mulligan followed by McSweeny who looks at Puter.)

Dan

Come on, Mac.

Mac

All right, Dan.

Puter

I don't see why de Government can't quarantine dem people. Dey land too sudden. Dar ain't enough fumigation.

(Exits R.H.)

Dan

Let him go, Mac. Let him go.

Mac

Very well, Dan.

(Cross center.)

Dan

(Takes Mac's hand.)

You're a friend of mine, and one of the ould Mulligans.

Mac

(Hand business)

I was first Leftenant when we licked the Dutch Brewery Light Guards at Communipaw.

Dan

That's the year I gave four tons of coal for a prize and burnt coke at home.

Mac

Yes, and I had four shots and win it, but I never gave it away.

Dan

Well do I know it. I've fixed it, all right, for you and Gilmartin to go to the Ball in your Pioneer suits, Wally. It's dead level. I got it from Tommy.

Mac

Dan, it's a favor you'll never be sorry for.

Dan

Don't mention it. There's one man going to that ball.

(Bus. shuts fist in Mac's face.)

Mac, I'm sore.

(Turning away from Mac.)

Mac

Who is he, Dan?

Dan

(Turns to Mac.)

A dutch butcher named Lochmuller. I'd lick him, Mac, but I owe him fifteen dollars.

(Turning down L.H.)

Mac

(Leaps R.H. as if to fight.)

I'll lick him for you.

Dan

(Imploringly)

No, lave it go. I'll lick him after the Ball.

Mac

Very well.

(Coming to Dan.)

Dan

I'm going to wear a fantail coat.

Mac

That's right.

Dan

What's the name of the hall the Young Mulligans have for the Ball?

Mac

The Harp and Shamrock

Dan

Good. I want to see the hall look nice. Will you do what I say?

Mac

Slug or anything, Dan, I'm wid you.

Dan

I don't want you to slug, but fix the hall the way I want it.

Mac

Very well.

Dan

Get a row of American flags on the right hand, wid a row of Irish flags on the left, blending.

(Bus. fingers together.)

Mac

Blending.

Dan

Yes, blendin, dovetailing, intertwining.

Mac

I understand.

Dan

Then get a row of wax candles on the balcony and put a sign up. Look out for the drip.

Mac

Yes, yes.

Dan

And farther on in the architecture. Get about thirty canaries in cages and hang them miscously.⁴⁰²

Mac

⁴⁰² Promiscuously.

(Tries to pronounce.)
Miscously.

Dan
About the room. And they'll sing when the band plays. Will you do it?

Mac
I will, Dan . Lave us understand this.
(Bus. points out.)
Would you like them horizontal or purpledicular?

Dan
(Bus. points out.)
No. I want them running paraletic. Will you do it?

Mac
I will, Dan.

Dan
The night after the Ball, I want you at my house, 'specially invited.

Mac
What for?

Dan
I'm twenty-five years married and I celebrate my Silver Wedding.

Mac
(Taking Dan's hand.)
I was at your first wedding when you hadn't a copper, and I've been your friend ever since.

Dan
I know it, Mac.
(Shakes hands with Mac up and down, sincere.)

Mac
I'm going over to the Wee Drop.
(Cross down.)

Dan
And -
(Rubs face)
I'll trail along after ye. I'm going to get shaved, but before I go I'll play you a game of handball for a pint.

Mac

I'm wid you. Ha ha ha. You're so easy.

Dan

(Taking Mac's arm.)

Do you remember the ould song?

(Singing chorus.)

We shoulder arms and marched, marched away.

From Jackson Street, way up to Avenue A.

The drums and fifes, did sweetly sweetly play.

As we marched, marched, marched,

The Mulligan Guards.

(Exit L.I.E.)

Act One
Scene 3

Simpson Primrose's barber shop.

Two doors at back, one in each flat, swinging flats. The audience can look over and under doors. The doors backed by street. Between the doors B.F. a barber's fixtures, two mirrors, cases for cups, brushes, razors, cut newspaper, straps, two barber chairs facing mirror. A filter containing ice, sign on filter. Ice water with hose attached to filter for shampooing. The filter rests on a stand near back flat R.H. where a wash basin on a wash stand rests. Bay Rum bottles and etc. at back. A room L.H. at back. See diagram with doors.

Door facing audience. Window facing stage. Sign on door, "Bath". A bench R.H. Old chairs and stools L. and R. for customers. Hooks R. and L. upon which are hanging coats, jackets, hats at opening. A small round table C. of stage. Discovered on table C. newspapers, calendars, and etc. Hangs on BFLH. a guitar, pictures of fighters, Police Gazette, pictures, racing posters and theatre bills. The scene put well on the stage, making it small. R.L.E. is a wing leading to a supposed stairway. Sign on entrance facing audience:

"Maggie Kearney: Hair Dresser upstairs"

A bootblack stand down stage L.H., brushes, bottle of oil, rags, blacking in stand.

At Opening:

Simpson Primrose in white jacket discovered shaving a man who is holding a newspaper in chair R.H. at back. Ferguson Clinton, a short-legged, deaf and dumb Negro in white jacket, discovered at chair L.H. at back, lathering a man in chair. Lafayette, a colored boy, discovered at bootblack stand, finishing blacking a man's boots who sits in chair. Characters of all descriptions seated R. and L. reading papers. The characters are types of New York low life. Signs on back flat: "Shave, 10 cents. Bath, 15 cents. Shampoo, 10 cents. Hair cutting, 15 cents."

Sign: "This shop closes on Sunday at 1 P.M." etc.

(A picture at opening: Lafayette getting five cents from man who gets out of bootblack chair and brushes man's coat)

Lafayette

Next german for boots.

(Man exits L.H.B. Flat after passing Lafayette, who gets story paper and gets in bootblack chair as Tommy Mulligan and Kitty Lochmuller enter door in B.F.R.H.)

Tommy

Good evening, Mr. Primrose.

Simpson

Good evening, Tommy. Howdy, Miss Lochmuller.

Kitty

Good evening.

(Omnes all look up from papers and resume reading, turning their bodies and legs in grotesque positions. The two men in barber's chair look up and are pushed back in chair by Primrose and Clinton, who pursue the shaving bus.)

Tommy

Where's Maggie Kearney's hair-dressing shop?

Simpson

Right up stairs frough de hall.
(Pointing R.1.E.)

Tommy

Is she up there now?

Simpson

Yes. She's got about ten girls to work, and dey work late.

Tommy

Come, Kitt.
(Exit R.1.E.)

Simpson

Nice young man. His father's a power in dis ward.
(Enter Dan Mulligan, door in B.F.L.H.)

Dan

Good evening, Sim. Good evening all.
(Starts C., takes coat half off)

Omnes

Good evening, Mr. Mulligan.
(Bus. of looking from papers and resume reading)

Simpson

Sit down, Daniel, you're next.

Omnes

(Looking up)
Eh?

I mean after you gemman.

Simpson

Oh!

Omnes

(Resume reading)

Dan

(Takes off coat C. looks at Omnes R. and L., goes to L.H.)

I'm in no hurry. I'll have my boots blacked, then a bath and a shave.

(Slaps Lafayette with hat)

Wake up, Lafatee.

(Puts hat on bench, hangs coat on hook.)

Lafayette

(Getting out of bootblack chair)

Yes, sir.

Simpson

Not Lafferty, but Laffaette named after the French general.

Dan

(Seated on B.B. stand)

That Frenchman was an Irishman named Lafferty, wint over to France wid the Irish Brigade and the French changed the name to Lafayette.

Simpson

I spec' you know.

Dan

(Bus. of chin whiskers)

I'm raising a goat.

Simpson

Dar was a goat raised you once.

Omnes

Ha, ha, ha!

Dan

(To group.)

Funny, isn't it. Primrose, don't ridicule me furninst the gillies.

Omnes

Gillies.

Dan

Yis, chumps. No good ducks. Your wives let you out of the house wid a fifteen cent fringe.; You blow in ten for a shave and five for a beer.

Omnes

(Rising, holding paper)
What!

Simpson

(Coming down C.)
Sit down, gentlemen, sit down.

Omnes

Well!
(Muttering as they sit down R. and L.)

Simpson

Mr. Mulligan, your name's good in dis shop from a shampoo to a bath. But dese gemmen am my customers. Don't abuse 'em. Don't abuse 'em.
(Going back to chair. Shaving bus.)

Dan

I'm joking, Primrose.

Simpson

I know, I know, but --

1st Man

(In Primrose chair, sitting up)
Hold on, you've cut me.
(Dan stands on bootblack stand.)

Omnes

(Rising, astonished)
Ah!

Simpson

(Bus. holding man's chin)
Dar, Mister Mulligan, you got me nervous and de gemman's gashed. A little alum will fix it.
(Gets piece of alum from case, rubs it on cut. This bus. is done after drying man's face with towel.)
Good gracious, make a man cut a man like that.

Dan

I come in here like a gentleman.

Simpson

(Bus. at man's face)
I know you do. Nobody but gemman shaves here. Your son patronizes me.

Dan

That's the reason there's pimples on his neck.

Omnes

Eh!
(Looking up astonished)

Simpson

You 'sinuate dat dis shop made dem pimples on his neck?

Dan

He never had a pimple till he shaved here.

Simpson

'Cos when he fist shaved here you couldn't see de pimples. Dey was in his system, and after he drank one bottle of my banisher, it fetched dem out and when he buys de second bottle and drinks it, dey'll banish.

Dan

Yes, and they'll land on someone else's neck.

Simpson

I don't presume de Banisher can kill de microbes in de air. Next.
(Man getting out of Primrose chair with a piece of newspaper sticking on his cheek, leaving newspaper that he has held in his hand during shaving. Bus. on barber's shelf. Goes to rack R.H., gets coat and hat. Makes bus. of putting on coat and hat and looking in hand glass that he picks up from table R.H. Clinton Pantomimes to man in his chair who is lathered, to get into Primrose's other chair. 2nd Man does so. Primrose begins on 2nd man. Clinton walks down R.H. and L.H. lame as on one leg. Pantomimes to 3rd man that he is ready for him. 3rd Man gets up, goes to Clinton's chair. Clinton walks to chair and begins lathering 3rd Man.)

Dan

(Sings as Clinton walks)
Lum de dum, lum de dum
Ti-ri-addy-de. Ti-ri-addy-de.
Lum de dum, Lum de dum.
Ti-ri-addy-de.
(Keeping in time to Clinton's walk to and from chair.)

What's the matter with his giblets?

Simpson

Dat's Mr. Clinton. He's deaf and dumb.

Dan

What ails his leg?

Simpson

(Who is shaving 2nd man)

He allus shaved on de right hand side of de chair, and de wight of de body leaning on de right leg for ten years work has made it two inches shorter dan de left.

Dan

He'd never make a runner for a policy office.

Simpson

Foolish man, dat's where his wages go. Next.

(First Man going up to door, picks up newspaper from barber's shelf, the paper he left there when he got out of the chair)

1st Man

Good evening.

Simpson

Hold on.

(Snatching newspaper from 1st Man)

Newspapers reserved for customers.

Dan

(Rising in B.B. stand)

Swipes the papers. Well, there's an area worker.

Man

That's my Herald.

Simpson

No, sir. No, sir. Dat's my Herald. I keep all de Daily papers for de gemmen here.

(Omnes looking on in amazement)

Man

I bought it.

Simpson

Don't don't give me dat.

Dan

(Going to C., takes up paper)
There's a Herald on the table there.

Simpson

What day of the month is this?
(Looking a paper)

Dan

The 19th of February.

Simpson

What date am dat Herald.
(Pointing to table)

Dan

I'll see.
(Going to table. Bus. at Herald)
The 18th of February.

Simpson

Dis am today's paper. I'll keep it. Dar's yours.
(Points to table)
You can't give me no ringer.

1st Man

I'll never shave in here again, crooked coon.
(Exit door in B.F.R.H.)

Simpson

Crooked, eh?
(Going to door, looking out.)
I'm on to you. Just the same.
(Giving paper to man on bench R.H.)
Read it. Got to have nineteen eyes in dis business.
(Bus. of shaving man in chair)

Dan

(Who has looked at all the papers)
Why, all these papers are dated the 18th of February.

Simpson

Goodness, dat man's got away wid every one of today's papers and left me yesterday's.

Dan

Go 'way, go 'way, come off.

Simpson
You don't believe me. I never swear, but I affirm -
(Hand up)

Dan
Now, I'll take my bath.

Simpson
Towels. Soap for the gemman.

Lafayette
Dis way.
(Exit door where sign of bath is.)

Dan
I'll float awhile, and then I'll take a shower.
(Exit door in bathroom.)

Simpson
You'll find alcohol dar for rubbing purposes. De last Irishmen took a bath dar drank it.

Man
(In Clinton's chair.)
Come come.
(Man enters door in B.F.R.H. as a cart driver)
Say, do you want any sand?

Simpson
No.

Man
(Noise with mouth as starting horse)
Get up.

Simpson
(Bus. of letting man out of his chair as Primrose shouts.)
Next!
(Man pays Primrose. Primrose goes to drawer, gets change, gives it to man.)

Man
I gave you a quarter.

Simpson
Ten cents change.

Man

I want fifteen cents.

Simpson

That's a Canada quarter. Worth twenty cents. No tariff here. Get out.

(Clinton walks down as usual, pantomimes to man L.H., who goes into Clinton's chair. Clinton begins to lather him. Lafayette enters from bathroom, goes to boot black stand after picking up dime novel and sits reading in boot black chair. 1st Man who gets out of Primrose's chair.)

1st Man

Good evening.

Simpson

Good evening.

(1st Man exits door R.H. at back, runs against Brigham Slapover, a countryman, who enters hurriedly)

1st Man

Look out where you're going.

Brigham

I'm looking out.

Simpson

Gemman, gemman.

1st Man

You're no good.

(Exit door. B.F.R.H.)

Brigham

Aren't I? We'll see. Say, Primrose -

Simpson

Well, Mister Slopover.

Brigham

I want my cup.

Simpson

What's de matter?

Brigham

I don't shave in here any more.

Simpson

Going to leave town?

Brigham

No, but I'm going to take my cup and go to a clean barber shop.

Simpson

You stand dar, in de presence of my customers and say my shop ain't clain?

Brigham

Yes. I say that any man that shaves in this shop will get ringworms.

(Simpson and Ensemble: Men in chairs who are pushed back in chairs by Simpson and Clinton)

Simpson and Ensemble

Ringworms!

Brigham

Yes, ringworms. I want my cup.

Simpson

What cup?

Brigham

My cup. With a horse and cart on it.

Simpson

Here's de cup.

(Getting cup that he is using)

I'm shaving dis gemman out of it. He don't find no fault.

Brigham

Well, I can tell him if he shaves out of that cup, he'll get ringworms.

(Man getting out of Primrose's chair. Man in Clinton's chair, same bus.)

Man

That settles it.

(Snatching towel, drying his face, getting hat quickly.)

Ringworms. I don't shave here.

(Exit quickly door back flat R.H.)

Brigham

I'll tell you gentlemen, if you shave here, you'll get ringworms.

(Exit door back)

Omnes

(Rising, getting coats)
None for me, none for me.
(Exit door back flat right and left)

Simpson

(Aside)
He never got dat ringworm here. Dat Dutch barber cross de street put dat job up on me.
I'll get even.

Dan

(At the window of bathroom)
What's the matter?

Simpson

Nuffin. Fire down de street.

Dan

Oh!
(Clinton, who during bus. has taken off apron, and put on high hat, comes and pantomimes to Simpson)

Dan

What is he giving you?

Simpson

He's telling me he want supper. He's a good man, but he eats too much.
(Takes feather duster that is on table, pantomimes with feather to eat light.)

Dan

(At window.)
Now what are you telling him?

Simpson

I'm telling him to eat light so he won't fall asleep at the chair.
(Clinton nods assent.)

Simpson

(Gives him coin)
Ten cents, dat'll do.
(Simpson gets high hat from rack and pantomimes to Clinton to have it ironed.)

Dan

What are you giving him now?

Simpson

I'm telling him to take that hat and have it ironed, and wait for it if he has to go to sleep.

(Clinton nods assent and exits as Dan sings)

Dan

(Sings)

Essaic he went up in a cloud,
and Moses was buried inside of a shroud,
Jonah, he lived inside of a whale
A darn side better than County Jail

When I want to take a shower bath, do I pull the string?

Simpson

Yes, sir. Pull it easy, or I'll have a flood.

Dan

All right.

(Exit window)

(Enter Mrs. Honora Dublin door R.H.B.F. with basket of wash: one white shirt
and towels. Basket neatly covered)

Simpson

Good evening, Mrs. Dublin.

Honora

Good evening, Mr. Primrose.

Simpson

Brought de washing.

Honora

(Bus. at table where she deposited basket)

Yes, sir.

Simpson

I 'spect you'll be at the Mulligan Ball.

Honora

I go wid Mrs. Mulligan and you jig dancers and high kickers must make room for me
when I forward four and cross over.

(Dancing to and fro)

Simpson

Hold on. Hold on. Come down to business. Dis ain't no dancing academy. I don't want
any Paddy-will-you-now in my shop. Get out de washing.

(Honora laying out white shirt. Simpson putting shirt away on barber shelf)

Dat's Brudder Puter's shirt. Took it off here when I leech'd him. I'll return it.

Honora
(Who has laid towels on table)
Just one dozen towels.

Simpson
(Counts towels)
Dar's only eleven here.

Honora
Eleven?

Simpson
Yes, eleven. Count 'em.

Honora
(Counting towels)
Well, that's all ye gave me.

Simpson
I know what I gave you. Twelve towels. Dat's what I gave you.

Honora
You make a mistake

Simpson
No, ma'am. I don't make any mistake on towels. I got twenty-four towels in ids shop. Dar was forty-eight customers come in here day before yesterday and used dem twelve towels, and here, here -
(Going to shelf, bringing towels down)
De ninth towel dat I used today of de twelve towels what's clean today. You can't tell me dat I didn't give you twelve towels.

Honora
I washed the towels, and when I was I know what I wash.

Simpson
You stand dar and tell me you washed twelve towels.

Honora
Yes, I washed twelve towels.

Simpson
You just sinuated dar's only eleven towels in dat basket.

Honora
I don't care what's in the basket. I washed twelve towels.

Simpson

I 'spect you want me to go in my drawer and give you as much soap for eleven towels as I would for twelve.

Honora

It takes as much soap to wash eleven towels as twelve.

Simpson

(Angrily)

I know. I know, but I ain't gwine to pay fore twelve towels when you turn in eleven.

Honora

I want thirty-five cents for those towels.

Simpson

I'll pay thirty-cents.

Honora

You'll pay thirty-five.

Simpson

I don't care for a nickel. I don't love money but when you hold out on a towel, I'll hold out on five cents.

Honora

You'll hould out my thirty-five or I'll break a looking glass.

(Takes a mirror in hand to smash it, taking cup and holding it in a threatening attitude. Mirror hangs on F.L.H.)

Simpson

(Going to drawer)

Hold on. I'll pay it.

Honora

Well.

(Coming down to basket on table, after leaving cup on shelf)

Simpson

(At drawer)

But I pay it under protest.

Honora

I don't care what you pay it under, as long as you pay it over.

(Bus. hanging towels on table, picks up basket)

Simpson

(Coming down, pays money)

Dar. Dat's de last wash you'll ever get from me. I was opposed to de Chinaman ever coming to dis country, but hereafter of de two European elements, Milesian and Mongolian, give me de Mongolian.

Honora

I'll advise Mr. Mulligan never to cut a hair of his face in this shop.

Simpson

(Bus. at towels)

Go out. Go out.

Honora

I will when I please.

(Noise of bathtub. Terrified)

What's that?

Simpson

De shower bath.

(Enter Dan Mulligan with hat, shoes, shirt, trousers, suspenders hanging and etc.)

Dan

The bottom fell out of the water tank.

(Exit R.1.R)

Simpson

(Looking in door)

A plumber! A plumber! Mind de shop, Mrs. Dublin.

(To Lafayette)

Here, here, damn dat dime novel.

(Throws paper on chair of boot black stand. Picks up foot-bath tub.)

Go in, catch de water till I bring de plumber.

(Exit door B.F. Lafayette exit bathroom door)

Honora

My gracious!

(Omnes of girls, Kitty Lochmuller, Maggie Kearney, Tommy Mulligan enter R.1.F. after scream offstage. Scream coming on)

Honora

What's the matter?

Tommy

Why, Father come upstairs in the shop in his bathing suit and frightened the girls out of the shop.

Girls

Awful, awful.

Honora

Small blame to them when the reservoir is busted in the bathroom.

(Enter Roderick O'Dwyer, a tailor, with a coat wet and dripping, and Palestine Puter in his trousers, vest and red shirt with clerical collar and Omnes)

Roderick

Here! Here! Stop the water.

Puter

Stop it, stop it!

Ensemble

What's the matter?

Roderick

I was mending Mr. Puter's coat in my tailor shop downstairs, and I laid it on the table when a flood o' water come down through the ceiling and drenched it.

(Water stops running off in bathroom)

Puter

Yes, and I got to visit a sick sister tonight, but I can't go in a wet coat.

Omnes

Too bad, too bad.

Lafayette

(Enters with foot-bath of water)

It's all out of the tub now.

(Exit with foot-bath door at back)

Roderick

Yis, it's out of the tub and into my cellar. Wait here till I dry your coat in the laundry.

(Exit at back with coat.)

Puter

Yes.

(Taking down guitar, sits in barber chair and picks on guitar. Orchestra plays: "Kelly after Five")

(Band Forte: Nell After Five.

The characters waltz in chorus and exit separate doors at back. Puter puts up guitar and exits L.H. door at back. Enter Dan Mulligan R.1.E. with coat and vest in hand.)

Dan
I gave those girls the devil's own scare when I run in the shop upstairs.

Simpson
(Enter door B.F.)
Can't find de plumber.

Lafayette
(From bathroom)
De leak's stopped leaking.

Dan
That's a bum tank you have in there.
(Hangs coat, after putting on vest sits in chair.)
(Enter Pizarro Push, an eccentric reporter from door in back R.H.)

Push
(Hanging hat on nail hurriedly)
Is the barber shop in?

Simpson
Yes, sir.

Push
(Taking off coat and hat)
Cut my hair, my beard, shave me, and shampoo.
(Getting into chair)

Dan
Big job - pays for repairing the tank.

Push
(In chair R.H.)
Nice weather.

Simpson
(Bus. of scissors)
Yes, and probabilities say we'll have more.

Push
Have you the morning scowl?

Simpson
(Cutting beard)
Yes, and I have my merry smile.

Push
I mean the newspaper called the Scowl.

Simpson
No, sir. All the papers but the Scowl.

Push
You should keep it. Contains society news, reports of the latest balls.

Dan
(In bootblack stand, reading paper)
Are you a reporter?

Push
(Stretching neck around to see Dan)
Yes, sir.

Simpson
(Pushes Push's head back. Bus.)

Dan
Why don't you take in the Mulligan Ball tomorrow night and write it up.

Simpson
(Bus. cutting beard)
A colored reporter is gwine to write de Skidmore Ball up for de Echo.

Push
Will there be many distinguished people there?

Dan
I'll be there.

Push
(Turning around to Dan)
Who are you?

Dan
Daniel Mulligan

Push
(Turning back)
Oh, yes, yes.

Simpson

(Looking at Push's hair)
Have you had a fever?

Push

Fever - why?

Simpson

You've got a very abundant crop of hair.

Push

I let it grow to keep my ideas warm.

Dan

Come over to McSweeny's Wee Drop Salon, and take down the names.

Push

McSweeny's Saloon. It's a restaurant a-la-carte.

Dan

You'll find a cart in front of the door.

Push

I'll be there.

Simpson

(Cutting beard)
The newspapers get a great deal of news nowadays.

Push

Oh yes, yes.

Simpson

(Cutting beard)
Dar must be a good deal of money made on de dime novel papers. Lafayette, my 'prentice boy, read a story called Limber-Eyed Jim or de High-Heeled Cowboy of Colorado, and he bought two revolvers and three daggers and started for de Prairies. It cost me a ferry ticket to drag him back from Jersey City.

Push

My story of Foxey-Haired Pat sold tremendously. Back numbers all bought up.

Simpson

By de ladies, eh?

Push

Yes, yes, yes.

Dan

(Looking at slippers)
I've lost my shoes. I must have dropped them in the tank.
(Exit in bathroom)
(Enter Lafayette from bathroom, goes to chair, picks up dime novel, reads it)

Simpson

(Bus.)
Now for the hair. Do you want a knot under your ear.

Push

Do not, do not.

Simpson

Do you want to take away the clippings?

Push

What, sir?
(Note: Pushes wig red wool, sewed on at each performance by the property man.
Wool to cut.)

Simpson

Do you want to take away de hair I cut off?

Push

What would I do with it?

Simpson

You might want to pad your coat wid it.
(Cutting hair. Bus. Sees Lafayette reading paper on stand. Goes to him angrily
snatches paper from his hand)
Put down dat paper. Sweep up dat hair. No nonsense.
(Lafayette gets broom, sweeps. Bus.)
See what dat boy's reading: Knocked-kneed Bill or De River of Blood.
(Push sneezes)
Don't sweep so much dust. Can't you see de gemman's got de hayfever?
(Lafayette Sweeps the bunches of hair into R.H.C, leaves broom R.H.C., goes to
stand, reads)

Push

Hurry, hurry, my friend, hurry.

Simpson

Yes, sir. You want it very short?

Push

Yes, very short, but don't scalp me.

Simpson

If I read dem injun stories, I'd have three or four scalps by dis time.

Push

Do you find any dandruss in my hair?

Simpson

No. Dandruff is danrouf in a man's hair. Do you want a shampoo?

Push

Yes.

Simpson

I'll give you a first class shampoo. Dis shop prides itself on shampoos.

(Puts on rubber coat, dries him. Coat hangs R.H.C. Bus. at Push with a shampoo.

Bus. To Lafayette)

Get de hose ready.

Push

A hose.

(Lafayette, getting stool places it near filter. Bus.)

Simpson

Yes, sir, a small hose for shampooing.

(Bus. shampooing lather)

Push

Oh.

(Simpson throws suds over shoulder, catches Lafayette in the eye on B.B. stand.)

Simpson

Do you want the water hot or cold?

Push

Hot, hot.

(Shampooing suds for lather in basin ready in barber stand)

Simpson

Lafayette, take a hunk of ice out of de filter.

(Bus. of shampooing)

Lafayette

Yes, sir.

(Getting chunk of ice from filter)

Simpson

All ready, sir.

(Takes Push to wash stand)

(Lafayette puts ice in basin and goes and reads in B.B. stand)

Push

Not too hot, not too hot.

Simpson

Just lukewarm. Put you hand under.

(Bus. of holding Push's head down.)

Push

Go easy.

Simpson

Yes, sir.

(Turning water on from filter, holds hose over Push's head)

Push

Hold on, it's too cold.

Simpson

Too cold. Lafayette, take another chunk of ice out.

Lafayette

Yes, sir.

(Leaving paper on chair, taking ice from filter, putting it on barber chair, going to bootblack stand, reading)

Simpson

Now get under.

Push

No more. It's ice water.

Simpson

(Places towel over Push's head)

Well.

(Takes Push into barber chair, who squirms and wriggles on ice, and shouts, while Primrose rubs his head with towel)

Push

Let go, man. I'm sitting on ice!

Good Lord!
(Putting ice on filter)

Simpson

The idea!
(Putting on hat and coat)
Want to kill a man?

Push

Excuse me, an accident.

Simpson

No accident, sir.

Push

Seventy-five cents.

Simpson

(Bus. in pocket)
I declare, I've left my pocketbook at home on the piano.
(Bum sleeps on bench)

Push

I want no more ringworms.
(Bus. Seizes Push, attempts to get him under hose. A struggle. Push exit door back flat. Lafayette laughs. Simpson beats Lafayette who exits back door L.H. Knocking down military coat that hangs on back flat near door L.H. Simpson puts military coat on table C., sees a tramp customer sleeping on bench, who has been asleep though scene. B.F.L.H., then picks up coat.)
I'd give a hundred dollars to catch dat boy. Look at dis coat for de Skidmore Ball.
(Tramp enters door back flat R.H., strikes Simpson in the back, exit door L.H.B.F. As Lafayette enters down from F.F.R.H. Simpson catches him and beats him off B.F.R.H. Hangs coat up.)
I'm out seventy-five cents and de shop is killed by ringworms, and bad plumbing. Oh dat coat is ruined!

Simpson

(Enters from bathroom)
I found me socks.
(Hangs coat up, cross L.H., getting in chair L.H. Lochmuller enters from door at back R.H., hangs coat, gets in chair near Mulligan R.H.)

Dan

Next.

Simpson

(Bus. with razor at chair R.H.)

Dan

(In chair L.H.)

Hold on. I'm next.

Simpson

(To Dan. Cross to Dan)

Excuse me, I didn't observe.

Lochmuller

Look here once, Mister Primrose. I'm next.

Dan

Yes, you're next after me.

Lochmuller

Yes, I'm next before you.

Simpson

(To Lochmuller)

My 'prentice will be here in a minute.

Lochmuller

I don't want to get shaved by de 'prentice. I got my cup and razor here.

Dan

Shave me first. If you don't, the divil a one of the Mulligans will ever lather in here again.

Simpson

Gemman. I'm sorry my journeyman's gone to supper. And if I was de Siamese Twins I could shave both at once.

Lochmuller

Shave me first. I've got as much pull in de Mulligan Guards as any man in de city. And Dan Mulligan is my friend.

Dan

(Getting out of chair)

That's my name, sir, and no man is my friend.

Lochmuller

(Getting out of chair)

That's me, too.

Dan

(Bus.)
If it wasn't for the fifteen dollars.

Lochmuller

Excuse me, Mr. Mulligan. I thought it was somebody I didn't know.

Dan

Oh, that's all right. Lave it go. Timporary. Timporary.

Simpson

(Coming down C. with razor)
When you settle de difference, I'm ready gemman.

Lochmuller

Dat's all right. I would fight for Dan Mulligan and de Mulligan Guards neider.

Dan

I know that.

(Aside)
Oh, if the Ball was over.

Lochmuller

(Getting into chair R.H.)
My wife and my little boy, Gussie, is waiting on de corner for me now. We are going to de Atlantic Gardens to hear Mr. Kline, de Swiss warbler "Yugle". So if you would let me shave first --

Dan

My wife is waiting at the house for me. We're going to hear a lecture on ancient Ireland, and I must shave first.

Simpson

I'll tell you, gemman. How we'll settle it. I don't want any quarreling in de shop.

Lochmuller and Dan

No, no.

Simpson

(To Lochmuller)
I'll shave one half of you.

(To Dan)
And den I'll shave de half of you. And den you'll both get shaved at de same time.

Dan

That's all right. Free trade and sailors' rights is all I ask for.

(Getting into chair L.H.)

Lochmuller

I don't want any domestic trouble. I'm satisfied.

(Getting into chair R.H.)

Simpson

Gemman, dare's nuffin like a mutual friend. I'll begin on Germany if Ireland will allow me.

(Lathering one side of Lochmuller's face)

Dan

Very well.

Lochmuller

I got a beautiful picture of my wife in my pocket. Show it to Mr. Mulligan.

Simpson

Yes, sir.

(Cross to Lochmuller's coat)

Lochmuller

Inside pocket.

Simpson

Yes, sir.

(Going into Lochmuller's pocket of coat.)

Dan

She's a fine looking woman.

Lochmuller

Dot's what everybody says.

Simpson

Here it is

(With photograph)

Lochmuller

Show it to Mr. Mulligan.

Simpson

Yes, sir.

(Shows Dan picture)

Dan

She was taken with a smile.

Lochmuller

Sure.

Dan

Good looking woman.

Simpson

Yes, indeed.

(Placing picture in Dan's coat pocket.)
His wife won't think so when she finds it there.

Lochmuller

Hurry up.

Simpson

Must tend to your wife first.
(Bus. at Lochmuller, lathering and shaving)

Dan

There's a big ratification meeting tonight in Mulligan Alley.

Simpson

Um. Um.
(Bus. shaving)

Dan

Yes, the boys are going to burn all the ash-boxes and barrels in the neighborhood.

Simpson

Excuse me.
(Laying down razor, exits door in flat R.H. back)

Lochmuller

Sure.

Dan

Burning those old straw ticks and rubbish is enough to bring out the Asiatic Cholera.⁴⁰³

Lochmuller

Sure.

⁴⁰³ Cholera was often referred to as "Asiatic Cholera" during the nineteenth century pandemics, particularly the 1866 outbreak in America which killed 50,000 Americans.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cholera>, accessed on April 16, 2009.

(Enter Simpson with a barber pole painted red and green. Harp on the top of the pole. Lays it down.)

Simpson

Dey won't burn dis.

Dan

That's right, look out for your property, and put none but Irish on guard.

Simpson

(At Lochmuller. Bus.)

A French artist painted dat pole, de green above de red.

(Dan sings with Simpson:

"The Harp that Once Through Tara's Hall")

Dan

(Stops)

Have you the clipper.

Simpson

Yes.

(Getting clipper from table C.)

De latest.

(Giving it to Dan and resumes shaving bus. at Lochmuller)

Dan

(Paper bus.)

I see here where Buck McCarthy licked the Dutch Butcher in two rounds.

Lochmuller

(Bus. of trying to look around)

Yes, I know, but what kind of fair play was that when all the gas house men jumped in and out the ropes?

Dan

I have here the referee's decision money and belt given to McCarthy.

Simpson

Orlando Whippletree, de colored professor in the gymnasium, I see in de Christian Observer has challenged McCarthy and de Butcher together.

Dan

He's a walk-over for Buck.

Lochmuller

Do you suppose a German would fight mit a nigger?

Simpson

Hold on. You see dis razor?

Lochmuller

Yah.

Simpson

I'm Simpson Primrose, Captain of de Skidmore. Every man of dem is N.G. Nice Gentlemen. Now you'll apologize or I'll draw dis razor 'cross your jugular.

Dan

A man has no right to insult a colored man to his face.

Simpson

Take it back.
(Bus.)

Dan

Make him take it back

Lochmuller

Yes. Yes. Hold on. I mean dat a colored man could whip any German in de world.

Simpson

Dat settles it.
(Cross to Dan, lathers him. Bus.)
Now I'll take de grass off of Ireland.

Lochmuller

Jiminy Christmas. I can't say notting. I must get my other side shaved. Have you got de German paper here?

Simpson

(Bus. at paper and table, giving it to Lochmuller)
Yes. Here's de German Puck.

Lochmuller

I read it.
(Bus.)

Come downstairs, Mr. Mulligan, where I live de night after de Ball. Dot is my birthday and Bimbles Brass Band is going to serenade me.

Dan

I might. I'm twenty-five years married that night.

Simpson

Good while.
(Bus.)
Once over.

Dan

Yes. And look out for the knots.

Simpson

Do you want that wart removed?

Dan

No. I hang my coat on it.

Simpson

Dar's gwine to be a hot time at dat ball tomorrow night.
(Bus.)

Dan

(In agony)
Yis. Yis. Hold-ow!

Simpson

All de Bon-ton colored people of Sixth Avenue gwine to be dar.
(Bus.)

Dan

(In agony)
Hey.

Voice off at Back

No one but niggers shave in there.

Dan and Lochmuller

(Bus. of rising up)
Niggers? What?

Simpson

(Putting Mulligan in chair)
Dar's no military organization in de city like de Skidmore Guards.

Dan

I thought you were talking about the Mulligans.

Simpson

I never mix wid dem kind o' people. 'Scuse me. I'm out of bay rum. I'll be back in a minute.

(Exit door B.F.L.H.)

Dan

There's more Irish in my district than there is Germans, Lochmuller.

Lochmuller

Yes, but dere is more German babies on Avenue A dan dere is tombstones in Greenwood Cemetery.

Dan

You're out of your census. Lochmuller, a word in private wid ye.

(Coming down stage)

Lochmuller

Well, two words ouf you like.

(Coming down stage)

Dan

I owe you fifteen dollars.

Lochmuller

Sure.

Dan

Lave it go.

Lochmuller

Yes. And de rent I owe you.

Dan

I want to talk to ye, Father to Father. What do you want to lave your daughter Kitty come around my boy for? Now lave the fifteen dollars out of the question entirely.

Lochmuller

Vell, lave de bill go. I want to know why you let your son Tommy Mulligan come around mit my Katrina.

Dan

My wife is waiting for me.

Lochmuller

Und my wife is waiting for me mit my little Gussie and my Spitz dog.

Dan

Before I'd allow my boy to marry a Dutch girl, I'd lick every Dutchman -

Lochmuller

Maybe, maybe.

(Enter Maggie Kearney at back)

Maggie

I forgot to lock the shop.

Dan

Ah, Maggie, you know my son.

Maggie

Certainly.

Lochmuller

Under you know my daughter.

Maggie

Sure

Dan

Tell me, is there any truth in what's going around about their marriage?

Lochmuller

(Kneeling and taking Maggie's hand)

On my knee, tell me oof my Katrina was going by marriage to Tommy Mulligan, tell me, tell me.

(Bridget Lochmuller enters, seizes Lochmuller, shakes him. Maggie exit R.1.E. serious.)

Dan

His wife.

(Cross to L.H. dancing with joy)

Bridget

And this is what I married you for, a dacent Irish girl that had her twelve dollars a month in the first families, to marry you , a bologna pudding butcher, and raise a family, to find you here, on your knees, making love to a woman in a nagur barber shop. Oh Lochmuller, Lochmuller!

Lochmuller

Bridget, my darling, hear me once.

Bridget

Why did I marry anything Dutch?

Dan

(Going to Bridget)
You're that man's wife?

Bridget

I am but I'll love him.

Dan

You have a daughter Kitty.

Bridget

I have. I have. Oh Kitty, darling, when you hear of your father's treachery.
(On knee to Dan)
Oh, Mr. Mulligan, hear me, save a mother's feelings.

Dan

'Take your hand o' me bosom.

Lochmuller

Bridget. Bridget.
(In tears)

Bridget

(On knee)
Who was that woman my husband was on his knees to? Tell, Mr. Mulligan.

Dan

I've trouble enough of me own.

Bridget

(Taking Dan's hand)
Hear me, Daniel.
(Cordelia enters door at back, sees Bridget on knees to Dan. Screams and strikes a funny picture. Chases Dan around barber chair L.H. while Bridget picks up broom and chases Lochmuller around barber chair L.H.)
(Picture: Cordelia faints in Dan's arms L.H. Bridget falls in Lochmuller's arms R.H. O'Dwyer enters door at back L.H.)

O'Dwyer

Stop the noise.
(Simpson enters back door R.H. with bay rum bottle, pours bay rum on O'Dwyer's head. Clinton enters with torn hat, holds it C. Group on. A picture.)

Curtain

Act II
Scene 1

(Interior of Wee Drop Saloon. Bar and bar backing. Mirror at bar. Bottles, cigar boxes. Towels. Doors R. and L. Back flat of saloon. Play bills hanging on back flat. A stove and stove-pipe in. Bar room at back. Two tables in bar room. A division piece directly across stage with large window of gauze reaching down to wainscoting to be seen through, to see all action in bar room. A small window in one of the gauze windows to pass liquor through. Two doors, one R., one L. practical in division piece.

The scene in front of division piece represents the back apartment of McSweenys. Wee Drop Inn, which sign is painted in bar room. The apartment is carpeted, cuspidors, chairs, rockers, table R. and table L.

Young girls discovered working on sewing machines, a dress-maker's model discovered C., scraps of muslin, linen, whalebone, scissors, needles and spools of cotton.

Cordelia, Mrs. Lochmuller, Mrs. Dublin, Kitty Lochmuller, Maggie Kearney, all discovered sewing. Dan Mulligan discovered in bar room cleaning mirror. Two barmen about stove in barroom. At rise of curtain, music.

Ensemble of Women

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Cordelia

Laugh away, it's the truth, ladies. When Mrs. Bradley was first married she engaged a Scandinavian cook, and because Mrs. Bradley wouldn't have her go out every Sunday, she made a pie and filled it full of buttons, and Mrs. Bradley broke one of her false teeth trying to bite through the brass button of a sojer coat.

Omnes

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Mrs. Dublin

Button, button, who has the button?

Omnes

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Kitty

(Rising, showing jersey)
How do you like the jersey?

Omnes

(Admiringly)
Lovely, lovely.

Cordelia
Kitty, are you going to wear a jersey?

Kitty
Yes, a New Jersey.
(Sitting down)

Cleopatra McSweeny
(Who has been at model with dress. Bus.)
There, Miss Riley, your dress is finished.
(Bus. at dress)

Cordelia
It sits on that model like a duck on the lake in Central Park.

Bridget
What a beautiful pompadour waist.

Cordelia
She hasn't wasted much in the making.

Kitty
Jennie Riley, you ought to catch a beau at the ball.

Miss Riley
Don't worry, I've got a beau.

Kitty
Yes, the big Swede, that drives the brewery wagon.

Omnes
Ha! Ha! Ha!

Miss Riley
That isn't funny, Kitty Lochmuller.

Kitty
I'm only fooling, Jennie.

Cordelia
If I was single, I'd rather marry a man that drove a brewery wagon than a man that'd drive a hearse, but there's not much difference. They both carry the bier.

Honora

My husband who was killed by the banditti of Texas was a cattle drover.

Bridget

I'll never forget the dress I was married in.

Honora

Rich and rare were the gems she wore, and a plain gold ring her finger bore.

Omnes

Stop it, Mrs. Dublin!

Honora

Excuse me, ladies.

Kitty

I'm going to join the McGonigal Amateurs Theatrical Association.

Omnes

That's nice! Oh dear!

Cordelia

You'll play in the theatre then.

Kitty

Yes, after a while.

Cordelia

Then you'll be like McGowen's daughter who wears wigs and carries a stick, and floats in the air in the Black Crook.

Omnes

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Bridget

I knew a great play actor in Connaught.

Honora

Minster, Connaught, Linster, all from the Giant's Causeway to Donegal.

Omnes

Don't, don't.

Honora

Excuse me.

Kitty

I'd like a glass of water.

Cordelia

The hydrant is stopped it. McSweeny dropped one of his middied rubber shoes in the pipe. Would you like a lemonade?

Kitty

Yes, don't have it sour. I'm too sweet for a sour lemonade.

Omnes

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Cordelia

Ladies, ye'd all like a lemonade.

Omnes

Certainly. I would. Of course. etc.

Cordelia

Talk aisy. Mister Mulligan is there.
(Pointing to bar room)

Kitty

He wouldn't find any fault.

Cordelia

Your mother knows his temper. She saw a bit of it in the barber shop last night when she lost her spitz dog.

Bridget

Cordelia, don't talk of it. We all make mistakes.

Cordelia

Yes, and Kitty, you'll take my advice. I'm as ould as your mother.

Bridget

Faith, you're oulder.

Cordelia

Sure, I'm not.

Bridget

Faith, you are.

Cordelia

We were both born in Ireland.

Bridget

Yis.

Cordelia

We were both there when it happened.

Bridget

Yis.

Cordelia

I have my age at home in the bible.

Bridget

The bible's an ould book.

Cordelia

Yis, and I have it on the leaf of the ould book. I'm 37 years of age.

Bridget

Put five more to it.

Omnes

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Cordelia

What are yees laughing at? I'm ould enough to be the mother of every one of yees.

Bridget

Ha! Ha! Ha! Open confession is good for the soul.

Cordelia

That is a scaled book to you, if your age was known. There's not a reporter in the land but what would be seeking ye, to find out when O'Connell was born.

Honora

O'Connell the hero
O'Connell the bold
His name, it is written in letters of gold.

Omnes

Stop it, Mrs. Dublin. Don't, don't.

Kitty

Where's the lemonade?

I'll ring for it.
(Touching bell)

Cordelia

(Enters door in division piece)
Well, ladies.

Dan

We'd like a drop of lemonade.

Cordelia

The lemons are out.

Dan

Have you any limes?

Cordelia

No. McSweeny plastered the ceiling wid it.

Dan

I mean limes from Bermuda.

Cordelia

Oh. I thought you meant lime from the Lime Kiln.

Dan

There's Dan Mulligan. He's fit for the Royal Artillery.

Honora

Con-a-stan-too. Mrs. Dublin.

Dan

Lug-an-too, Daniel. I'll dance wid you tonight.

Honora

I don't know about that.

Cordelia

Excuse me. I forgot he was married.

Honora

I haven't.

Cordelia

Dan

I'll be the center of observation and the topic of conversation.

Where's McSweeney? Bridget

He went out to get me a Barrouche. Dan

Oh! Lochmuller going in a couple? Bridget

He'll come home in an ambulance. Dan

The ball is making you lay out your money. Cordelia

Dan
(Aside)
I'll lay out Lochmuller after the ball.
(Aloud)
Oh, Ladies.

What? Omnes

I'm thinking of going up to Albany to see the Governor. Dan

I thought the Governor was on Governor's Island. Cordelia

I'm going to have the Governor consolidate the Mulligan Guards in the N.G.S.N.Y. National Guard. Dan

What will the Governor say? Cordelia

He'll say, Daniel, the Mulligan Guard can take the place of the 7th Regiment. Dan

Do you know the Governor? Bridget

Dan

No more than a friendly nod, and a Hello, Mike.

Cordelia

A nod's as good as a kick.

Honora

Daniel can kick the noddle off of an enemy.

Dan

You're right, and if I get the nomination for alderman, and I'm elected, there'll be no snow next winter.

Cordelia

There'll be snow, no matter who reigns over the people.

Dan

No. I'll have all the appointments in the Weather Bureau.

Cordelia

Have they a Bureau for Weather?

Dan

I don't know weather or no, but when I'm elected they'll have a refrigerator.

Cordelia

You'll be a great man.

Dan

I'll be Boss Mulligan or nothing.
(McSweeny enters door at back of saloon)

McSweeny

I couldn't find a barrouche.

Dan

If I don't get a barrouche, I'll walk

McSweeny

How would you like Dempsey's grey horse and his night hawk?

Dan

Well!

Cordelia

He'll do.

McSweeny
The horse is not fit to be out at night.

Dan
Is the horse any better than me?

McSweeny
No, sir.

Dan
Well, I'm out all hours of the night.

McSweeny
The horse is sick.

Dan
He'll do.

McSweeny
The officer of the cruelty to animals might take you in.

Dan
He has power over the horses, but not over the mare.

McSweeny
I'll get him.
(Exit door B.F. and the door B.F. of saloon)

Dan
He's a fine horse. I saw him race wid Lannigan's Stallion and they came in neck and neck, and Dempsey's horse stuck out his tongue and beat Lannigan's Stallion by half a tongue.

Omnes
Ha! Ha! Ha!

Cordelia
Get the lemonade.

Honora
Beer up, me boys, beer up. The keg is run dry. We'll drink a toast to Evins Host. To conquer or to die.

Dan
Good. Mrs. Dublin, you have the true Celtic fine in you.

Cordelia
Daniel, don't be inflammatory. Get the lemonade.

Dan
Ever yours, Cordelia.
(Starting for door)

Honora
Mister Milligan.

Dan
(Stopping)
Well?

Honora
By the way of no harm, I'd like a stick in my lemonade.

Dan
I'll put a club in it.
(Exit door in division piece, going to pump at bar with tray and beer glasses and gin glass. Bus. at pump and bar)

Bridget
Ladies, Mrs. Swartz is not going to the ball.

Omnes
No!

Cordelia
Little loss.

Honora
Damn little.

Omnes
(to Honora)
Pshew! Pshew!

Bridget
Her husband is a baker.

Cordelia
Yis, and a loaf of his bread would give you the dyspepsia.

Bridget
She goes to Macy's every day.

Cordelia

Yis. What for, ah! Ah!

Kitty

Her daughter Louisa's a cash girl there.

Cordelia

Yis, and Louisa gives her the pick of the plaques.

Cleopatra

I'm nothing but a dressmaker.

Cordelia

Yis, and Norah Gillespie learnt her trade wid you.

Cleopatra

Yis, but I won't say anything about her.

Cordelia

(Dan coming from bar with tray and glasses)

But I will. I have my opinion about an Irish girl who learnt her trade in Cherry Street and then goes up to Fifth Avenue and put out her sign, Madam Norah Gillespie -

(Enter Dan with tray and glasses, passing glasses around until he comes to Mrs. Dublin)

Omnes

Pshew!

Dan

Ladies, ye'll have to skip the place soon. The Young Mulligans have a meeting here before marching to the ball.

Cordelia

You're very gallant. You attend to the bar. I'll attend to the ladies.

Dan

(Turning to Cordelia)

Am I saying anything?

Cordelia

We want none of your vanity here.

Dan

I'm not galavanting, Cordelia. I'm doing a friendly turn for McSweeny, looking out for the bar.

Honora
Daniel, you'll do a friendly turn for me, if you bring me my lemonade.

Dan
Did I overlook you, Lady Godiva?

Honora
Yis. And I'll look over it.

Dan
All right.

Honora
I'm not like a good many women that I know, and that's not far off.
(Looking at Bridget)
That can take the drop behind the door, but openly, at all times forward, I drink.

Dan
(Enters division piece with glass)
That's right, Mrs. Dublin.
(Bus. of glass)
Drink it down. 'Twill put you in good spirits for the Ball.

Honora
True for ye, Daniel.
(Drink bus)
Here's that the ocean may never be dry, nor those cross it --
(Giving glass to Dan)
(Dan, who has collected glasses, gets glass from Bridget and enters saloon. He exits door in division piece)

Bridget
I was astonished this morning when I went to take the clothes line down.

Omnes
Yes, yes.

Bridget
Ye all know Mrs. Casey.

Cordelia
It's her little boy Patsy that knows the pie wagon.

Omnes
Ah, ah.

Bridget

Well, I saw her this morning taking down a beautiful silk quilt from her clothes line.

Cordelia

Never a cent it cost her. She's a sample grabber. There's not a store from the Battery to Harlem, but what she's had her pick in.

Omnes

That's so, very true.

Cordelia

I never like to talk about my neighbors, but ye'll all know Mrs. Crowley.

Omnes

Yes, yes,

Honora

(Rising)

Crowley from the North. Ah.

Omnes

Sit down, Mrs. Dublin.

Honora

I will.

(Sitting)

Cordelia

Well, she circulated a report that I was married before in the ould country to an English Grenadier.

Honora

(Rising)

Give me forty thousand men,
I'll break the English heart,
Cried that gallant little Corsican
Napoleon Bonyparte.

Omnes

Pshew!

(Mrs. Dublin sits on needle. Bus. looking at girl as if she had placed needle for her to sit on . Pulling needle from dress, quietly and looking angry)

Cordelia

(Rising)

Ladies!

Kitty

(Rising, going to her)

Mrs. Crowley is the worst gossip in gossip row.

(Song: DOWN IN GOSSIP ROW

During last verse of song, Dan enters apartment through division piece)

I'VE MOVED MY FAM'LY BED AND ALL LAST YEAR THE FIRST OF MAY,
FROM A VERY QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD, SURE, DAN COAXED ME AWAY,
HYPOCRISY AND SCANDAL, THEY HAVE CAUSED ME BITTER WOE,
OH EVER SINCE THE MORNING, I MOVED DOWN TO GOSSIP ROW.

Chorus

GOODMORNING MISSES DOOLEY, AND DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS,
SURE, MARY QUINN WENT TO A BALL, AND BORROWED KATY'S SHOES
THERE'S A SECONDHAND PIANO IN TWENTY-TWO BELOW,
AND LOTS OF DRUNKEN BOARDERS IN THAT HOUSE ON GOSSIP ROW,
NOW, LISTEN MISSES CROWLEY, I'VE SOMETHING FOR YOUR EAR,
WHAT IS IT DEAR? WHAT IS IT? OH WE'RE DYING FOR TO HEAR,
THE BRUNETTE, JULIA DEMPSEY, I'M TOLD SHE HAS A BEAU,
SHE RUN OFF WID A SOGER FROM HER HOUSE IN GOSSIP ROW.

I WEAR A NEWMAD E BONNET OH, AND WALK ALONG THE BLOCK,
HOW THEY POKE THEIR HEARDS FROM WINDOWS
AND THEY WHISPER WHAT A SHOCK
SHE THINKS SHE IS A YOUNG SCHOOL GIRL, AIN'T SHE HORRID SHOW,
YE'D HAVE TO RUN THE GAUNTLET, WHEN YE WALK THE GOSSIP ROW.

Chorus

GOODEVENING MISSES DOOLEY, OH, DID YOU HAVE YOUR TEA.
I HAD A GLASS OF LAGER BEER, JUST NOW WITH MISSES FAY,
SHE WANTS TO BE A YANKEE, I'LL LET THE NEIGHBORS KNOW,
SHE LIVED IN COUNTY CONNAUGHT FOR T SHE MOVE IN GOSSIP ROW.
NOW LISTEN MISSES CROWLEY, I NEVER LIKE TO SPEAK,
BUT WHO THROWS OUT THE GARBAGE EV'RY SUNDAY IN THE WEEK,
SURE I COULD TELL YE AISY, GO ON, WE WANT TO KNOW,
"TIS MISSES LYNCH, AH, HA, HA, HA, THAT LIVE IN GOSSIP ROW.

THEY BORROWED ALL MY KINDLING WOOD AND DOVE INTO MY COAL,
SURE THEY WALKED OFF WITH MY CROCKERY
'CEPT ONE OLD SUGAR BOWL,
MY OVERCOAT AND TAB JACKET, I NEED IT FOR THE SNOW,
WERE STOLE OFF FROM THE CLOTHESLINE, IN MY YARD IN GOSSIP ROW.

Chorus

OH, DEAR MISSES DOOLEY, I WENT TO CENT TO CONEY ISLE,
THE OLD MAN WAS NOT HOME 'TILL SIX, YOU FLIRTED THERE AWHILE,
I MET A GERMAN BUGLER, YE, YES, WE WANT TO KNOW,
HE EATS CLAMS WITH THE LADY THAT IS KNOW IN GOSSIP ROW.
EXCUSE ME, MISSES CROWLEY, NOW WONT YOU TAKE A CHAIR,
I'M TOLD THAT MISSES COOGAN SHE IS DYEING UP HER HAIR,
HER LITTLE DAUGHTER DELIA, SHE'S SENT OFF TO BORDEAUX,
TO LEARN THE POLLY WOO, WOO, FOR THE FRENCH IN GOSSIP ROW.

Dan

Ladies, you'll have to leave here. I'm going to undress.

(Attempts to take off coat)

(Omnes of women's screams and exit R.1E. Honora stands a second and is pulled off S.1.E. by Cordelia)

Cordelia

Come on, Mrs. Dublin, come on.

(Exit R.1.E. with Honora)

Dan

Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Enter Tommy Mulligan and a group of Young Mulligans - young men. Truck drivers. Working lads, etc. They all enter door at back of saloon R. and L. shouting "Hello, Mac. In the back room, gentlemen", etc. All enter door R. and L. of apartment, shouting, "Hello, Dan. We hold the meeting here. Just the place.")

Tommy

(Who has pulled table C. and Mulligans have seated themselves L.H. in various positions about apartment)

Come to order! Come to order!

Dan

(R.H.)

What's the meeting about, Tommy?

Tommy

We're going to see if the order of dancing suits the gang. Goldstein the tailor is coming here with the blue shirts and glazed caps for the uniforms, and you'll oblige me, Pop, by not chiming in.

Dan

Am I saying anything?

Tommy

Well, don't. We'll begin the meeting by appointing a Secretary. I move Podgy Delany fills the position.

Omnes

Second the motion.

Tommy

Moved and seconded. Podgy Delany is secretary. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Omnes

Aye.

Tommy

Contrary?

Dan

No!

Tommy

Pop, you ain't in this!

Dan

Am I saying anything?

Tommy

The Treasurer is all right. Jimmy Sullivan. We want a sergeant-at-arms.

Dan

Tommy, if I don't get an office I'll bolt the convention.

Tommy

Well, gentlemen, it's only a temporary office. What do you say if the old man fills it?

Sullivan

I second the motion.

Tommy

It's moved and seconded that my father's sergeant-at-arms. All those in favor, signify by the usual aye.

Omnes

Aye.

Tommy

Contrary?

(Bus. of Dan looking at omnes threateningly.
Push enters)

Dan

Hold on.

Tommy

(Bus.)
Hold on, Pop. That's a reporter.

Omnes

A reporter!
(Offering chairs. Dan also offers chair)
Have a chair.

Push

One chair is sufficient.
(Sits L.H.)

Omnes

Oh!
(Sit on chairs.)

Push

I've come here to get the names of the Mulligan Guards.

Tommy

I'll call 'em off.

Push

I will make an item.

Tommy

(Taking out paper, reads)
Barney Driscoll.
(Push, with pencil and notebook, writing)

Driscoll

Here.

Tommy

Teddy Gallagher.

Teddy

Here!

Lipsy Warren. Tommy

(With hare-lip accent) Lipsy
Here.

There's a hare-lip for you. Dan

Order. Hold on, Pop. Tommy

Am I saying anything? Dan

(Reading) Tommy
Slap Hickey.

He's up the river. Dan

Tommy
Hold on, Pop. Don't spread it. His reputation's bad enough without coughing it all over the land wit de 'Sociated Press.

Dan
It's the truth I'm telling, Tommy. He was collared for wrenching the iron shutters off a warehouse.

Driscoll
Go on wid the meeting, Tommy.

Push
(Writing)
One of the Mulligan Guards stole the shutters from a warehouse.

Tommy
(Coming down to Push)
You going to publish that in the paper?

Push
(Looking at Omnes)
Well...

Tommy
If you want to stay - well, don't do it.
(Going to table)
Order, please. You're all here but Moran.

Dan
He won't be here for six months.

Tommy
Let up, Pop. Don't chime in...don't!

Dan
Am I saying anything?

Tommy
Don't chip in, don't.

Omnes
Go on wid the meeting, Tommy

Tommy
De next thing before the meeting is the appointment of Committees.

Dan
If I'm not on the floor committee, I'll kick.

Tommy
Hold on, Pop, hold on!

Dan
I'm out of it.

Tommy
No, no, but keep still! The committee of arrangements consists of Jimmy Sullivan, Jack Delany and Tommy Mulligan.

Omnes
First class. Bang up. Good.

Dan
Have you made any arrangements for me, Tommy?

Tommy
We'll fix you if you keep still.

Dan

Am I saying anything?

Tommy

(Reading)

The Floor Committee consists of Ted Dougherty, Red McGuinness, Sleepy Dugan and Tommy Mulligan.

Omnes

Bang up. First class. Good.

Dan

Tommy, if I'm not on the Floor Committee, I'll stop home.

Omnes

Put him on, Tommy, put him on.

Tommy

Well, Pop, I'll put you on the floor.

Dan

There isn't a man in the room can put me on the floor.

Tommy

Hold on. I mean the Floor Committee!

Dan

That's different.

Tommy

But don't interfere with the getting up of sets.

Dan

Did I say anything?

Tommy

(With order of dancing)

I'll read the order of dancing. If there's any objects, sling 'em out.

Omnes

Go on, Tommy, go on.

Tommy

The first dance is a grand march. The Mulligan Guards.

Omnes

Good. Good.

Dan
None better.
 (Sings)
We shoulder guns --

Omnes
Order!

Dan
Am I saying anything?

Tommy
The next dance is the Lancers and promenade. Perichole by Offenbach.

Dan
Ha, he, ha! A ton of coal on your back!

Tommy
Don't chime in, Pop. It's from de Opera Bouffe.

Dan
You can't give me no bluff.

Omnes
Go on, Tommy, go on.

Tommy
The next is a round dance, a waltz. Carry Me Back to Old Virginny.

Omnes
(Bus.)

Tommy
Order, please. Then comes a Gallop, a Quadrille and the Saratoga Lancers.

Dan
What Lancers?

Tommy
The Saratoga.

Dan
Oh! I don't like that.

Tommy

Don't like what? What are you working up now?

Dan

Don't put Saratoga on it. Keep in your own District and don't get over your head.

Tommy

Pop, you'll oblige me by not chiming in. Let us young fellows get up our own affair, won't you?

Dan

Am I saying anything?

Tommy

Well, don't. Get up and take an order of dance and look it over.

(Omnes go up to table, get an order of dance from Tommy and go to seats)

He tries to queer everything I put my hand to. It's one hundred dollars to a nickel, he'll queer the ball!

Push

Gentlemen!

Omnes

Hear him.

Push

There's a friend of mine named Lochmuller.

Dan

(Bus. of making fist)

Lochmuller!

Push

Yes, Lochmuller.

Dan

A Dutch butcher.

Push

Yes, sir.

Dan

Is he a friend of yours?

Push

A dear friend.

Dan

(With fist up)
He's no good.

Push

Any man that says my friend Lochmuller is no good, is no gentleman.
(Goldstein, a Jewish tailor, enters with bag of caps and shirts and is seized by Dan)

Dan

(Holding him downstage)
Where are you going?

Goldstein

Take your hand off my collar.

Omnes

Let go, Dan, it's the tailor.

Dan

Oh, excuse me.

Goldstein

Vell! Vell!

McSweeny

(Who has gone out in saloon and brought in a bung starter, angrily)
I'm with you, Dan.

Tommy

Order, please. How are you, Goldstein?

Goldstein

Mister Mulligan, I come here wit de hats and shirts for de Ball. Am I going to have my collar button pulled off when I come here on business?

Dan

(To Goldstein)
I've apologized.

Goldstein

Mister Mulligan, I respect you. Can a man do no more?

Tommy

(Aside to Goldstein)
Don't say anything to him about the thirty dollars I owe you for my new suit.

Goldstein

(Aside to Tommy)
Dat's all right, your fadder's good for de money.

Tommy

Order, please. We'll give out the caps and shirts.

Goldstein

Very fine goods.
(Bus. of cap and shirts)
(Omnes taking caps and shirts, trying a cap and measuring shirts across their breasts)

Goldstein

Hold on! Before you take de goods, I want my money.

Tommy

You'll get it.
(To Sullivan)
How much is in the funds?

Sullivan

Twelve dollars.

Tommy

What's the bill?

Goldstein

Eleven dollars for de caps and shirts.

Tommy

(To Sullivan)
Pay him.

Sullivan

(At table)
Here you go, Goldstein. Eleven dollars.
(Paying money that he takes from pocket)

Goldstein

Thank you, gentlemen.
(Aside)
Tommy, can I strike de old man for the thirty?

Tommy

Not now - after the ball.

Goldstein

All right. Thank you, gentlemen.

(Exit to saloon, gets drink from McSweeny and exits at back of saloon)

(Bimble enters saloon and starts for door of apartment)

Tony

Every man pays a quarter tonight to put his hat away.

Dan

McSweeny wears his Russian hat and he'll not take it off.

Tony

That's different. He's a Pioneer.

(Enter Mister August Bimble as a German musician. He is seized by Dan)

Dan

Where you going?

Bimble

I'm August Bimble, de Leader of de Band.

Omnes

He's all right.

Tommy

Come to order.

Bimble

I am de leader of Bimble's Band.

Dan

And if you play a Dutch tune at the ball, I'll lick you.

Omnes

Hold on, hold on.

Bimble

Dar's no man can lick Bimble. I play for de toughest crowd in de city. I'm a gentleman.

Tommy

Let up, Pop.

Dan

Am I saying anything?

Bimble

I come here for more advance money.

Tommy

We put up twenty dollars, didn't we?

Bimble

Dot's not enough. If got fifteen more I furnish de trombone and French horn.

Dan

I'd like to put a French horn on that Dutchman.

Tommy

We'll give you the fifteen at intermission.

Bimble

Dat will do. If I don't get it, de band will leave.

Tommy

You'll get it.

Bimble

I take your word.

Tommy

Well, it's getting late. Near time to fix up for the Ball. Step up and get your badges. The meeting's adjourned.

(Omnes going to table. Tommy gives out badges. All the Women enter R.1.E dressed for ball.)

Dan

Cordelia, you look charming.

Cordelia

We're all ready.

Dan

Wait here till we're togged out and we'll come back and all go to the ball together.

(Exit Dan)

Omnes of Men

Yes.

Tommy

My gracious, look at the Little Widow Dunn.

(Song: LITTLE WIDOW DUNN)

THERE'S A CHARMING LITTLE WIDOW, WHO KEEPS A CANDY STORE,
WHERE THE LITTLE CHILDREN BUY THEIR CHEWING GUM.
SHE SELLS TAFFY FOR A PENNY, HER NAME IS ON THE DOOR:
OH, THERE'S MUSIC IN THE FACE OF WIDOW DUNN.

SHE IS FROM THE COUNTY KERRY; HER HUSBAND WAS A TIP,
IN THE ENGLISH ARMY BEAT A DRUM.
AND AT SINGING SWEET JOHANNA, OH, CAN'T SHE GIVE IT LIP;
SUCH A VOICE HAS THE LITTLE WIDOW DUNN.

Chorus

AILEEN ALANA, STARRY BANNER, SLAV'RY DAYS, BOYS, EV'RY ONE,
SHE WARBLER EASY, SWEETLY PLEASE YE;
SUCH A VOICE HAS THE LITTLE WIDOW DUNN.
O SWETT KILARNEY, DENNIS KEARNEY,
COME AND KISS ME, YJM, YUM, YUM, YUM,
OH, KEEP MY GRAVE GREEN, SWEET EVANGELINE;
THEY ARE SUNG BY THE LITTLE WIDOW DUNN.

YOU SHOULD HEAR HER AT A PARTY, SING "BRANNON ON THE MOAR,"
JUST AS STATELY AS THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.
OH, SHE RISES UP THE CEILING; SHE SHAKES THE PARLOR FLOOR;
OH, EV'RYBODY LOVES THE WIDOW DUNN.

SHE'S A PRETTY LITTLE BODY. JUST LIKE A 'RISTOCRAT.
AND EYES A ROLLING OVER FULL OF FUN,
AND SHE DRINKS A GLASS OF LAGER, LIKE ANY DEMOCRAT;
IT'S A PLEASURE FOR TO MEET THE WIDOW DUNN.

Chorus

THE LITTLE DUDEEN, SHE'S MY CRUISKEEN, IN THE BALLETT, MARY RUN.
O LITTLE BUTTERCUP, SHUT THE SHUTTER UP;
THEY ARE SUNG BY THE LITTLE WIDOW DUNN.
AILEEN ALANA, STARRY BANNER, SLAV'RY DAYS BOYS, EV'RY ONE,
SHE WARBLER EASY, SWEETLY PLEASE YE;
SUCH A VOICE HAS THE LITTLE WIDOW DUNN.

Close in.

Act II
Scene 2

(Local street. Low buildings. Alleys, etc. Enter Gustavus, Lochmuller, Bridget, Lochmuller and Gussie Lochmuller. L.I.E. dressed for ball.)

Bridget

Come on. What are you looking back for?

Lochmuller

I want to get de number of dot peddler's wagon vat came near our Gussie when we crossed the street near de gutter.

Bridget

It's no peddler's wagon you're looking after, but it's Mrs. Mulligan you have your eye on. There she is.

(Looking off L.I.E.)

Looking from the second story window over the Wee Drop Saloon.

Lochmuller

How could you say dot, Bridget? Would I look by dot woman ven she is already married now?

Bridget

Wasn't it only last night in the nagur barber shop that I found you on your knees to Maggie Kearney?

(Crying and taking Gussie to her)

Oh, Gussie! Gussie!

Gussie

Mudder, don't cry, when we're going to de ball.

Lochmuller

Bridget, darling, don't cry. Hear me once.

Bridget

No, false man. You deceived me. Gussie! Gussie!

(Crying)

Your father's breaking my heart.

Lochmuller

Bridget, I told you last night vas true. Ven I vas down on my knees to Maggie Kearney, dat vas to save our Katrina. Katrina, our darling.

Bridget

Lave it pass over, Gustavus.

(Wiping her eyes)

I forgave you last night, but the thought of it will come up in my brain.

Lochmuller

I know ven you got suspicious by me, den your temper vernt up. You can't help your Irish blood. You got mad for a minute once, den it all blows away once over.

Bridget

Yes, all over now.

Lochmuller

Vere is Katrina? Don't she go by de ball mit Mister Kline de Swiss warbler?

Bridget

No. I gave her my consent to go wid Tommy Mulligan to the Mulligan Ball.

Gussie

Padder, Tommy's a darling.

Lochmuller

(stops Gussie)

Quick, go home, you don't go by de ball.

Gussie

(L.H.)

Boo-hoo.

(Crying)

Lochmuller

Go soon! Quick! I make your suspenders off right away. Go!

Gussie

(Exit L.H. Running and crying)

Boo-hoo.

Lochmuller

Bridget, you want Katrina to go by de ball mit Tommy Mulligan and de Swiss Warbler can stay home, I believe. Eh?

Bridget

Id' never allow my daughter to marry a Dutchman. Her mother threw herself away on a German butcher when she could have married an Irish soldier.

Lochmuller

I'm sorry.

Bridget

You were a lucky man to get a woman like me.

Lochmuller

Dere vas no luck in it. It vas all love. You come by my butcher shop to buy some spareribs and you know it vas de spare-rib of Adam dot make Eva. Und three days after I sold you de spareribs, we vas married.

Bridget

And Gustavus, we never quarreled till last night.

Lochmuller

No. Und Bridget, we von't quarrel any more. We will live like canary birds.

Bridget

Oh, Gustavus, I'm dying to dance the Varsouviana wid you.

Lochmuller

I can't dance de Louisiana but ven you say de Waltz, I can speil.

(Singing a German song – waltz – as he takes Bridget off R.1.E.)

(Tommy Mulligan and Kitty Lochmuller enter L.1.E. quickly, arm in arm)

Tommy

Don't be nervous, Kitty. There's many a young fellow got married that hadn't a ferry ticket.

Kitty

Just think, Tommy. Mother and Father will be at the ball and if they suspected –

Tommy

Your father won't suspect anything. I'll get him in the bar-room and I'll fill him full of beer.

Kitty

Suppose your father finds out we're going to be married.

Tommy

Oh he'll never drop. All I've got to do is mention Tammany Hall and that settles it. He forgets the world for that, but when Goldstein the tailor fires in his bill for thirty dollars for these gos, maybe he won't kick then. Oh, no.

(Bus. Turns around)

How are they?

Kitty

You look nobby, Tommy. I thought you were going to wear a uniform.

Tommy

What? Get married in a uniform? What do you take me for, a regular? The Mulligans marched down in a body a while ago with McSweeny and Gilmartin at their head as Pioneers. Say, Kitty, I've got the ring.

(Bus. Of showing ring)

It's the best I could do. It cost me a fiver. Will I shove it on your finger now?

(Bus.)

Kitty

No. Wait till we're getting married.

Tommy

We'll let the Judge put it on, eh?

Kitty

I don't care

Tommy

Well, Kitty –

(Taking her arm)

I suppose I'll be rated among the old ducks when I'm married, and –

Kitty

Oh, come on, Tommy.

Tommy

(Looking of L.1.E.)

Will I pipe. There's the old man. Hurry.

(Both exit R.1.E.)

(Cordelia and Dan Mulligan enter quickly L.1.E. dressed for ball, Dan wearing black trousers, cutaway coat, white vest, high hat, chrysanthemum in buttonhole, patent leather shoes. Both strut across stage and back to C.)

Dan

How are we, Cordelia?

Cordelia

I feel like a schoolgirl.

Dan

(Holding hat)

How do you like my sixer?

Cordelia

Your what?

Dan

My hat.

Cordelia

(Taking hat, looking at it, bus.)

Beautiful. Dan, you're as young as ever, but don't say anything to Lochmuller. I'm sorry for what happened in the barber shop last night.

Dan

Say nothing. Keep under cover. I'll down him after the ball. I owe him fifteen. Let it go.

Cordelia

I'll not. He can take it out in rent to us.

Dan

Well, lave it so. But understand me, Cordelia. No one can waltz wid you but Walsingham McSweeny. You'll be the belle of the ball and I'll be the bullgerine.

Cordelia

Will you make a speech at the supper table?

Dan

Will I? Daniel Webster couldn't equal it. I'll deliver an obituary.

Cordelia

What's that?

Dan

Spontaneous emanation.

Cordelia

Daniel, you could rule the nation.

Dan

Wid acclamation.

Cordelia

I wouldn't ride to the ball in Dempsey's night-hawk.

Dan

No, nor me.

Cordelia

What's that I smell on your hair?

Dan

Kerosene.

(Exit R.1.E.)

(Music. Enter Skidmore Guards L.1.E. Simpson Primrose as Captain and Palestine Puter as Chaplain. Primrose wears a large gold badge on breast)

Simpson

Halt.

(Bus.)

Members, I ordered you to carry arms tonight at the Skidmore Fancy Ball, kase we were forced to give up Lyric Hall and take de Harp and Shamrock. Dar's no telling how many Irish will be in ambush dar, so on going in de Hall, you can put your muskets in dat hat-rack and every man have his razor ready. No one must interfere wid our pleasure.

Puter

I'm agin de shedding of blood, but when it comes to dem people, you all know me.

Group

Mm, mm.

(Skidmore Fancy Ball Song and Chorus)

OH, HERE WE GO SO NOBLY OH!
DE COLORED BELVIDERE,
A NUMBER ONE, WE CARRY A GUN,
WE BEAT THE FUSILEERS.
YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR DANCERS WHEN WE HEAR THE CORNET CALL,
WE WING AND WING, DE DUST WE SLING,
AT DE SKIDMORE FANCY BALL.
NOW RIGHT AND LEF, JUST HOLD YOUR BREF,
WE'RE BON TON DARKIES ALL,
DE FAT AND LEAN GET IN AND SCREAM
AT DE SKIDMORE FANCY BALL.
OH, HALLELUYAH, GLORY, OH,
NOW BALANCE DOWN THE MIDDLE,
I TELL YOU WHAT GUE HAH! IT'S HOT,
LIKE GRAVY IN DE GRIDDLE;
ALL FORWARD FOUR, ALL ON DE FLOOR,
JEST SPREAD OUT THROUGH DE HALL,
OH, EVERY COON'S AS WARM AS JUNE
AT THE SKIDMORE FANCY BALL.
DE SUPPER'S SERVED AT ONE G.M. BY BROWN DE CATOROAR,
FAT TURK AND GOOSE, OH CUT ME LOOSE,
JUST LEM ME IN DE DOOR.
DE CHAR'S RESERVED FOR LADIES' UMBRELLAS IN DE HALL,

DAR'S ETIQUETTE IN EVERY SET,
AT DE SKIDMORE FANCY BALL.
DEN HANDS AROUND, KEEP OFF DE GROUND,
WE'RE BON TON DARKIES ALL,
GET IN AND SAIL, DO HOLD YOUR TRAIL
AT DE SKIDMORE FANCY BALL
OH EVERY HAT DAT DEY GET AT, DIS COLORED COTERIE,
WILL COST A HALF, YOU NEEDN'T LAUGH,
OH HELP DE MILLISHEE.
WE'RE GWINE DOWN TO NEWPORT JUST NEXT SUMMER IN DE FALL,
SO FOLLOW SUIT AND CONTRIBUTE,
AT DE SKIDMORE FANCY BALL.
OH WALTZ AWAY, AND MAZURKA,
WE'RE BON TON DARKIES ALL,
SWEET CALEDONE, IT GIVES A TONE
TO DE SKIDMORE FANCY BALL.

(March off R.1.E.)

Act Two

Scene 3

(The Harp and Shamrock Hall. The scene decorated with Irish and American flags. A.C.D. opening at back looking on hallway. The scene boxed. Chandelier of willow to fall at climax. Young men in glazed caps, blue shirts, young girls, Cordelia, Dan Mulligan, Bridget and Lochmuller, Kitty Lochmuller, Tommy Mulligan, Maggie Kearney, McSweeny in Russian hat, military coat. The Ensemble finishing a Quadrille as scene opens. Benches R. and L. Ceiling with graps for Negro figures to fall through.

Omnes

Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Going to benches R. and L.)

Tommy

Say, Pop, give the boys a song wile the band goes out for a beer.

Dan

With pleasure, Tommy

(Song: "Babies on Our Block")

IF YOU WANT FOR INFORMATION
OR IN NEED OF MERRIMENT.
COME OVER WITH ME SOCIALLY
TO MURPHY'S TENEMENT.
HE OWNS A ROW OF HOUSES
IN THE FIRST WARD NEAR THE DOCK,
WHERE IRELAND'S REPRESENTED
BY THE BABIES ON OUR BLOCK.
THERE'S THE PHALENS AND THE WHALENS
FROM THE SWEET DUNOCHADEE,
THEY ARE SITTING ON THE RAILINGS
WITH THEIR CHILDREN ON THEIR KNEE.
ALL GOSSIPING AND TALKING
WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS IN A FLOCK
SINGING "LITTLE SALLY WATERS"
WITH THE BABIES ON OUR BLOCK.
'OH LITTLE SALLY WATERS
SITTING IN THE SUN
A-CRYING AND WEEPING FOR A YOUNG MAN;
OH RISE, SALLY, RISE,
WIPE YOUR EYE OUT WITH YOUR FROCK":
THAT'S SUNG BY THE BABIES
A-LIVING ON OUR BLOCK.

VERSE 2

OF A WARM DAY IN THE SUMMER
WHEN THE BREEZE BLOWS OFF THE SEA,
A HUNDRED THOUSAND CHILDREN
LAY ON THE BATTERY;
THEY COME FROM MURPHY'S BUILDING,
OH, THEIR NOISE WOULD STOP A CLOCK!
OH, THERE'S NO PERAMBULATORY
WITH THE BABIES ON OUR BLOCK.
THERE'S THE CLEARYS AND THE LEARYS
FROM THE SWEET BLACKWATER SIDE,
THEY ARE LAYING ON THE BATTERY
AND THEY'RE GAZING AT THE TIDE;
ALL ROYAL BLOOD AND NOBLE,
ALL OF DAN O'CONNELL'S STOCK,
SINGING "GRAVEL, GREENY GRAVEL"
WITH THE BABIES ON OUR BLOCK.
"OH, GRAVEL, GREENY GRAVEL,
HOW GREEN THE GRASSES GROW,
FOR ALL THE PRETTY FAIR YOUNG
MAIDENS THAT I SEE";
OH, "GREEN GRAVEL GREEN,"
WIPE YOUR EYE OUT WITH YOUR FROCK":
THAT'S SUNG BY THE BABIES
A-LIVING ON OUR BLOCK.

VERSE 3

IT'S GOOD MORNING TO YOU, LANDLORD,
COME NOW, HOW ARE YOU TODAY?
WHEN PATRICK MURPHY, ESQUIRE,
COMES DOWN THE ALLEYWAY
WITH HIS SHINY SILKEN BEAVER,
HE'S AS SOLID AS A ROCK,
THE ENVY OF THE NEIGHBOR BOYS
A-LIVING ON OUR BLOCK.
THERE'S THE BRANNONS AND THE GANNONS
FAR DOWN AND CONNAUGHT MEN,
QUITE EASY WITH THE SHOVEL
AND SO HANDY WITH THE PEN;
ALL NEIGHBORLY AND FRIENDLY,
WITH RELATIONS BY THE FLOCK,
SINGING "LITTLE SALLY WATERS"
WITH THE BABIES ON OUR BLOCK.
'OH LITTLE SALLY WATERS
SITTING IN THE SUN
A-CRYING AND WEEPING FOR A YOUNG MAN;

OH RISE, SALLY, RISE,
WIPE YOUR EYE OUT WITH YOUR FROCK":
THAT'S SUNG BY THE BABIES
A-LIVING ON OUR BLOCK.

(After song:)

Tommy
Take your partners for a Quadrille basket.
(Bus. Of forming set about stage)

Dan
(To Cordelia downstage)
Did Tommy bring a basket?

Cordelia
Hush, Daniel.

Bridget
Tommy, dance wid Kitty.
(Taking Tommy over to Kitty who is with Lochmuller)
Come, Gustavus.
(Taking Lochmuller away from Kitty)
Dance wid me, and lave Tommy dance wid Kitty.
(She is now R.H. The Quadrille set is formed at back)

Dan
(Who is at head of set with Cordelia)
No, Tommy, dance wid your Mother. I've a bunion here.
(Holding boot up)

Tommy
(Who is now at head of set with Kitty, facing Dan and Cordelia)
Ah, Mother can't go through the basket.

Dan
Can't she? She fell through the rocking chair last week. A basket's nothing to her.
(Mrs. Dublin, who is with McSweeney L.H. facing Lochmuller and Bridget)

Mrs. Dublin and McSweeney
True for ye, Daniel.

Tommy
Oh, Father, you don't know what I mean.

Dan

Don't I?

(Aside to McSweeney)

If the fox gets away from me tonight, I'm blind, that's all.

Tommy

(Bus. Going to Cordelia)

Well, come on, Mother.

Cordelia

No, Tommy, I'll sit down wid your father. You dance with Kitty.

Lochmuller

No, excuse me.

(Crosses to Kitty)

I love to dance wid my child.

Dan

That's right. I love to see a child honor its parents.

Lochmuller

My Katrina loves me more den de whole world.

Dan

And my Tommy thinks more of me than any young lady in the room.

Mrs. Dublin

I'd like to dance afore and after.

(Bus. Of dancing with Mc. Sweeny. L.H.)

Ensemble

Hold on, hold on.

Tommy

Go easy, Mrs. Dublin. Go easy, McSweeney.

(Cross to Dan)

Say, Pop, are you going to make up the set, or are you going to kick.

(Taking Cordelia's hand)

There, you're a head in this set.

Dan

You bet, Tommy. I'm never behind.

Tommy

(Going to Lochmuller and Kitty)

Take a side, Mr. Lochmuller.

Lochmuller

Yah, and I don't gone away from dis side.

(Holding Kitty close to him and crossing with her to side facing Mrs. Dublin and McSweeny)

All right.

Tommy

Come, Mrs. Lochmuller.

(Taking Mrs. Lochmuller with him upstage, facing Dan and Cordelia)

Bridget

I'm there, Tommy.

Tommy

All ready.

(In hog Latin to Kitty aside)

Kiggeny, aggeny, theginny seggeny, slippeny.

(Kitty after the set skips)

Kitty

Yeggeny.

Lochmuller

(To Kitty)

Vat is dat he talks?

Kitty

He means the next dance is the tra-a-la-do-do.

Tommy

(Slapping his hands)

Let her go!

(Music commences Quadrille. Couples bow and forward and back once, when Goldstein the tailor enters from back)

Goldstein

Stop de dance! Stop de dance!

Ensemble

(Stop dancing)

Eh! What's the matter?

Goldstein

I want to talk to Mr. Mulligan privately.

Dan

That's my name, sir.

Goldstein

Vell.

Dan

Well?

Ensemble

Well!

Goldstein

I've come here because your son, Tommy Mulligan, owes me thirty dollars for a suit of clothes.

(Bus. Of bill)

Here's de bill. You are his father and he said you would pay it.

Dan

I never ordered any clothes for Tommy Mulligan!

Goldstein

I know, but he said you would pay de order.

Dan

Are you ordering me?

Ensemble

Order, order!

Dan

I'm in order.

Goldstein

I got de order, and I want my money.

Ensemble

Go on with the Ball!

Dan

(To Goldstein)

Clear the floor!

Goldstein

I don't clear de floor till I get thirty dollars.

Ensemble

Put him out, put him out!

McSweeny

Get out of here!

(Bus. of throwing Goldstein out, going upstage in group, shouting)

Ensemble

Give it to him, McSweeny! Throw him out, etc.

(Now coming down stage, forming set)

Go on with the Ball!

(Dan and Lochmuller, looking about room. Music: Piano of Skidmore Guards heard off)

What's that?

Dan

Where's Tommy?

Lochmuller

Vere's my Katrina?

(Skidmores enter, go down L.H. no muskets)

Simpson

Halt.

(Ensemble of Mulligans R.H. Dan in front of group)

Dan

What do you coons want here?

Skidmores

(Business)

Coons!

Dan

Yis, ink bottles!

Skidmores

Eh!

Simpson

Halt!

(Business)

Get back!

Dan

(To Mulligans)

Stand by me!

We will, Dan! Ensemble (Mulligans)

(To guards)
Hold yourself in preserve! Simpson

Mm, mm. Group

What are you Irish trespassing here for? Simpson

We have the hall, and ye have no right here. Dan

No right! Ensemble (Mulligans)

The divil a right!
(Business) Mrs. Dublin

No!
(Business) McSweeny

Hold on, Mac.
(Restraining McSweeny) Dan

Look to your arms, gemmen.
(Bus. Of razors) Simpson

Every Full Moon's ready.
(Bus. Of razors with guards who draw razors) Puter

You'll have to lave the hall, or we'll walk on ye. Dan

We will!
(Business) Ensemble (Mulligans)

Simpson

(With razor, cutting air)
Hold your ground, men!

Guards

Mm, mm.
(Cutting air)

Dan

Out with them, Mulligans!
(Bus. Rush to C. Women scream. Negroes keeping Irish off with razors. Enter Mr. Strongarlic from back, coming C.)

Strongarlic

Stop it! Stop it! It's a mistake!

Dan

You own the Hall?

Strongarlic

I do.

Dan

What are those nagurs doing here?

Skidmores

Niggers!
(Bus. Or razors and a rush of Mulligans. Woman screaming Strongarlic is between constituents; the Irish and Negroes do not get together)

Simpson

Hold on, gemmen. I'll tell you when to cut!

Dan

Stick by me, boys.

Ensemble (Mulligans)

We will!

Dan

(To Strongarlic, whom he pulls C.)
What's the meaning of this?

Simpson

Dat's what we want to know!

Strongarlic

(Very loudly)
Gentlemen, if you'll give me a word, I'll tell you.

Ensemble

(Negroes and Irish)
Go on.

Strongarlic

There's been a mistake in this date. I rented the Hall to the Mulligan guards for tonight, and my clerk rented it to the Skidmore guards for the same date, not knowing I had rented it.

Dan

We've a right to it, we rented it first!

Ensemble (Mulligans)

Yes!

Simpson

No, sir, we rented it first!

Skidmores

Yes, sir!

Dan

No, sir!

(Bus. Of rushing and screaming of women. Razor bus. Strongarlic in C.)

Strongarlic

(Shouting loudly)
Hold on – hold on! There needn't be any trouble if the colored gentlemen would be kind enough to take the Redmen's Lodge room upstairs. It's all ready for dancing.

Puter

I object, gemmen. I'm a red man.

Strongarlic

It's a beautiful Hall. And I'll throw off ten dollars on the rent.

Ensemble (Mulligans)

That's fair!

Simpson

Members, I think dat's a very boisterous proposition, and I propose we jine upstairs. Might as well have harmony. De two balls can go on widout interfering, and as long as we're upstairs, we're above de Irish, and I know dat suits every Full Moon in de Company.

Skidmore Guards

Yes, dat's fair, etc.

Simpson

Mister Mulligan.
(Hand bus.)

Dan

Mister Primrose.
(Hand bus.)

Simpson

We've allus been on speaking terms wid de Mulligan Guards, and as we are gwine up stairs to have our pleasure, we want to be friendly.

(Letting go of Dan's hand)

Members, I propose three cheers for de Mulligan Guards.

Puter

Hip! Hip!

Skidmores

Hurrah!

Puter

Hip! Hip!

Skidmores

Hurrah!

Puter

Hip! Hip!

Skidmores

Hurrah!

Puter

Tiger!

(Exit at back, followed by Skidmores who march off. Chorus)

Simpson

Right wheel, forward march!

(Exit after Strongarlic, ensemble following Skidmores up stage)

Dan

Three cheers fro the Skimore Guards!

Ensemble

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

(Bridget screams after feeling about her person)

Ensemble

What's the matter?

Bridget

I've lost me diamond pin!

Ensemble

What?

(Bus. Of looking over ballroom floor)

Dan

(Who has taken pin from Bridget when upstage in group)

I have it! I have it!

(Pretends to find it L.H.)

(Fiddles, horns, banjos heard upstairs and shouts off: "Forward four! Cross over!" etc.)

Dan

Cordelia – where's Tommy?

Lochmuller

(To Bridget)

Yah! Und where's Katrina?

(Enter Tommy, Kitty and Maggie Kearney C.)

Tommy

Here I am, Pop, and allow me to introduce you to Mrs. Mulligan Junior.

(Dance kept up above)

Ensemble

What!

Dan

Tommy, have you married Kitty Lochmuller?

(Ceiling moving overhead with chandelier)

Tommy

(Bus.)
Here's our certificate from Judge Walsh next door.

Dan

Catch me! I'll fall! A drop of something!

McSweeney

(With bottle he takes from pocket)
Here, Dan!
(Dan: drink bus. From bottle)

Bridget

Oh, Kitty, my child!
(Embracing Kitty)
Tommy! I've been waiting for this.

Kitty

Forgive me, Father.

Lochmuller

Sure!
(Bus.)
When a German marries an Irishwoman, his children are sure to go that way too.

Cordelia

Me blessings on the two of you.

Tommy

Come, Pop, kiss the bride.

Dan

I will, Tommy. A father's prayers go wid you.
(Embraces Kitty)

Tommy

Here, Pop.
(Money, bus)
Pay Goldstein for me thirty dollars. That leaves me seventy dollars for our wedding trip to Yonkers. Goodbye all. We'll be at your Silver Wedding, Pop.

Ensemble

Goodbye, Tommy! Good luck to you!

Dan

Hold on, Tommy. One dance before you go: a Virginia Reel.

(Ensemble form set. Wenches enter)

Wenches

Whar's de Skidmore Ball?

Ensemble (Mulligans)

Upstairs.

Wenches

Much obliged. Ha! Ha! Ha!
(Exit at back)

(Dance movement with Music of Virginia Reel. Dan and Cordelia forward, Lochmuller and Kitty forward. A crash as chandelier falls on Dan and Negro Dummies, Wenches and Soldiers fall through ceiling. Simpson, Puter and Four Negroes enter at back)

(A melee and...)

Curtain

Act Three

Hallway in Mulligan's house. Doors in flat L.H. Gussie enters door in flat R.H., cross L.H.

Cordelia enters with a pan and a turkey on it from R.1.E. covered with a napkin.

Cordelia

Good evening, Gussie.

Gussie

Good evening, Mrs. Mulligan.

Cordelia

I'll wager you can't tell what I've brought from the baker's over in the pan.

Gussie

It's a turkey.

Cordelia

It's a turkey. I won him at a raffle. I threw nineteen for him. He's ten pounds now, but he was fifteen pounds wid his feathers on. I weighed him in the rain. Will you carry it upstairs for me?

Gussie

Yes, ma'm.

Cordelia

That's a good little boy. Here.
(Bus. Of giving pan to Gussie)
Aisy wid him. Don't lave him fall.

Gussie

No, ma'm.
(Exit L.1.E. with turkey)

Cordelia

Gussie Lochmuller's a lovely child.
(Enter Lochmuller from door in flat R.H.)

Lochmuller

Good evening, Mrs. Mulligan.

Cordelia

Good evening, Mr. Lochmuller.

Lochmuller

How do you feel after the ball?

Cordelia

I'm allright, barring a black spot on my shoulder where a nagur fell on me from the ceiling.

Lochmuller

De Skidmore Guards were carried out on stretchers.

Cordelia

And Daniel's in bed all day from the thump he got from the fall of the chandelier.

Lochmuller

De chandelier was light – it couldn't hurt him when it lit.

Cordelia

He's allright for the wedding party tonight.

Lochmuller

I have my birthday party, you know.

Cordelia

Oh, yes. Where's Mrs. Lochmuller?

Lochmuller

She went up mit some friends to meet Katrina and Tommy dot's coming back from de wedding trip by Yonkers.

Cordelia

Of course they'll come up stairs.

Lochmuller

Sure.

Cordelia

I have a fine turkey.

(Gussie enters from L.1.E.)

Haven't I, Gussie?

Gussie

I fell down wid it, and de turkey went in de coal scuttle.

Cordelia

What!

Lochmuller

Turkey is nothing! We got haussen-pepper, red cabbage, roasted pig and kraut.
Germany laughs at turkey over de Rhine wine.

Cordelia

(Bus.)

How dare you drop that turkey! I've a notion to take the fur off your trousers.

Lochmuller

Dat is my boy, Mrs. Mulligan!

Cordelia

Yes, and a mischievous one.

Gussie

(Crying)

I couldn't help it.

Lochmuller

Don't cry, your fadder is here.

Cordelia

You take his part?

Lochmuller

Sure!

(Strutting up and down)

Cordelia

You're putting on a great many airs. Ye that have six chairs in the house, and two of them belong in the parlor.

Lochmuller

Mrs. Mulligan, don't add reputation to insult.

Cordelia

I didn't come here to insult you.

Lochmuller

Dis is my own floor here.

Cordelia

We own the house, and we have the floor above you.

Lochmuller

Yes, and sometimes like the niggers you fall through the ceiling.

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Gussie

(To Gussie)

Cordelia

What are ye laughing at?

Gussie

Dere was a fly tickling me.

Cordelia

Yes, and I'll get a strap to tickle you.

Lochmuller

Dat tickles me. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Cordelia

You laugh at him, when you should chastise him.

Lochmuller

If the cap don't fit, throw it away.

Cordelia

I'll make my husband come down to you!

Lochmuller

(Snapping fingers)

Dot for your husband! When Mr. Bimble and his Brass Band comes here.

Cordelia

You're brave behind his back.

Lochmuller

Sure, my sweet mother-in-law now.

Cordelia

What?

Lochmuller

I mean my Katrina's mudder-in-law. Und I am your Tommy's fadder-in-law, und dare is law enough by New York to give me my rights.

Cordelia

Are you throwing up the fifteen dollars?

I don't got it to throw up.

Lochmuller

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Gussie

Go by de door quick!
(Bus. of putting Gussie in door)
I got me my temper too!

Lochmuller

You can't crow me down.

Cordelia

I don't vas a rooster.

Lochmuller

No, you're a turkey gobbler. There's a rooster upstairs called Daniel Mulligan that'd make you scratch gravel.

Cordelia

Maybe. Dis is my floor.

Lochmuller

We own every nail in it, barrin' the mortgage.

Cordelia

I put a nail in de mortgage oof I don't get my fifteen dollars.

Lochmuller

Thank heaven I have it.
(Going in bag on neck)
Take it and lave us be rid of you.

Cordelia

I take it.
(Taking money)

Lochmuller

No pay me your rent. I have your receipt here.
(Bus. Of receipt that she takes from bag)

Cordelia

Give me de receipt.
(Hand out)

Lochmuller

Cordelia
Give me the money.
(Hand out)

Lochmuller
Dare.
(Giving back fifteen dollars, taking receipt)

Cordelia
And there's your receipt. Now get out.

Lochmuller
How could I get out, when I got de receipt for one month's rent in advance.
(Looking at receipt)

Cordelia
I'll have my husband put ye out.

Lochmuller
I go ven I get my fifteen dollars.

Cordelia
I paid you the fifteen.

Lochmuller
Sure, but I give it back by you.

Cordelia
That's my rent.

Lochmuller
Yah.
(Holding receipt)
Und I got de receipt.

Cordelia
I'll have you out.

Lochmuller
Ha! Ha! Ha!
(Laughing and snapping fingers at Cordelia)

Cordelia
I'll have you out, pudding butcher.

(Cordelia and Lochmuller shout “Ah” in each other’s face. Cordelia exits angrily, L.1.E.)

Lochmuller

(In anger)

Oh! Oof Bimble’s Band vas here, I would show Mister Mulligan and his friends dot we don’t take water. Oh, I tremble mit my mad! I go get a glass of Weiss Beer. Oh, dot my Katrina would make me a fadder-in-law by dem Irish people! Oh!

(Exit door in flat R.H.)

(Enter Primrose and Puter R.1.E. Puter carries a shirt in a bundle)

Simpson

I don’t know wedder Mulligan lives on dis floor or de next.

Puter

Since I fell through dat ceiling, I don’t like to climb high.

Simpson

Most of de Skidmore Guards am done up in plasters.

Puter

How did you escape?

Simpson

I don’t know. I was saved by Providence.

Puter

Yes, I’m here by de way of Fall River.

Simpson

I must get my badge I lost.

Puter

And I must get my shirt.

Simpson

You got Mulligan’s shirt in de bundle.

Puter

Yes, and I ‘spect he’s got mine.

Simpson

Yes, dat Irishwoman, Mrs. Dublin made a mistake in de washing.

Pputer

Confidentially, Captain, I had to go to dat ball in my undershirt, as I wouldn't wear an Irishman's shirt at any stage.

Simpson

No, and I must get my badge.

Puter

(Smelling bus.)
I smell sausages.

Simpson

(Smelling bus.)
No, it's pig's head.

Puter

Den it's an open question wedder it's Irish or Dutch lives here.

Simpson

Will you risk it?

Puter

(Looking off R.1.E.)
Well, dar's only one flight of stairs, and I'm insured. I'll risk it.

Simpson

We're on a dangerous mission.

Puter

Yes, and I'm a dangerous missionary.

Simpson

Secretion is de better part of valor.

Puter

Dat wisdom is wasted on de Irish.

Simpson

I'll knock.
(Bus. Of knocking at door)

Lochmuller

Come in.

Puter

Dat's Lochmuller!

Simpson

Yes, he was at de ball. He might have de badge.

Puter

He'll surrender.

Simpson

Oh, will he. I'm a badger puller. Dis way.

(Exit door in flat)

Puter

Yes, and I'll get a shirt or dey'll put me in de wash.

(Exit door in flat)

(Enter Jimmy Sullivan and Omnes with tin horns, kettles, bells, etc. from R.1.E.)

Jimmy

Go easy, go easy.

(Exit L.1.E.)

Change of Scene

Act Three
Scene 2

Same as scene first.

A long table L.H. with tablecloth, bottles of beer on table, plates, knives and forks, chairs about table, stove. Turkey in oven of stove. Bread cut up on table, smoked beef and a cake on table. The bureau and mirror of Act One C. The door R.H. back flat. Violin on shelf at back. Candle in candlestick burning on bureau. A lamp neatly trimmed, lighted on table L.H. Apples in a pan on table. Gussie Lochmuller enters quickly.

Gussie

De Mulligans are all hid in de hallway, ready to give Tommy a serenade. Fadder wouldn't leave me go to de ball last night, but I'll get even when Bimble's Band comes here for de birthday party tonight. I'll send 'em all upstairs to Mulligan's.

(Bus. looking at apples on pan on stove)

Oh, apples! I'll cook 'em.

(Gets pepper caster from table L.H.)

Cayenne pepper.

(Takes knife from table, cuts two apples and places pepper in apples. Sees boots)

His boots. I'll tack 'em.

(Puts tacks in boots)

I'll bake 'em.

(Bus. Puts boots in oven)

When Mulligan sees his boots, he'll chase himself.

(Bus. Sees violin on mantle)

His fiddle. I'll grease it.

(Takes one of the lighted candles on bureau, blows it out, then greases violin bow)

Voice of Mulligan

(Off R.H. door)

Cordelia!

Gussie

(Cross to Mulligan's door)

Dat's Mulligan.

(Cross to C.)

He ain't been out of bed since de ball.

Dan

(Off R.H.)

Cordelia!

Gussie

By-Jim-a-neddy's.

Dan

(Off)
Cordelia!

Cordelia

(Enters from L.H.)
I'm coming!
(Sees Gussie)
Well!

Gussie

(Assumes a serious face)
Me fadder sent me up to tell you dat I was sorry for de turkey.

Cordelia

Get out, bad luck to you.
(Bus. Of running after Gussie)
(Gussie exit door in flat R.H. at back. Enter Dan Mulligan in stocking feet, wearing vest)

Dan

Get me boots.
(Sitting in rocker R.H.)
Ah!

Cordelia

(Bus. Finds boots in oven)
Here they are.
(Giving boots to Dan)

Dan

(Putting on boots)
Hurry up. The neighbors will be here. Why did you lave me oversleep myself?

Cordelia

I didn't think.

Dan

(Bus.)
Take it off! Take it off!
(Bus. Holding foot up)

Cordelia

(Taking boots off)
What's the matter?

Take it out!
(Cordelia: bus. Takes out tacks)

Dan

What is it?

Dan

Tacks.

Cordelia

Where did you find my boots?

Dan

In the oven of the stove beyant.

Cordelia

That accounts for the leather I ate in my pie yesterday.
(Bus.)
Get me slippers.

Dan

I will.
(Exit room R.H.)

Cordelia

Hurry up! Hurry up!
(Enter Cordelia with Dan's slippers)
(Putting on slippers)
Who put my boots in the oven?

Dan

Lochmuller's boy.

Cordelia

He's the devil, that fellow. I came home late last night and he put a rope across the hallway. And when I went in the dark hallway, I went up against the rope with my throat. And there was a man coming downstairs at the same time, and he went against the rope and we both fought for fifteen minutes.

Dan

Oh dear, dear. Yes, and he put a hat down in the yard wid a brick in it, and I kicked it and knocked my ingrowing nail into me tow.

Cordelia

He'll never be governor.

Dan

Cordelia
Oh, Daniel, to think our Tommy's married to a Lochmuller.

Dan
It was love, and you can't help it.

Cordelia
I must tell you!
(Crying)

Dan
What?

Cordelia
I've been insulted.

Dan
Where?

Cordelia
Down stairs in the hallway, by Lochmuller, a Hessian trooper.
(Dan starts for door after rolling up sleeves. Cordelia goes after him)
Daniel! Daniel, don't make trouble the night of our Silver Wedding.

Dan
Well, I'll lick him when the night's over. But—
(Raising hand)

Cordelia
Daniel, don't. Lave it go, lave it go!

Dan
For your sake, Cordelia.

Cordelia
I have everything ready for the supper to our friends.

Dan
Have you the turkey?

Cordelia
Yes, beyant.
(Pointing L.H.)
But Lochmuller's boy let it fall in the coal scuttle.

Dan
What!
(Bus. Of attempt to go to door)

Cordelia
Don't Daniel, lave it go. The turkey's all right!

Dan
For your sake, Cordelia. Is the lining in the turkey?

Cordelia
Yes.

Dan
Bring me my coat.

Cordelia
I will, Daniel.
(Exit L.H.)

Dan
(Tapping stage with hand)
Lochmuller downstairs, we'll come together yet.
(Enter Bridget Lochmuller from door in flat)

Bridget
(Jumping up and down)
Oh, they're coming! They're coming!

Dan
Don't be silly!

Bridget
They're coming, they're coming!

Dan
(Jumping up and down)
What are you leaping for?

Bridget
They're coming!

Dan
Who?

Bridget

Tommy and Kitty.

Dan

Where are they?

Bridget

At Maggie Kearney's house. And they'll be here by and by. And I've brought you the news.

Dan

Well, may they live happy together.

Bridget

Amen.

(Looking about)

You're celebrating your twenty-fifth anniversary of your marriage tonight!

Dan

I am.

Bridget

And I'm celebrating Gustavus's forty years.

Dan

Forty years of married life?

Bridget

You're very complimentary. Lochmuller's forty today.

Dan

(Aside)

We're equally matched.

Bridget

Your collar is loose.

Dan

Would you arrange it, while the old woman is out?

Bridget

Yes.

(Bus. Fixes Dan's collar as Cordelia enters with Dan's coat and a picture of Bridget in her hand)

(Cordelia screams L.H.)

Bridget and Dan

What!

(Running to Cordelia)

Cordelia

Stand away, false man! And you, false woman!

Dan and Bridget

What!

Cordelia

(To Bridget)

You're very pleasing to my husband, ain't you?

Bridget and Dan

What?

(Enter Primrose and Puter at back, stand at door. Puter with bundle)

Cordelia

You can fix his collar better than Cordelia.

Bridget

The collar was off the button.

Cordelia

Maybe you could put a button on your picture that I found in his coat pocket. Oh, Daniel, Daniel!

(Showing picture of first Act)

Dan

I never had a picture, only the one on the Mulligan Guard target.

Simpson

I can explain dat picture.

Dan, Bridget, Cordelia

You?

Simpson

Yes, ma'm. Mr. Lochmuller showed it to me in de barber shop, and I accidentally put it in Mr. Mulligan's pocket.

Cordelia

(Throwing picture on floor)

Oh, Daniel, forgive me!

Dan

Oh, Cordelia!
(Bus. Of embracing)

Simpson
There's nuffin like domestic happiness.

Puter
It won't last long.

Bridget
Excuse me for intruding.

Dan
(Who has taken picture, give it to Bridget)
Take your face.

Bridget
I've a party of my own downstairs, and I can go to it. I'm no flirt!
(Exit quickly and dignified, door at back)

Dan
(Kicks leg at Bridget)
Scat! Scat! I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Primrose.

Simpson
Not at all, Mister Mulligan.

Dan
You saved me from a devorse.

Simpson
I lost my badge at de ball and I come to see if you had it.

Dan
A gould badge?

Simpson
Yes, sir.

Dan
I found it, and I'll give it to you tonight.

Simpson
Thank you.

Cordelia

Wouldn't Mister Primrose and Mister Puter stop at the party and help out on the table?

Puter

I'm a caterer.

Simpson

Dat was my business once.

Puter

If you want us as waiters, our terms are one dollar a night.

Simpson

Dat's society prices.

Dan

I'll pay society prices if you stop here and help us to carry the people to bed.

Puter

Yes, but before going to work, I want to say, Mr. Mulligan, dat I got a shirt of yours here in dis bundle, and I guess you got mine.

Dan and Cordelia

Eh?

Simpson

Got mixed up in de washing by Mrs. Dublin.

Dan

Did I wear a black man's shirt?

Cordelia

Yes.

Dan

There's a full moon on this.

Simpson and Puter

Yes.

Dan

(Cross R.H.)

I'll take off your shirt and put on my shirt and then I'll throw your shirt out.

(Exit door R.H.)

Simpson

Nice man.

Puter

None better.

Cordelia

Now ye'll stand by the table.

Simpson

Have you any aprons dat you could loan us to wait on table in?

Cordelia

Yes, come wid me, and I'll fix you out.

Puter and Simpson

Thank you.

(Exit R.H.)

(Enter McSweeny with coat on arm and vest, shirt, trousers, all in shreds)

Mac

The police won't find me here. I licked that reporter for writing about the Mulligan Guards stealing an iron shutter, but I don't want to win any more fights like that.

Dan

(Throws shirt over transom L.H.)

There's your shirt.

Mac

That's Dan. He sees I have no shirt, and he throws me one.

(Exit R.1.E. with shirt)

(Enter Girls and Tommy Mulligan and characters quaintly dressed. Dan enters from R.H. Cordelia with Simpson and Puter from L.H. Simpson and Puter wearing coats and aprons over coats. Waiters have turkey)

(A picture)

Tommy

Mother!

(Embracing Cordelia)

Kitty

Mrs. Mulligan.

(Embracing Cordelia)

Ensemble

Ah!

(In delight)

Dan

Welcome, Tommy, Kitt.
(Kitty crosses to Dan)
Welcome Gra gal Machree.
(Embraces Kitty)

Tommy

(Crosses to Dan)
Pop, our wedding trip's over.

Dan

Yes, and your Mother fitted out your room there beyant.
(Pointing R.H.1.E. Sits in rocker)

Omnes

(Off stage)
One for Tommy Mulligan!
(Noise of bells and horns, etc.)

Ensemble

What's that?

Tommy

The lads' giving me a shiverree.

Cordelia

I hate to tell it, Kitty, but your father grossly insulted me in the hallway downstairs this evening.

Ensemble

Lochmuller!

Cordelia

Yis.

Dan

(Rising)
Kitty, your father is my father-in-law, but we'll come together yet. And if any of his friends come here tonight, I'll say Turk. They boys stand by me.

Ensemble

Sure!

Puter and Simpson

Supper's ready!

Ensemble

Ah!

(All going to table. Dan at head. Cordelia at end. Tommy and Kitty and Omnes all sit at table)

(As Dutch musician (Bimble) enters door in flat R.H. at back, goes down R.H. corner)

Musician

(In uniform)

Hist!

Dan and Omnes

(going down)

Eh?

(Women remain at table)

Musician

Does Mr. Lochmuller live here?

Dan

Lochmuller?

Musician

Yah, Gustavus Lochmuller.

Dan

Are you a friend of Lochmuller's?

Musician

A particular friend.

Dan

Turk!

(Bus. of throwing musician out)

Omnes

Oh, fire him! Out with him!

(Bus. Throws musician out. Dan strikes at McSweeny. Bus. Coming down front, recognizes McSweeny. Shakes hands with McSweeny)

Dan

Hello, Mac. Have an onion.

Mac

I don't like fruit.

(Mrs. Dublin enters door in flat)

Good evening, all. Honora

Good evening, Mrs. Dublin. Ensemble

(To Mrs. Dublin)
Come up and have a kettle of soup. Dan

No, thank you. I'll take the bite of an apple. Honora
(Taking apple from pan on stove, bites apple and takes contortions of face as if she is burning up. Shouting)
Fire! Murder! Water! Water!
(Going R.H. side)

(Men going down to Mrs. Dublin) Ensemble
What's the matter?

I've a volcano in my throat. Honora

What is it? Omnes

Some divil of a joker put cayenne pepper in those apples! Honora

It's Lochmuller's boy. Cordelia

'Twill do you good. Dan

How? Honora

'Twill stop your gossiping tongue from scandalizing your neighbors. Dan

Who did I ever scandalize? Honora

Dan
You scandalize that dacent man.
(Kicking Mac who is behind Mrs. Dublin)

Honora
How?

Dan
You said he couldn't drink.

Honora
I never did.

Dan
And you can carry your load.
(Going to table)

Mac
Sit down, Honora.
(Honora sits in rocker)

Tommy
Pop, that musician is a friend of my father-in-law.

Dan
I'll be sorry tomorrow. Pass your plates.
(Bus. Passing plates. Simpson takes plates nervously and passes them to Dan who is at the head of table)

Dan
Cordelia, would you like a bit of the breast?

Cordelia
Yes.

Tommy
Pop, I'll take a leg.

Dan
And Kitty will take the other leg.
(Sings)
Leg a geg geg, let go o' me leg?

Omnes
Or I'd pucker you wid me horns, oh!

Dan
To Tommy Mulligan and his bride!

Tommy
(Rising)
Drink standing.

Omnes
Drink standing.
(Enter Bimble with fiddle box. Bimble comes down L.H. with fiddle box. Hat on. Mulligan walks down with a boot that he picks up at back. Omnes of men leave table and walk down towards Bimble. Negroes pile stools and chairs in front of door at back R.H. Mulligan strikes Bimble in stomach with boot. Bimble exit over stools. Enter Lochmuller, Band and Mrs. Lochmuller)

Lochmuller
Here! Here! You have insulted my band, Mr. Mulligan!

Dan
I can insult you!

Omnes
Hold on!
(Enter Push door R.H. at back)

Omnes
The reporter!

Push
(Takes off coat)
Yes, the reporter! And I'm looking for McSweeny!
(Lochmuller's boy enters, puts candle in Push's pocket and exits)

Mac
That' me, you owe me for a round of drinks.

Push
You assaulted me! And I demand satisfaction.

Dan
Hold on, Mac.

Cordelia
(Coming C.)
Stop it, Daniel, on the night of our Silver Wedding! Take the fiddle and play something.

Dan

The press is welcome.

(Cross to Lochmuller)

There's my hand. I'll lick him after supper.

(Omnes form set. Mulligan attempts to play)

Dan

(Sees candle in Push's pocket)

That man's greased my fiddle!

Lochmuller

Out mit him!

(Puts Push out)

Cordelia

Dan, if we can't dance, we can sing.

Dan

We'll go out on the front stoop.

(Song: "Our Front Stoop")

I'M THE FATHER OF A FAMILY SIX GIRLS AND ONE BIG BOY,
WITH THE NEIGHBORS THEY ARE FRIENDLY,
THEY ARE THEIR MOTHER'S JOY;
IT'S EV'RY SUMMER'S EVENING
WHEN THE HEAT WOULD MAKE YOU DROOP
OLD FRIENDS WOULD MEET FROM EVERY STREET
TO TALK ON OUR FRONT STOOP.

Chorus

TRA LA LA, TRA LA LA LA, TRA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA,
TRA LA LA, LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA.

THERE IS DAINTY MISSUS GROGAN AND ALEX MCAFEE,
WITH THE UNDERTAKER HOGAN, THE PRIDE OF CALVARY,
OH! YOU SHOULD HEAR THE WARBLERS,
THEY'D BURST AN OPERA TROUPE,
"SWEET BY AND BY" WOULD MAKE ONE DIE
AS SUNG ON OUR FRONT STOOP.

Chorus

THEY TALK ABOUT THE MURPHYS AND SAY THEY PUT ON STYLE,
AND HOW THEIR DAUGHTER MARY WENT DOWN TO CONEY ISLE,
IT'S EV'RY SUMMER'S EVENING
WHEN THE HEAT WOULD MAKE YOU DROOP

OLD FRIENDS WOULD MEET FROM EVERY STREET
TO TALK ON OUR FRONT STOOP.

Chorus

YOU WOULD HAVE TO RUN THE GAUNTLET IF YOU WERE WALKING BY,
THEY'D HAVE YOUR FAM'LY HIST'RY IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE;
OH! YOU SHOULD HEAR THE WARBLERS,
THEY'D BURST AN OPERA TROUPE,
"SWEET BY AND BY" WOULD MAKE ONE DIE
AS SUNG ON OUR FRONT STOOP.

(Dance and Curtain)

The End

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