

**LONDON ASSURANCE:
A COMEDY IN FIVE
ACTS, 1889**

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London Assurance: A Comedy in Five Acts, 1889 by Dion L. Boucicault

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A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

DION L. BOUCICAULT

NEW AMERICAN EDITION, CORRECTLY REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL AUTHORIZED ACTING EDITION, WITH THE ORIGINAL CASTS OF THE CHARACTERS, SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS, TIME OF REPRESENTATION, DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES, SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOTS, DIAGRAMS OF THE STAGE SETTINGS, SIDES OF ENTRANCE AND EXIT, RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS, EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS, ETC., AND ALL OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

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LONDON ASSURANCE.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Covent Garden, London, March 4, 1847.</i>	<i>Park Theatre, New York, Oct. 11, 1847.</i>
SIR HARCOURT COURTLY.....	Mr. W. Farren.	Mr. Placide.
CHARLES COURTLY.....	Mr. Anderson.	Mr. Wheatley.
DAZZLE.....	Mr. Chas. Matthews.	Mr. Browne.
MAX HARKAWAY.....	Mr. Bartley.	Mr. Fisher.
DOLLY SPANKER.....	Mr. Keeley.	Mr. W. H. Williams
MARK MEDDLE.....	Mr. Harley.	Mr. Latham.
COOL.....	Mr. Brindal.	Mr. A. Andrews.
SOLOMON ISAACS.....	Mr. W. H. Payne.	
MARTIN.....	Mr. Ayliffe.	Mr. Howard.
JAMES SIMPSON (<i>butler</i>).....	Mr. Honner.	Mr. King.
LADY GAY SPANKER.....	Mrs. Nisbett.	Miss Charlotte Cushman.
GRACE HARKAWAY.....	Madame Vestris.	Miss Clarendon.
PERT.....	Mrs. Humby.	Mrs. Vernon.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—TWO HOURS AND FORTY-FIVE MINUTES.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

SIR HARCOURT COURTLY, a superannuated old lady-killer, is about to present society with a second Lady Courtly, in the person of GRACE HARKAWAY, a girl of eighteen and niece of his old friend MAX HARKAWAY, a bluff and honest country squire living at Oak Hall, Gloucestershire. SIR HARCOURT'S previous follies and extravagances had been supplied with large sums of money, on mortgages, by GRACE'S father whose estates were contiguous to SIR HARCOURT'S, with the design ultimately of uniting the two properties. He had died some years before, leaving his daughter to the care of MAX, with the provision that if, on attaining the age of nineteen, she married SIR HARCOURT, the latter should receive back both mortgages and property as her dowry; otherwise, on her refusal to consent, both should revert to SIR HARCOURT'S heir. CHARLES COURTLY, though regarded by his father as a perfect

child in heart is, in fact, a roystering young prodigal whose peccadilloes are artfully concealed from SIR HARCOURT by COOL, the latter's valet and the most accomplished liar in London. While COOL is keeping watch for CHARLES early one morning, the latter comes in noisily, accompanied by MR. DAZZLE, a leading example of London assurance, the two having met the night before. COOL contrives to get both out of the way before SIR HARCOURT'S appearance, and while accounting for CHARLES' absence in the usual way, is interrupted by the entrance of MAX HARKAWAY who greets SIR HARCOURT heartily. After hearing an account of the latter's experience since they last had met, and inquiring for CHARLES, he is left alone while SIR HARCOURT retires to prepare his toilet. DAZZLE then enters, announces himself as a friend of the family, and, on the strength of that, is invited down to Oak Hall. CHARLES now reappears, sobered up, and coldly tries to dismiss DAZZLE, but, in turn, is invited by the latter to accompany him on a visit to his old friend's estate down in Gloucestershire,—an invitation gladly accepted by CHARLES, who is thus enabled to evade MR. SOLOMON ISAACS, an impatient creditor waiting in the hall below.

Down at Oak Hall, GRACE HARKAWAY, cynically awaiting the arrival of her uncle and her future husband, prepares for matrimony as she would for dinner. DAZZLE, of whose visit, also, she has been apprised, arrives with CHARLES whom he introduces as "Augustus Hamilton"; in the course of the conversation, the latter learns that his hostess is to be married the following week, to an old man about whom she knows little and cares less. MAX and SIR HARCOURT are then announced. DAZZLE greets MAX heartily, is introduced to SIR HARCOURT, and, in turn, presents his friend "Augustus Hamilton," who is staggered at meeting SIR HARCOURT, the latter not having revealed his approaching marriage to his son. But CHARLES stoutly denies his identity, and is loyally supported by COOL, who declares that he had never seen "Mr. Hamilton" before. GRACE, however, being a silent witness to this encounter, at once suspects the truth.

The entire party while awaiting dinner, is surprised by the entrance of LADY GAY SPANKER, a lively lady of sporting proclivities, who makes an instant impression on SIR HARCOURT. She is accompanied by her husband, DOLLY SPANKER, good-natured but stupid, and announces their intention of remaining a few days. Meanwhile CHARLES learns that SIR HARCOURT has sent to town for him and expects his arrival on the following day. This necessitates "Augustus Hamilton's" retirement, but suggests to DAZZLE a scheme by which, with LADY GAY'S aid, he hopes to circumvent SIR HARCOURT'S marriage in favor of that of his son who has become enamored of GRACE. DAZZLE opens the campaign by requesting SIR HARCOURT, as a man of honor, to shun studiously the society of LADY GAY who has been struck with his address. This, of course, inflames the old fellow's vanity, and he looks for a glorious conquest, at the same time taking a sudden fancy to DAZZLE who accounts for his former presence in the baronet's London house, by saying that he had gone there to present an acceptance given by CHARLES; and further, whenever SIR HARCOURT has the money convenient, DAZZLE will feel delighted. As SIR HARCOURT withdraws to procure the necessary funds, DAZZLE calls CHARLES to sign this bill, dating it back, as well as a few others for future contingences, and de-

parts after SIR HARCOURT. GRACE now shudders at the contemplation of her union with the baronet; and in an interview in which CHARLES betrays himself, she exclaims emphatically that she will never marry SIR HARCOURT. CHARLES then declares himself, but his avowal is interrupted by the entrance of LADY GAY; he throws himself upon her generosity and invokes her aid in outwitting SIR HARCOURT by drawing the latter after her and away from GRACE. LADY GAY readily consents to lend her aid, and immediately commences operations upon SIR HARCOURT with the keenest delight.

"Augustus Hamilton" now quits Oak Hall in a desperate hurry, leaving for GRACE a note of farewell in which he supplicates pardon and oblivion for the past. While she is discussing the departed "Augustus" with LADY GAY, the gentlemen return from the dining-room. DOLLY SPANKER, a little the worse for wine, having been incited to harshness by SIR HARCOURT, so that the latter's suit may thrive, boldly asserts his marital authority, to the unconcealed delight of LADY GAY who dearly loves him. MR. CHARLES COURTLY is now announced, and enters with his manner totally changed to that of an awkward pedant. He is presented to GRACE as her future stepson, is instantaneously recognized by her and commanded by SIR HARCOURT to remain and amuse her while the others retire for a dance. Determined to prove her affection for him, CHARLES proceeds to recount the death of "Augustus Hamilton," but is perplexed by her cheerful reception of the news. LADY GAY, meanwhile, has led SIR HARCOURT on as fast as he could desire, and finally brings him to the point of proposing an elopement, to which she affects to consent, in the hearing of MEDDLE who is concealed in the room. She then reveals SIR HARCOURT's arrangements to CHARLES who agrees to "bend the haughty GRACE" by persuading her to elope with him in SIR HARCOURT's carriage, just in time to prevent the latter's escape with LADY GAY.

SIR HARCOURT, having equipped himself for the elopement, while trying to hurry LADY GAY, who makes some pretended objections about leaving a pet dog behind, is nonplussed by the entrance of the whole party headed by MEDDLE who had overheard SIR HARCOURT's proposals and smells profitable litigation. DOLLY SPANKER, being properly worked up, writes a challenge to SIR HARCOURT, at the dictation of LADY GAY, who does not believe that SIR HARCOURT will fight; the letter is entrusted to DAZZLE who suggests that the affair come off in the billiard room, forthwith. But to LADY GAY's surprise, SIR HARCOURT accepts the challenge, and she rushes to MAX HARKAWAY with the intelligence that the baronet is about to blow her DOLLY's brains out. MAX, however, promptly suppresses hostilities. SIR HARCOURT, apologizing for his conduct, waives all claim to GRACE's person and property; but the latter, incensed at CHARLES' boastfulness, tells SIR HARCOURT that while he was being duped by LADY GAY, she had been played upon by LADY GAY and "Mr. Hamilton"; she begs, therefore, that the contract between them may still, to all appearances, hold good—to which request SIR HARCOURT yields his consent. After confessing to CHARLES that she did love poor "Augustus Hamilton," he finds himself in the dilemma of either being ruined by his father's discovery of who "Augustus" is, or suppressing the truth and seeing GRACE marry SIR HARCOURT. But the catastrophe is precipitated by the entrance of SOLOMON ISAACS with several writs against CHARLES, and his disclosure to SIR HARCOURT that the latter's

son and "Augustus" are one and the same person—and a quite different sort of person from what SIR HARCOURT had fondly supposed. GRACE now offers to pay CHARLES' debts; DOLLY and LADY GAY SPANKER are completely reconciled; and SIR HARCOURT, finding that he has been fairly beaten, and being reminded that if GRACE marries any one but himself her property reverts to CHARLES, makes a virtue of necessity and gives the young couple his hand and his blessing.

COSTUMES.

N. B. *While it seems important, for a wholly correct representation, that the characters should be dressed thoroughly in accordance with the language, manners and costumes of the time when this play was written (1840), yet for the convenience of such companies as may prefer modern costumes, suitable dresses of the present day are specified as well. The following costume plots have been prepared expressly for this EDITION of "London Assurance" by THE EAVES COSTUME COMPANY, No. 63 East 12th Street, New York, from whom all costumes can be hired at reasonable charges,*

ORIGINAL—1840.

SIR HARCOURT COURTLY.—*Act I.*: Handsome brocade dressing gown; light waistcoat; ruffled shirt-front; collar and stock; embroidered smoking cap; écaré gaiter-pantaloons; jet black curly hair or wig and black mutton-chop whiskers. *Act II.*: Black frock-coat; white satin waistcoat; lavender gaiter-pantaloons; stock and collar; colored gloves, also white gloves; travelling cloak and low hat. *Acts III. and IV.*: Blue dress coat and pantaloons; white waistcoat; collar and black stock; fob and chain. *Act V.*: Same as act II.

MAX HARKAWAY.—*Acts I. and II.*: Wide skirted dark brown or green sporting coat with metal buttons; buff waistcoat; drab breeches, and gaiters; ruffled shirt-front; wide brimmed, low crowned white beaver hat; collar and colored neckerchief; colored silk handkerchief; carries a heavy walking-stick; iron gray wig, rather bushy and curling. *Acts III., VI. and V.*: Blue dress coat; white waistcoat; snuff-colored pantaloons; white cravat; low cut shoes; fob chain.

DAZZLE.—*Acts I. and II.*: Dark green coat; silk waistcoat; buff or drab gaiter-pantaloons; bell-crowned beaver hat; ruffled shirt-front; collar and tie. *Acts III., IV. and V.*: Brown dress coat with brass buttons; satin waistcoat, pearl-colored pantaloons; fob chain; curly wig.

CHARLES COURTLY.—*Acts I. and II.*: Blue coat; light waistcoat and gaiter-pantaloons; bell-crowned beaver hat; ruffled shirt-front; travelling cloak; curly hair. *Act III.*: Brown dress coat; satin waistcoat; light gaiter-pantaloons; fob chain. *Acts IV. and V.*: Frock coat of the time, dark in color; dark waistcoat and pantaloons; his whole appearance subdued; hair parted in the middle and plastered down straight and flat on the sides; spectacles.

DOLLY SPANKER.—*Act III.*: 1st dress. Scarlet riding coat; buff waistcoat and breeches; riding boots, hat and whip; blonde curling hair, parted in the centre. 2nd dress. Similar to Dazzle's dress in act III. *Acts IV. and V.*: The same as last.

COOL.—*Act I.*: Brown dress coat; white waistcoat; dark pantaloons; white cravat. *Acts II. to V.*: Black frock coat; light waistcoat; dark pantaloons; black hat.

MEDDLE.—Full skirted frock coat, dark in color, with high collar and very tight sleeves; figured waistcoat; black pantaloons; white gaiters; bell-crowned beaver hat, light in color and with green under brim; high stock and collar; fob chain; sandy hair and short whiskers; he carries a green umbrella.

MARTIN.—Handsome livery coat, waistcoat and breeches; buckles, low shoes and white stockings; powdered hair; white cravat.

JAMES.—Neat livery coat, waistcoat and breeches; buckles, low shoes and white stockings; white cravat.

SOLOMON ISAACS.—Short-waisted, long-skirted coat of quaint color, with tight sleeves; very loud double-breasted waistcoat; tight-fitting white pantaloons; yellow gaiters; exaggerated fob chain; white bell-crowned beaver hat; black curly hair and whiskers.

LADY GAY SPANKER.—*Act III.*: 1st dress. Handsome riding habit; Gainsborough hat; gauntlets; riding whip. 2nd dress. Handsome dinner dress. *Acts IV. and V.*: Same as 2nd dress in act III. with cloak and veil.

GRACE HARKAWAY.—*Act II.*: Morning dress. *Acts III., IV. and V.*: Dinner gown.

PERT.—Neat cambric dress; cap and apron; white collar and cuffs; no jewelry.

MODERN—1889.

SIR HARCOURT.—*Act I.*: Handsome dressing jacket; embroidered smoking cap; light trousers and waistcoat; black hair and side whiskers. *Act II.*: Black frock coat; light waistcoat; dark trousers; light overcoat; silk hat; gloves. *Acts III. and IV.*: Modern evening suit. *Act V.*: Same as act II.

MAX.—*Acts I. and II.*: Full skirted frock coat of a subdued color; figured waistcoat; drab breeches and gaiters; stock and collar; fob chain; walking stick, white tall hat; colored silk handkerchief; iron gray hair. *Acts III., IV. and V.*: Black dress suit.

DAZZLE.—*Acts I. and II.*: Stylish walking suit; light overcoat; silk hat. *Acts III., IV. and V.*: Black evening suit.

CHARLES. *Acts I. and II.*: Stylish modern suit; light overcoat; derby hat. *Act III.*: Black dress suit. *Acts IV. and V.*: Black frock coat, waistcoat and trousers; hair parted in the middle and worn flat; spectacles.

DOLLY.—*Act III.*: 1st dress. Riding coat; fancy striped waistcoat; buff breeches; riding boots; silk hat; blonde hair. 2nd dress. Black evening suit. *Acts IV. and V.* The same.

COOL.—*Act I.*: Every day morning suit, sack-coat. *Acts II. to V.*: Black frock coat, waistcoat, trousers and hat.

MEDDLE.—Black tight-fitting character coat, waistcoat and trousers; character hat; stock and collar; green umbrella.

MARTIN.—Livery coat; striped waistcoat; dark trousers; white neck-cloth.

JAMES.—Livery coat, waistcoat and trousers; white neckcloth.

SOLOMON ISAACS.—Highly exaggerated and loud costume of a Hebrew money-lender.

LADY GAY.—*Act III.*: 1st dress. Handsome riding habit, silk hat, veil, gauntlets and whip. 2nd dress. Handsome dinner gown. *Acts IV. and V.*: Same as 2nd dress in act III., with cloak and silk scarf to throw over her head.

GRACE.—*Act II.*: Tasteful morning dress. *Acts III., IV. and V.*: Dinner dress.

PERT.—Maid's costume.

PROPERTIES.

ACT I.—Furniture as per scene-plot. Bell off stage. Assortment of bell-pulls, door-knockers, etc., and visiting card for CHARLES COURTLY. Pencil for DAZZLE.

ACT II.—Flowers for GRACE. Newspaper and memorandum for MEDDLE. White gloves and handkerchief for COOL. Eye-glass for SIR HARCOURT.

ACT III.—Furniture as per scene-plot. Chess board and chessmen. Letter for COOL. Pocket-book, containing documents, for DAZZLE. Writing materials. Bell off stage.

ACT IV.—Coffee in small cups on tray. Sealed letter on salver. Book for CHARLES. Smelling bottle for SIR HARCOURT. Note-book and pencil for MEDDLE.

ACT V.—Travelling equipment and memoranda for SIR HARCOURT. Subpoena documents and coins for MEDDLE. Notes for SPANKER. Writing materials.

STAGE SETTINGS.

ACT I.

