

SCENE TWO

Tenement section, Tottenham Court Road. A shabby back alley filled with atmosphere for everyone but those who live there. There is a small public house on one side of the stage, a converted mews on the other and, rising in the end of the street that divides the two, the misty outline of St Paul's Cathedral [Chris Wren's, not the Covent Garden St Paul's].

Time: Later that evening.

There is a commotion at the pub. GEORGE, the bartender, is discovered forcibly evicting two disorderly members of the lowest possible class, by name HARRY and JAMIE. GEORGE now directs his remarks into the bar.

BARTENDER: I ain't runnin' no charity bazaar. Drinks is to be paid for or not drunk. Come on, Doolittle. Out you go. Hop it now, Doolittle. On the double. On the double.

[ALFRED DOOLITTLE emerges. He is an elderly but vigorous dustman, clad in the costume of his profession, including a hat with a black brim covering his neck and shoulders. He has well-marked and rather interesting features, and seems equally free from fear and conscience. He has a remarkably expressive voice, the result of a habit of giving vent to his feelings without reserve. His present pose is that of wounded honour and casual disdain.]

DOOLITTLE: Thanks for your hospitality, George. Send the bill to Buckingham Palace. *[The BARTENDER exits into pub as DOOLITTLE joins his associates]* Hyde Park to walk through on a fine spring night; the whole ruddy city of London to roam about in sellin' her bloomin' flowers. I give her all that, and then I disappears and leaves her on her own to enjoy it. Now if that ain't worth half a crown now and again, I'll take off my belt and give her what for.