

CAPTAIN SMITH.

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

E. BERRIE,

(MEMBER OF THE DRAMATIC AUTHORS' SOCIETY)

AUTHOR OF

"*Little Fibs*," &c.

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CAPTAIN SMITH.

First performed at the Charing Cross Theatre, under the management of Miss Fowler, on Monday, the 4th April 1870.

Characters.

SIR CHARLES CHATTERTON	...	Mr. TEMPLE.
CAPTAIN SMITH	...	Mr. HERBERT.
FIDO	...	Mr. F. ROBSON.
MRS. CLAPPERCLAW	...	Miss MAXE.
MISS STELLA SMITH	...	Miss COLEMAN.
ARABELLA	...	Miss MINIE.
DOLLY	...	Miss L. FOSBROOKE.

TIME.—*Present.*

SCENE.—Drawing Room at Mrs. Clapperclaw's.

Costumes.

SIR CHARLES CHATTERTON.—Plain morning suit.

CAPTAIN SMITH.—Plain morning suit.

FIDO.—Fat boy. Dark green trowsers, with gold stripes, scarlet vest, dark green coat, gilt buttons, gold lace collar, cuffs ; apron in first scene.

MRS. CLAPPERCLAW.—Black silk dress, shawl, spectacles, stiff curls, large cap and mittens.

STELLA SMITH.—Neat grey dress.

DOLLY.—Cotton dress, white apron, and cap.

ARABELLA.—Black dress (too short), pinafore, thick boots, long straight hair.

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CAPTAIN SMITH.

SCENE.—*Drawing Room in Mrs. Clapperclaw's Academy; high, stiff, formal furniture; door, R. C.; two windows in flat, L. C.; high wire blinds to windows; dingy brown curtains; dingy paper on walls; crayon heads and landscapes on walls; two side tables; round table, c.; black horsehair chairs and sofa, placed methodically round the room; piano and piano stool, and music on piano, L. 2 E.; fire-place, R. 2 E.*

DOLLY discovered sweeping.

DOLLY. Who would be housemaid in an academy! 'Tis work, work, work, from morning till night. Here it's getting on for twelve o'clock, and the front parlour ain't done yet. All in dish-a-billy, as missis says, when she hasn't fixed her curls on. And, what's worse, there ain't no perquisites now, as there used to was, before missis found a billy-doo in a apple I was a-carrying to one of the young ladies. My! wasn't there a row! I nearly lost my place that time, I did. Since then she's stopped up the windows, and had those 'ere blinds put up. But, law! they manage to deceive her, for all that. I believe a school-girl would deceive the old gentleman hisself! And they calls them hinnocent! I know what their hinnocence is like. (*dusting chairs*) Did any one ever see such chairs in all their born lives? Pins and needles! I shall never forget when little Miss Brown first came here. She wore short frocks then—*very* short, and when she was put on one of these, didn't she set up a howl—that's all! Not all the jams in missus's cupboard could stop her either. She never sat on one again—she didn't. But where is Fido? Why can't he come and help me? He gets lazier and lazier every day. His infections seem to be froze up, like the pump. Oh! here he is at last.

Enter FIDO, lazily polishing a shoe, R. C.; fat to excess.

DOLLY. So, you've come, have you? I hope you haven't hurried yourself.

FIDO. Hurried myself? No; I should rather think not. When a young man has reached my proportions, it ain't no

good hurrying himself. The very thought of hurry makes me ill.

DOLLY. La! Fido. Why?

FIDO. Why? Ha! Dolly; I've a silent sorrow here. (*knocks the blacking-brush on his chest*) Underneath this pink and white exterior I've got such an amount of haccumulated hagony, that my only wonder is, it doesn't blow off all my buttons, and reveal itself to the eyes of the astonished Clap-perclaw.

DOLLY. Oh, my!

FIDO. Dorothea, I've let concealment, like a worm in the tub, prey on my damask cheek. I'm wearing away! I'm wasting! *I'm getting THINNER!*

DOLLY. La!

FIDO. Some day, Dolly, you'll find these 'ere invisible greens empty, and nothing left of me but a broken heart, to tell you, "*This was Fido!*"

DOLLY. I'll tell you what it is, Fido. You're in love.

FIDO. In love! That's a mild hexpression. I'm plunged in a very abyss of haffectation.

DOLLY. And you're afraid your detachment ain't returned.

FIDO. That's just it, Dolly.

DOLLY. (*rubbing table*) Well, then, I'll tell you a great secret. Your love is returned.

FIDO. Returned? No!

DOLLY. Yes.

FIDO. Oh! the picter is too bright! I—I am beloved! Oh, what hecstasy! My Harabellar loves me.

DOLLY. (*sharply*) Who loves you?

FIDO. Who? Why my Harabellar, to be sure; who else? Wern't you talking of her?

DOLLY. Of her? No. I was talking of myself. It's me who returns your detachment—me who loves you, you little monster! (*threatens him with broom*)

FIDO. (*waving the blacking-brush*) You! Pooh!

DOLLY. I see what it is, Fido. You've been falling in love again with one of the parlour boarders. That's the seventh this quarter.

FIDO. What if it is? It's a amiable weakness.

DOLLY. What if it is! you good-for-nothing, weak-minded little wretch, you. Why, you're a reg'lar Don Juan in buttons!

FIDO. (*chuckling*) Ha! ha! I begins to think I am.

DOLLY. And you're sighing for Miss Harabellar. Well, I would have chosen something bigger. Why, she's only twelve years old.

FIDO. She'll grow older, and improve with age, like wine.

DOLLY. And if she does, do you think she'll be ignited to you, Buttons?

FIDO. Love levels all distinctions. If her parents refuse their consent, I'll bear her away to some distant climb, and we'll build a harbour by some green wood, on the bank of some philandering stream, and pass our days on love and watercresses. Dost like the picture? (*imitating Claude Melnotte*)

DOLLY. Oh, be off, you absurd piece of fat. You said you was going to be welded to me. We was to keep a green-grocery: I was to mind the shop, and you was to go out and wait.

FIDO. It's *you* who'll have to *wait*, Miss Dolly. I've a soul above greengrocery and white berlins.

DOLLY. Very well, Mr. Fido, as you please. Keep your Harabellar. I can have the baker.

FIDO. (*furiously polishing the shoe*) Hang the baker!

DOLLY. He's been pertickler attentive to me lately—pertickler attentive. (*flourishes duster in his face*)

FIDO. (*brushing furiously*) Oh, he has—has he? Then my suspicions is realized. (*looking DOLLY full in the face*) You've been with him!

DOLLY. Of course I have. He's just given me the half-quarters.

FIDO. And something else besides. There's a patch of flour on your mouth. How dares he leave his mark on my property!

DOLLY. Your property, indeed! Not till you give up Harabellar.

FIDO. I'll try, Dolly; I will indeed; though it's a 'ard struggle. Oh, Dolly! it's a hawful feeling—love.

DOLLY. (*edging close up to him*) Yes, Fido; and makes one feel very weak.

FIDO. It's a sort of all-overishness.

DOLLY. (*leaning on him*) As calls for support.

FIDO. (*trying to shake her off*) And strength.

DOLLY. (*sighing*) And sympathy.

FIDO. (*brushing shoe*) And polish.

DOLLY. (*wiping her mouth*) And—and—and—

FIDO. (*brushing*) And Day and Martin's Reviver.

DOLLY. Oh! oh! oh, dear! Oh, gracious!

FIDO. What?

DOLLY. Such a queer feeling! So funny! Just between my nose and chin. What is it? Do see.

FIDO. (*looking*) I don't see anything.

DOLLY. (*close to him*) Look again.

FIDO. (*looking*) No. There's nothing there—except the mouth.

DOLLY. I think—it is—the mouth.

FIDO. Oh! I see now. You want me to kiss you. Well, I don't mind obliging you, for once. (*kisses her*) Ha! It tastes savoury. I'll have another. (*kisses her again—a bell, R.*)

DOLLY. Missis's bell. You answer it, Fido. Come; do move a bit quicker. Let me see you in a bustle for once.

FIDO. Bustle! I leaves that to women. I'm symmetrical enough, without such help to add to my attractions. Oh! Harabellar! Harabellar! Little do you know what I am suffering for you! *Exit, R.*

DOLLY. And to-morrow it will be, "Oh, Jemima! Oh, Jemima!" Fortunately, I ain't jealous in earnest. (*a knock*) A visitor! Who's that for, I wonder.

SIR CHARLES CHATTERTON. (*without, R.*) Is Miss Smith within?

FIDO. (*without*) Miss Stella Smith? Yes, sir.

SIR C. (*without*) Can I see her?

FIDO. (*without*) This way, sir.

Enter SIR CHARLES and FIDO, R. C.

FIDO. Dolly, tell Miss Smith she's wanted.

SIR C. Stay, my good girl. A pretty face like yours deserves a pretty cap. Here's to buy one.

DOLLY. (*curtseying*) Oh! sir! (*to FIDO*) A real gold half-suffering! It'll go towards the greengrocery.

FIDO. (*aside*) Then I'd better keep it for you.

DOLLY. (*pockets it*) Not if I knows it.

MRS. CLAPPERCLAW. (*without, R.*) Dolly! Dolly!

DOLLY. That's missis. Shan't I catch it, for not denouncing you, sir!

SIR C. I'll give you something to avert her anger.

DOLLY. La, sir! What?

SIR C. (*kissing her*) The kiss of peace.

DOLLY. Oh, sir.

Runs off, R.

FIDO. (*aside*) Hallo! young man. You're a-going it—you are! Ain't it enough for that crummy baker to come a-poaching on my preserves, without this other a-firing off his salutes? I must watch!

SIR C. (*who has been examining the room*) Here, my fat friend; what's your name?

FIDO. My name is Fido, on the Grampian hills—

SIR C. (*showing money*) Then, Fido, my friend, do you see this?

FIDO. I does.

SIR C. Then, if you'll do me a favour—

FIDO. Oh—ha! I see! But I ain't a-going to take your money, as Dolly did! I ain't a-going to do no favours! I ain't a-going to be *kissed*, I ain't! No—a! (*aside*) Umph! Take that, and smoke it!

Exit, R. C.

SIR C. (*laughing*) Ha, ha, ha! He's a character! Ha, ha, ha! But, now I'm alone, let me look round, and re-consider my plans. So far, my adventure has succeeded, and my first step is gained. I have come to a house I do not know; knocked at its door, and been admitted; have asked for Miss Smith (as I thought, there *is* a Miss Smith; there *always* is a Miss Smith in a school), and here I am. But why am I here? Why have I—I, Sir Charles Chatterton, of Chatterton Manor, come to a house I do not know, and knocked at a door I never knocked at before, and asked for a girl I've never seen, and only know she is *Miss Smith*! This confounded snow is the cause. Who ever knew snow at this time of the year!—such snow, too! Spoilt our fun; might as well be in Town again. Wish I were! Hunting, impossible; skating, bosh; snow-balling, caddish; duck-shooting, trash; sleigh-driving, pooh! Tired of billiards, disgusted with myself, everybody, and everything; but ready for any fresh sport to kill time. So, hit upon a wager with the fellows, that one of us should come to this school, ask to see a girl we'd never seen, and cut off a lock of her hair, with her own permission and the governess's. We tossed: it fell to me. They bet two to one I shouldn't do it. I took it in ponies, and here I am. It will be hard if I can't induce a merry school-girl to lend herself to a bit of fun! I wonder if she's a trot in pinafores, or a venerable spinster in spectacles!

DOLLY. (*at door, R. C.*) Please, sir, missis wants to know if you are Miss Smith's brother.

SIR C. Her brother?

DOLLY. Very well, sir.

Exit, R. C.

SIR C. Here! here! My name's not Smith! Here's a mess! What am I to do now, without a word or clue to guide me! The girl evidently jumped to the conclusion I was Miss Smith's brother. Well, I can't go back now! I must run my chance, and trust to impudence to befriend me! *goes to piano—reads "Smith and Co."* Smith seems a favourite name! I wonder what the thing's like! (*plays loudly*)

Enter MRS. CLAPPERCLAW, R. C.—stands erect at door.

SIR C. Abominable! atrocious!

(MRS. CLAPPERCLAW *coughs*—SIR CHARLES *turns—still continues playing*)

Miss Smith. Frightful!

MRS. CLAP. Sir! Have you visited my academy for the purpose of injuring *my* pianoforte?

SIR C. Certainly not, my dear madam! that would be impossible! (*aside*) Old Clapperclaw, by Jove!

MRS. CLAP. Sir!

SIR C. For a worse instrument—

MRS. CLAP. Sir!!

SIR C. Or one less devoid of tone—

MRS. CLAP. Sir!!!

SIR C. I never heard.

MRS. CLAP. Sir, have you come here to insult me?

SIR C. By no means, madam. I only speak of your instrument. Listen to my defence. (*strums on piano—aside*) Anything to prevent her speaking of—*my sister*. (*aloud*) There, Mrs. Clapperclaw! I ask you—is that an instrument to learn upon?

MRS. CLAP. Such as it is, sir, ladies of quality have received their rudiments upon it!

SIR C. Very *rude* rudiments, they must have been. But, I trust, madam, you do not think *me* rude! (*rises*)

MRS. CLAP. No, sir. I am a woman of large sympathies, and can make allowance for your protracted absence from the land of your birth.

SIR C. (*aside*) So, I've been abroad! Thank you for the hint.

MRS. CLAP. The customs of the country from which you come are, I know, lax in the extreme! But what can you expect otherwise, in a land where the use of the globes is unknown?

SIR C. What, indeed!

MRS. CLAP. I am a woman of large sympathies, and have had serious thoughts of organizing an academical mission to that benighted land—

SIR C. To teach them the use of the globes?

MRS. CLAP. Just so. Is it not grievous to think that so many millions of our fellow-creatures should be ignorant of that important knowledge?

SIR C. Alas!

MRS. CLAP. But, sir—you have not yet spoken of your sister! My sympathies tell me your heart must be full of her!

SIR C. Precisely. Too full to speak of her!

MRS. CLAP. Then, sir, I will inform her of your arrival. I am anxious to witness your meeting, after a separation of so many years. I am a woman of large sympathies, and rejoice in the sympathies of others!

Exit, R. C., with folded hands, and walking very erect.

SIR C. Hang her sympathies! I didn't want her presence till I had smoothed the path. To be sure, the brother has been away for years, and may be changed. Psha! as if the girl won't know I'm not her brother! I shall be taken for a swindler! Agreeable prospect! I'd better beat a retreat while I can, and pay the wager. Hang it! there's only one door; I must try the window. (*goes to window*) Nailed—by Jove! Afraid of game flying out and poachers coming in, I suppose. (*voices outside*) Too late! Here they are! Now for my bread-and-butter miss! Hercules defend me!

Enter MRS. CLAPPERCLAW and STELLA, R. C.—MRS. CLAPPERCLAW stands erect at door—STELLA rushes to SIR CHARLES, throws her arms round his neck, and kisses him repeatedly.

STELLA. Oh, my dear, dear brother! Come at last!

SIR C. (*aside*) I'm glad I did not run away.

STELLA. (*kissing him*) Oh! Harry, I thought you'd never come!

SIR C. (*aside*) My sister is decidedly agreeable.

STELLA. (*affectionately*) And even now I can scarcely believe it is real—that you are here!

SIR C. *Don't* doubt it. I am here. Believe the evidence of my lips! (*kisses her*)

STELLA. Not that I should have known you in the least. We were quite children, you know, when you left England. Let me see, how long is it?

SIR C. (*aside*) I haven't the remotest idea.

STELLA. And when I received your letter this morning, saying you were in England, and would be with me in a few hours, you cannot tell the joy I felt.

SIR C. (*aside*) So the *real* brother is coming!

STELLA. And you are glad to come back to England and me?

SIR C. (*his arm round her*) I am, indeed! And you?

STELLA. (*looking up lovingly*) You have never been out of my thoughts—by day or night—since you left!

SIR C. Thanks for those thoughts and sympathy—

MRS. CLAP. Pardon me for interrupting the intercommunion of fraternal sentiment, but I believe you made use of the word sympathy, Captain Smith.

SIR C. (*aside*) So! I'm *Captain Smith*!

MRS. CLAP. Sympathy is a word which strikes a chord that vibrates my entire corporeal system!

SIR C. Most unpleasant, I'm sure.

MRS. CLAP. Not so. The sensation is eminently refreshing, And now, having witnessed the gush of affection which burst forth after being pent up so many years, I will retire, that

Miss Smith may converse unreservedly with her long-absent brother.

SIR C. Excuse me; before you go—have you a pair of scissors?

STELLA. Whatever do you want with scissors?

SIR C. A mere fancy. I want one of those little curls that hang so temptingly upon your neck. You will not refuse?

STELLA. Refuse? No! (*cuts off a curl—gives it to SIR CHARLES*)

MRS. CLAP. Beware! scissors cut love!

STELLA. Oh! I have no fear! (*laughs*)

SIR C. No; we have no fear! (*laughs*)

MRS. CLAP. Then now I will leave you for a short time. It is not my practice, as Miss Smith knows, but yours is a peculiar case.

SIR C. Very!

MRS. CLAP. And, as I am a woman of large sympathies, I can feel for the sympathies of others. *Exit, R. C.*

SIR CHARLES. (*aside, putting up curl in his pocket-book*) Wager won, by Jove! And now the sooner I can manage to retreat the better. I'm loth to leave my newly-found sister, though. I believe I'm half in love with her. I don't know how I'm to begin to tell her—but I must. She's a dear little thing; she will forgive me, I'm sure.

STELLA. (*who has been walking round him, watching him attentively*) Do you know, Harry, you are so altered, that unless your letter had prepared me, I positively should not have known my own brother!

SIR C. (*aside*) I should wonder if she had.

STELLA. But I dare say I am quite as much altered. Should you have known me, now? (*holds both his hands, and throws back her head*)

SIR C. I do not think I should.

STELLA. Ha! we have both changed since we parted. Dark days and early sorrow have weighed upon us. Papa's death first, which obliged us to leave the dear old Rectory—

SIR C. (*aside*) The Rectory!

STELLA. And then mamma's failing health, and you away! But Heaven sent us a friend! Mamma and I never wanted anything so long as he lived. With her last breath, mamma prayed for blessings on his son—Sir Charles Chatterton.

SIR C. (*starting up*) Sir Charles Chatterton!

STELLA. Yes, Harry; your old schoolfellow is Sir Charles Chatterton now. Ha! times have changed since you and he played together! (*leans her head in her hands, and appears lost in thought*)

SIR C. (*aside*) Can it be possible ! Is this the daughter of my old tutor—the little bright-eyed, laughing girl I loved to tease in early boyhood ! I remember now ? He died about the time I went to Christchurch, and my father provided for the widow and children ; and this is the girl ! She had not reached her teens when last I saw her—and I not to recognise her ! Yet, now I look upon her, I see it is the same—the bud blossomed into flower ! Strange—strange fatality, that an idle, foolish wager should bring us again together thus. (*aloud*) And you have not seen Sir Charles since ?

STELLA. No ; I should not know him now.

SIR C. (*aside*) So it appears. (*aloud*) But how came you to be governess here ?

STELLA. It was my only resource when mamma was gone. Oh ! but how I've envied each child when the holidays came, and I had no home to go to.

SIR C. Do you mean to say you've passed your holidays here—with Clapperclaw ?

STELLA. She has been very good to me.

SIR C. That's fortunate. If she hadn't——

STELLA. (*kissing him*) You dear, dear Harry ! How nice it is to have you back !

SIR C. Isn't it ?

Enter FIDO, R. C.—carries a tray, with wine, biscuits, plates, and glasses.

FIDO. Here's a ewent, Miss ! Missis is a-coming it—rayther !

STELLA. It certainly is very kind of her.

FIDO. Kind ! I should think it was ! She says it's to celebrate Captain Smith's return to 'ome and beauty. "Fido," says she, "The harmy has a claim on my sympathies !" Cos why ? Cos her husband was in the taller trade, and supplied the barracks with longs and shorts. This 'ere is champagne, sir. (*chuckles*) Ha ! ha ! the wine's the sham, and comes first. The pain follows arter, of its own accord. I tried it once. (*SIR CHARLES and STELLA laugh*)

FIDO. And these are Habernetheys, sir ! Missis says they's the wholesomest. I dessay they is—'cos they're too hard to eat. But if you've a mind to try one, I'll fetch a hammer and break 'em.

SIR C. Thanks ; I've no taste for biscuitology.

FIDO. She calls this a 'umble *fête* ! Ha ! ha ! it's 'umble enough. But when *my* fate comes, I hope it won't be gooseberry wine and fossil habernetheys. (*aside—seeing ARABELLA at door*) Ha ! that's *my* fate !

Enter ARABELLA, R. C.—takes three steps forward, then executes dancing-master's curtsey, very low—trips to piano—places music on desk—sits on stool, and waits—FIDO gazes admiringly on her)

STELLA. This is one of my little pupils, Harry, come for her music lesson. Mrs. Clapperclaw, no doubt, forgot to countermand her.

ARAB. (*through her nose*) Yes, miss.

FIDO. (*aside*) Angelic voice! She's always a cold in her head.

STELLA. I'll just attend to her a few minutes, whilst you amuse yourself with the wine and biscuits.

FIDO. (*drops biscuits*)

STELLA. Why, what's the matter, Fido?

FIDO. (*picking up biscuits*) Only a spasm, miss—that's all! (*aside*) Oh! Harabellar, Harabellar! the extent of spasms and other unpleasantnesses I endure for you ain't in power of mortal lips to reveal. But if the fluttering agony of a tortured 'art can ever be rewealed by hincreasing size and tightness of livery, then—and not till then—will you know the secret of your Fido's love! Oh!

ARAB. (*plays scale, counting*) One, two, three, four.

SIR C. (*stopping his ears*) What on earth is that horrible noise?

STELLA. Only the scale in A major, dear.

SIR C. A major? A devil!

FIDO. (*aside*) Oh, don't she do it beautifully?

SIR C. Oh, stop that infernal noise!

FIDO. (*aside*) What does he want to stop it for?

STELLA. Find your song, dear.

ARAB. (*through nose*) Yes, miss. (*looks over music*)

FIDO. (*aside*) Song! I'll drop the biscuits again, to listen. Never shall I forget the first time I heard her play "In my cottage near a wood." I was struck all of a heap. Miss Smith, there, was obliged to play it with all her fingers, but Harabellar did it with one.

SIR C. Hallo, my fat friend—another spasm?

FIDO. Oh, sir! listen.

ARAB. (*plays prelude, and sings*) "Wivva, wivva, wapid wiver!" &c., &c.

SIR C. (*stopping his ears, and pacing up and down*) Oh—oh!

FIDO. (*in ecstasy—watching ARABELLA*) Oh, ain't it lovely (*creeps to piano*)

Enter DOLLY, R. C.—carrying a heap of copy-books).

DOLLY. If you please, Miss Smith, here's the book for coppers.

STELLA. Very well, Dolly, put them on the table.

DOLLY. (*aside to FIDO*). Ain't you ashamed of yourself, casting sheep's eyes on that chit.

FIDO. (*aside to DOLLY*) Mayn't a sheep cast eyes on a lamb?

DOLLY. (*aside*) I've no patience with you. (*puts books on table*)

STELLA. Now, dear, I'll play that piece to you.

(ARABELLA rises—stands by piano—STELLA plays a soft, dreamy air: “Ecoutez moi,” or the like)

FIDO. (*aside*) Oh, those innocent little tootsies; how meekly they do stand there!

DOLLY. (*pinching him*) Are you coming, sir?

FIDO. (*rubbing his arm*) I suppose I must. Adoo, bright vision! and if for ever, still ad-doo!

DOLLY. Are you coming?

FIDO (*shrinking back*) No, no—not another bruise! (*aside*) Fido, be a man; tear yourself from temptation. Dolly, I—I—come!

Exit DOLLY, dragging FIDO, R.C.

SIR C. (*looking over copy-books*) What a life for the poor girl! Day after day, this everlasting drudgery! (*reads*) “Slavery is detestable,” says this copy. So it is; but how little do we think of applying it to our own land. We pity the black slaves of some Uncle Tom’s cabin, thousands of miles away, and forget the white slaves in our very homes, whose miseries are all the greater for being inflicted with honied stings, and having to be borne with a sad and patient smile! (*writes in books*)

STELLA (*to ARABELLA*) There, dear, now you may go.

ARAB. Thank you, miss. (*takes up her music—trips to door—repeats curtsey—exit*)

STELLA. (*going up to SIR CHARLES, and laying her hand on his shoulder*) And now, dear, we are quite alone again, and can have another nice chat. But whatever have you been doing, Harry?

SIR C. Only writing a few copies for you, sister. (*reads*) “Necessity is the mother of governesses,” “All work and no play is their life from day to day.” “Multiplication of lessons,” “addition of labour,” “division of duties,” form the “rule of three inverse for the reduction of health.”

STELLA (*laughing*) That's all very well, but it will not do for Mrs. Clapperclaw. (*tears out the leaf*)

SIR C. Hang Clapperclaw! Cut her and the whole thing.

STELLA. Harry!

SIR C. Come with me, and share my home and fortune, with my heart!

STELLA. (*startled*) Harry! brother!

SIR C. Stella, forgive me. I am *not* your brother!

STELLA. (*starting back*) Not my brother?

SIR C. With shame I confess it.

STELLA. Oh! (*starts farther back—sinks on chair by table, and buries her face in her hands*)

SIR C. You cannot despise me more than I despise myself!

STELLA. (*sobbing*) Not my brother!—and I—oh!

SIR C. Stella—Miss Smith—hear me!

STELLA. (*looking up*) You've come from him—you've seen him—he's ill. Oh tell me all—the worst; see—I can bear it now!

SIR C. Miss Smith, I have not seen your brother—at least, not for many years, though we once were friends.

STELLA. You?

SIR C. I am your brother's early friend—your father's pupil—he whom your mother named in her last hour—Sir Charles Chatterton!

STELLA. (*covering her face*) Sir Charles Chatterton?

SIR C. See, this is the little locket you gave me when we parted as children. It has not left me since.

STELLA. (*sobbing*) Deceived—so cruelly deceived!

SIR C. Can you not forgive me? It was the frolic of a moment—not meant to pain you. I made a foolish wager, that brought me here. Chance sent you to meet me; time had changed us both too much for recognition; your brother's return helped to deceive you—but be generous, and forgive.

STELLA. A sister's love should have been sacred.

SIR C. I know it, and hate myself for the part I have played. But say you forgive.

STELLA. Your father's son, Sir Charles, will always have my gratitude.

SIR C. No more? We loved each other as children, Stella, and I love you, still—not as when a boy, but with the deeper feeling of a man. Do you remember you promised to be my little wife? I ask you now to fulfil your vow.

STELLA. You forget, Sir Charles—

SIR C. I forget nothing. You were my first love, and my last, for in all these years I've never loved as I loved my little playmate.

STELLA. I am poor—

SIR C. You have a priceless treasure to bestow—a woman's loving heart!

STELLA. If you really esteem me, you will leave me.

SIR C. Not until I have a sign that you forgive me. (*takes her hand*) Do not withdraw your hand; let me claim it as my own; and, when your brother does come, let me meet him as your affianced husband.

STELLA. What would your mother—Lady Chatterton—say, if her son married a governess?

SIR C. Then you consent? Hurrah! (*catches her in his arms*)

STELLA. No, no; I did not consent.

SIR C. But you will. And now, another kiss—a brother's kiss, you know. (*kisses her*)

Enter MRS. CLAPPERCLAW, R.C.

MRS. CLAP. (*erect at door*) Bless me! I left Miss Smith kissing her brother, and I find her still engaged in the same occupation. Well, young people, though I am not an advocate of that constant osculatory practice in which you seem to pass so much of your time, I am thankful to see that there is so much sympathy between you. But I shall have to request Miss Smith to forsake these pleasures for a few moments, and beg you to superintend the calisthenic class.

STELLA. (*aside*) I am glad to run away. (*going off*)

SIR C. (*following her*) I shall see you again?

MRS. CLAP. Oh, yes—very soon.

STELLA. Good-bye.

Exit, R.C.

MRS. CLAP. (*sitting down very stiffly*) You must excuse me, Captain Smith, but I have rarely seen so large an amount of sympathy between brother and sister as you have shown to Miss Smith.

SIR C. I am happy to think that I have gained *your* sympathies, my dear madam, and I trust— (*loud knock—aside*) Simon Pure, by George!

MRS. CLAP. You were remarking, Captain Smith—

Enter FIDO, R.C.

FIDO. (*at door*) It's another gent after Miss Smith, mum! Is he to be took in?

MRS. CLAP. Certainly. Show him up.

Exit FIDO, R.C.

Your sister is finding all her friends to-day, Captain Smith.

SIR C. (*aside*) Here's a jolly lark! I'm curious to see the end.

Enter FIDO, R.C.

FIDO. (*at door*) Captain Smith.

MRS. CLAP. Bless me! Two Captain Smiths!

Enter CAPTAIN SMITH, R.C.—military-looking—young—well-dressed—quick military walk; Exit FIDO, R.C.

CAPTAIN S. (*walks straight to MRS. CLAPPERCLAW—bows*) Mrs. Clapperclaw, I presume.

MRS. CLAP. (*rising*) At your service, Cap-tain--Smith.

CAPTAIN S. I have called, madam, to see my sister.

MRS. CLAP. (*aghast*) Your—sister?

CAPTAIN S. My sister—Miss Stella Smith.

SIR C. (*aside*) Delightful!

MRS. CLAP. Allow me to say, sir, you are labouring under some singular misapprehension.

CAPTAIN S. Misapprehension? Is not this Minerva House? Are not you Mrs. Clapperclaw? and is Miss Smith not governess here?

MRS. CLAP. Quite true, sir. Miss Smith *is* my governess.

CAPTAIN S. But not for long. I have returned to bear her to a new home, and to the station she was born to fill.

MRS. CLAP. Then, sir—are you?—I mean—do you *love* her?

CAPTAIN S. With all my heart and soul!

MRS. CLAP. Then, I think I ought to have been informed of this attachment.

CAPTAIN S. Is it not natural.

MRS. CLAP. Well, I suppose it is. (*aside*) It was thus Clapperclaw once spoke to *me*!

CAPTAIN S. Now, madam, where is my sister?

MRS. CLAP. (*starting back*) Sister?—your *sister*?

CAPTAIN S. Yes, madam, my sister!

MRS. CLAP. You still maintain, then, she is your sister!

CAPTAIN S. What else can she be?

MRS. CLAP. (*pointing majestically to SIR CHARLES, who comes forward*) Then, sir—is that gentleman your brother?

CAPTAIN S. Nature has not given me that pleasure! I do not even know that gentleman, nor have I ever seen him before!

MRS. CLAP. Then, sir, how dare you come here, with falsehoods and fictitious names?

CAPTAIN S. I do not understand you, madam.

MRS. CLAP. But this gentleman understands, sir. However, I will waste no more words. (*rings—FIDO appears at door*) Fido! show this person the door.

CAPTAIN S. Excuse me, Mrs. Clapperclaw; but I do not leave this room till I have seen my sister.

MRS. C. (*to SIR CHARLES*) I appeal to you, sir, to protect me from this man! Use your right, sir, as the real Captain Smith—the real brother of my governess!

CAPTAIN S. What does this mean? *You* Captain Smith? You *my* sister's brother?

SIR C. You heard, sir.

CAPTAIN S. Then in the name of wonder, who am I?

SIR C. That, sir, is best known to yourself.

CAPTAIN S. Am I mad, or dreaming?

MRS. CLAP. Both! Fido, take him away! I shall scream!

FIDO. All right, mum! I has my eye on him.

CAPTAIN S. What the deuce does this mean?

MRS. CLAP. It means, sir, that the sooner you leave the pure-minded and virtuous academy, the better!

SIR C. It means that there is a mistake here which requires explanation.

FIDO. (*interrupting*) It means that you had better hook it, whilst you can, young man.

MRS. CLAP. Now, sir, are you going?

CAPTAIN S. I am going—to stay! I came here to see my sister, and I do not stir without her. (*sits*)

MRS. CLAP. Fido, prepare!

FIDO. All right, mum! (*turns up his cuff*)

MRS. CLAP. Fido, do your duty!

FIDO. I will, mum! I'm getting the steam up! (*beating his arms*) Now, young man! There's the door, and here's me! I'm a lamb outside, but a lion within! don't rouse my ire!

CAPTAIN S. I'll rouse something else, though. (*starts up, seizes Fido by his collar—twists him round—kicks him out of the door—Fido screaming*) Learn now who is Captain Smith!

MRS. CLAP. (*to SIR CHARLES*) Really, sir—I ask you, as a gentleman and an officer, am I to have my sympathies outraged in this manner?

STELLA. (*without*) Captain Smith, did you say?

FIDO. (*without, howling*) Aye!

STELLA. (*rushes in—runs to CAPTAIN SMITH—same business as first entrance*) Oh, my dear, dear brother! Come at last!

SIR C. (*aside*) The murder's out, now!

MRS. CLAP. *horrorified*) Gracious powers! Miss Smith embraces every gentleman she sees!

CAPTAIN S. (*fondling STELLA*) Now, madam, are you satisfied?

MRS. CLAP. Satisfied! to see my governess kiss and clasp two Captain Smiths, within the space of five minutes! Oh, my sympathies!

STELLA. But this is my *real* brother.

MRS. C. Worse and worse.

SIR C. (*coming forward*) It is time, my dear Mrs. Clapper-claw, for me to explain I am not Miss Smith's brother.

MRS. CLAP. Monster! Wretch!! MAN!!! Who are you, then? To kiss her, too, before my eyes! And you, you indelicate girl; I see it all now. Oh, my misplaced sympathies. Here, Dolly, Fido! Police! Help, help! I shall scream—I know I shall. Ha!—

Exit screaming, R.C.

CAPTAIN S. (*coming forward with STELLA, who has been talking to him, up stage*) Sir Charles Chatterton, did you say?

SIR C. The same. The son of Christopher! Don't you remember, your old school-fellow, Harry? (*holding out his hand*)

CAPTAIN S. (*shaking hands*) I do, indeed.

SIR C. And how you used to help me with my verses? (*laughs*)

CAPTAIN S. Ha, ha!

SIR C. And first taught me to pull an oar—for which last, I shall ever remain grateful.

CAPTAIN S. It is *we* who should talk of gratitude.

SIR C. Hush, hush! Not another word. I have another subject to talk of with you and Stella—my sister of an hour!

(*they go up stage and talk together*)

Enter MRS. CLAPPERCLAW, R.C., very pale—she is supported by FIDO and DOLLY.

MRS. CLAP. There they are! Call the police! Get a warrant! Fetch the yeomanry—the volunteers! Don't let them escape.

SIR CHARLES. (*sits on chair*) Mrs. Clapperclaw! I entreat your forgiveness for the confusion I have caused.

MRS. CLAP. (*faintly*) Take the man away! Away!

CAPTAIN S. Let me join my entreaties to those of my old friend, Sir Charles Chatterton.

MRS. CLAP. (*looking up*) Eh? Who?

SIR C. Sir Charles Chatterton.

MRS. CLAP. Of Chatterton Manor?

SIR C. The same.

MRS. CLAP. (*rising*) Then you are Lady Chatterton's son?

SIR C. I am; and I assure you I've often heard my mother speak in the highest terms of her friend, Mrs. Clapperclaw.

MRS. CLAP. (*recovering*) That completely alters the case—since you are the son of my dear friend, Lady Chatterton! Here, Dolly! Fido! Where are you going!

DOLLY. To fetch the pelisse, mum.

FIDO. And the voluntary-dears.

MRS. CLAP. Stupids! Could you not see I was only joking! You see, Sir Charles, I am a woman of large sympathies; but why did Miss Smith deceive me?

SIR C. Miss Smith was as much deceived as you. Until a few minutes ago, she did not know I was *not* her brother; and now I trust soon to be able to call her by a nearer and dearer name to me!

MRS. CLAP. I understand. Of course she has accepted.

STELLA. (*confused*) I have not said. I think—I—

MRS. CLAP. I see. You blush! You love him! (*aside*) Oh, he's just like Clapperclaw!

CAPTAIN S. You are right; she *does* love him. She has

explained all to me ; and gladly do I entrust her happiness to my old friend.

MRS. C. (*sobbing*) Bless you ! bless you !

DOLLY. (*sobbing*) Oh, Fido ! Ain't it beautiful !

SIR C. (*to Mrs. CLAPPERCLAW*) I hope you will honour my mother with a visit and be our chief wedding guest.

MRS. C. Oh ! it's too much for my sympathies ! (*cries*)

FIDO. So it be's for mine ! (*cries*)

DOLLY. Oh ! Fido, when will our turn come ? (*cries*)

SIR C. So soon as you like, Dolly. You shall have your greengrocery whenever Fido is willing to follow my example.

(*holding STELLA to him*)

DOLLY. Oh, sir, I knowed you was a prince in disguise. I wishes you and your lady happiness, sir, and plenty on 'em, sir. (*curtseying*)

FIDO. Dolly !

DOLLY. Fido !

FIDO. I plight thee my broth !

DOLLY. (*holding out her hand*) Take it.

FIDO. I'll convert you into Mrs. Fido——

DOLLY. And lead me to the menial altar ?

FIDO. Like a lamb to the slaughter !

DOLLY. (*throws herself into his arms*) Let it be soon !

SIR C. (*coming forward with STELLA, CAPTAIN SMITH and MRS. CLAPPERCLAW*) And thus, my foolish wager, has been the means of my finding a gentle, loving wife, and my old playmate and friend, " CAPTAIN SMITH."

Curtain.