

CAPTAIN BILLY

An Operetta in One Act

The Words by Harry Greenbank
The Music by François Cellier

SCENE.--*The Village Green at Porthaven.*

WIDOW JACKSON'S *cottage is seen on the left, the Blue Dragon is on the right.* SAMUEL CHUNK *discovered.*

CHUNK (*seated R.*). Let me see--what's to-day? Friday! then it won't bring any luck for the ABlue Dragon," or its owner. (*Gets up.*) Ah! Samuel Chunk, it was an evil day for you twenty years ago when you deliberately disregarded the solemn injunctions of a dying man. (*Works L. through this.*) It has lain upon my chest like a nightmare ever since, and though some men would have called it by the name of chronic indigestion, I know it to what in truth it is--an uncompromising and inconvenient remorse!

(*Goes R. to door.*)

Enter CHRISTOPHER JOLLY, L. U. E.

JOLLY. What ho, there! Landlord. I want a night's lodging; and if the bed is comfortable, who knows but that I may linger a week under your hospitable roof!

CHUNK. I shall be happy to accommodate you, sir. The bed I am sure will give satisfaction. It is our state four-poster, and is canopied with green. Allow me to take your bag. (*Takes bag from JOLLY.*) A stranger in these parts, sir? I don't seem to know your face (*puts bag R.*)

JOLLY. Dear me, that's very disappointing. I was afraid you wouldn't, and yet I live in hopes of being recognized. It is the one drawback to complete happiness that nobody knows who I am--I don't even know myself. For several years it has been my sole occupation to travel about in search of my certificate of birth--I regret to say without avail. I am, therefore, totally in the dark as to who I am, where I was born, who my parents were, and what my age is. The last causes me more inconvenience than all the rest. Am I a mere boy, or am I well advanced in life? Should I be pursuing my studies, or is it time that I married some woman of suitable appearance? You can scarcely appreciate the ceaseless worry of my position! Is there any lot in life so dreary, so inexpressibly hopeless as that of the man who has lost his certificate of birth?

SONG.--CHRISTOPHER JOLLY.

Oh, it isn't very nice
When you fail at any price
 To discover any record of your birth,
Though you've offered a reward
That you cannot well afford,
 And have travelled many times around the earth!
I can truthfully aver
Ev'ry parish register
 I've examined very diligently through,
And it wasn't to be met
In the House of Somerset--

Captain Billy

So I wonder what on earth I am to do!
Any ordinary person will agree,
That it's really most embarrassing for me,
When unable to unearth
Such a document of worth--
My certifi-tifi-tifi-tifi-tificate of birth.

For it puts me in a rage,
This uncertainty of age,
When I'm thoroughly unable to decide,
If I ought to be at school
Under pedagogic rule,
Or be blushing at the altar with a bride.
And supposing I decline
To be put to bed at nine,
Is it certain I am acting in the right?
After all, I may not be
Old enough to have a key,
And remain out very often all the night.
Any ordinary person will agree
That it's really most embarrassing for me,
When unable to unearth
Such a document of worth--
My certifi-tifi-tifi-tifi-tificate of birth.

My companions point out
That there cannot be a doubt
I'm considerably over twenty-one;
For they say, "My boy, you shave!
And you frequently behave
As a man of five-and-thirty would have done."
But of course I stand aloof,
When as plain and certain proof
They adduce peculiarities so small;
For to any man of sense
Circumstantial evidence
Doesn't *positively* prove a thing at all!
Any ordinary person will agree
That it's really most embarrassing for me,
When unable to unearth
Such a document of worth--
My certifi-tifi-tifi-tifi-tificate of birth.

CHUNK (*getting up*.) It certainly places you in a very awkward position, sir. But still there can't be much doubt, to look at you, that you're five or six-and-twenty years of age.

JOLLY. But you are simply judging by appearances, which are never to be trusted. Take the case of a woman, she may appear to you to be five-and-forty, but is she really that age? Oh, no, Mr. Chunk, you know she is not! You have but to ask her and you will learn the truth--she is twenty-seven (*takes stage R.*).

CHUNK. But have you no clue, can't you remember your father or mother?

JOLLY. I never knew them! My earliest recollections are of life among the Arab tribes in the great desert of Sahara. I well remember being fed with some more than usually unpleasant native food out of a coarse earthenware pot.

CHUNK. Poor boy!

JOLLY. Boy! There you go! How do you know I am a boy? I may have been a full-grown man when you were being dandled by a doting mother. The only clue I have is that my linen was marked with the name Christopher

Captain Billy

Jolly. I am anxious to examine the registers kept in the old parish church here. Can you tell me where the keys are to be obtained?

CHUNK. Yes, sir. You have but to knock at the door of that cottage and the Widow Jackson will respond to your summons. She is a harmless person, who keeps the keys of the church and opens the pews on Sundays. Pour into her ears all that you have to say--she will give you a patient and attentive hearing. She has been known to listen to the whole of one of the Vicar's sermons.

JOLLY (*going L.*). Well, I shall probably spend the afternoon at the church, and I will ask you to prepare a substantial meat tea for my return. (CHUNK *bows and goes R.*) Why, who is this pretty little maiden coming towards us? (*looking L. U. E.*)

CHUNK. Oh, that's Polly, sir--Widow Jackson's daughter. She is a pupil teacher at the Porthaven Board School.

JOLLY. Dear me! I have always connected Board Schools with everything repulsive and objectionable, but this pupil teacher is most sweet and comely in appearance.

Enter POLLY, L. U. E.

CHUNK. Good afternoon, Miss Polly. This gentleman wants the keys of the church--I have just referred him to your mother.

POLLY. Quite proper, Mr. Chunk. (*To JOLLY*) If you will follow me, sir, I will take you to mother; I daresay you want to see the monumental brasses. They are very fine!

JOLLY. Well--no--I am anxious to search the parish registers for a record of my birth.

POLLY. It is only right to tell you, sir, that if you want a certificate signed by the Vicar, there will be two-and-sevenpence to pay.

JOLLY. I will not let two-and-sevenpence stand between me and my future happiness!

POLLY. Shall I call mother, sir?

JOLLY. I should much like to make myself thoroughly at ease with you before being shown into her presence. Mr. Chunk, I think it is time you should order in all that is necessary for the meat-tea I spoke of.

CHUNK. Certainly, sir.

[Exit into "Blue Dragon" R.]

JOLLY. Now that we are alone I can improve my acquaintance with you. How old are you?

POLLY. Eighteen.

JOLLY. It is a sweetly pretty age, is it not?

POLLY. I have always thought so. You are more than eighteen, sir?

JOLLY. I don't know that I am. I may be more, I may be less, I cannot say.

POLLY. It should not be difficult to find out. You have but to subtract the year you were born in from the current year and the answer will be your age. I have done many such sums; but of course I am a Board School teacher, and used to intricate calculations.

JOLLY. But suppose I do not know the year I was born in?

POLLY. Then you call to your aid the science of algebra, and you represent the year of your birth by the symbol Ax , which is an unknown quantity.

JOLLY. I confess I never thought of calling upon algebra to help me.

POLLY. I call upon it whenever I am sore in need; sometimes it helps me out of my difficulty, but often it plunges me into deeper labyrinths.

JOLLY (*coming c.*). Let us try to work out my age, then. It may save me the two-and-sevenpence.

POLLY. In this case there are two unknown quantities--one is the year of your birth, which we represent by the symbol "x"; the other is your age, which we represent by the symbol "y."

JOLLY. Why?

POLLY. Why not? The present year is 1891; and if we make an equation of it we find that 1891 minus "x" equals "y." In other words, you are 1891 minus "x" years of age.

JOLLY. I see. The answer does not appear to be very satisfactory.

POLLY. The answers in School Board algebra very seldom are, sir.

JOLLY. Mr. Chunk told me you were a pupil teacher. It is not often one sees so pretty a maiden. What a pity that you should be cooped up in a school when every pulse should be bounding with the delight of spring-time!

POLLY. The breezes come to me through the open windows, sir, for the schoolroom is well ventilated; and I like my work, for I feel I am opening up the minds of young England; but sometimes a great longing comes over

Captain Billy

me--particularly when a sum will not work out properly--to race out into the meadows without my hat, and drink in all the sweetness of the scented air, while the soft breeze plays with my pretty curls, and coaxes the hairpins from their hiding-places!

JOLLY, It is a fair picture. I would gladly join you in your pastime (*takes her to seat L.*).

DUET.--CHRISTOPHER and POLLY.

JOLLY. When flowers blossom in the spring,
And lambkins frolic gaily;
Oh! is it not an irksome thing,
Instructing children daily?
To take them through the alphabet,
From Aantelope" to Azebra@;
And on their slates politely set
Equations in algebra?

BOTH. Sing hip-hooray!
(*up, and come C.*) In merry May
The scent of hay will reach her;
That very merry,
Chubby, cherry,
Charming pupil teacher!

POLLY. I love to sit upon the grass,
And listen to the *ewe*-bells;
Or in the woods my time to pass,
In gathering the blue-bells.
But daily I the children teach
Of those who can't *afford* schools--
For Government within their reach
Has kindly placed the Board Schools.

BOTH (*together*). Sing hip hooray!
In merry May,
The scent of hay will reach her;
That very merry,
Chubby, cherry,
Charming pupil teacher!

JOLLY. I am quite anxious to know the mother of such a charming daughter. I hope to instal myself in her good graces.

POLLY. If you wish to do that, sir, I will tell you how to accomplish your object. My poor mother has one weakness, and that is to be asked to dance a hornpipe, and to be praised for the way in which she executes the steps.

JOLLY. A hornpipe?

POLLY. Yes, sir; in truth it is a feeble performance, but if only you will praise it, she will be most gratified.

JOLLY. It is a curious weakness on your mother's part. I understood she was a pew-opener.

POLLY. So she is, sir, but father was a sailor, and in a moment of thoughtlessness he taught her this hornpipe. Ten years ago he disappeared and has never been heard of since, and for ten years mother has danced the hornpipe continually as a tribute to his memory.

JOLLY. She does not combine it with the pew-opening business, I suppose?

POLLY. Oh no, sir, she keeps them quite distinct. But I think ten years of zealous pew-opening would have broken any woman's heart who had not the hornpipe to fall back upon in her leisure moments. Mother! (*goes to door of cottage, L., and knocks.*) Mother, dear!

Enter WIDOW JACKSON from cottage.

Captain Billy

WIDOW. Why, Polly, what's the matter?

POLLY. A gentleman to see you.

JOLLY (*aside*). What a sober and respectable person! (*Aloud.*) Yes, Mrs. Jackson, Mr. Chunk tells me that you have the keys of the parish church, and I wish to inspect the registers.

WIDOW. I shall be very happy to show them to you, sir. Would you like to go at once?

JOLLY. If it is quite convenient; but I have one little request to make of you first. Your husband was a sailor, I think

WIDOW. Ah! sir, let him rest. He was a bold, bad man; but for ten long years he has ceased to worry me.

JOLLY. You mean he is dead?

WIDOW. I think so, sir--when a man never comes near his wife to bully her for ten years, she is justified in supposing he is dead. It is the only explanation of such self-denial.

JOLLY. At any rate, you were a sailor's wife, and, in spite of your present calling, rumour says you have acquired a strange facility in the performance of a hornpipe.

WIDOW. Oh, sir, you flatter me!

JOLLY. Indeed, I do not, Mrs. Jackson; I merely repeat what I am told. I should much like, before you take me to the church, to witness your agility in this exacting dance.

WIDOW (*going c.*). Shall I humour him, Polly? I have not danced it since Saturday week.

POLLY. Yes, do, mother dear; it will cheer you up wonderfully.

TRIO and DANCE.

WIDOW, POLLY, and CHRISTOPHER.

JOLLY. With beating heart I wait to see.
 A proof of your agility;
 A hornpipe I am told you trip
 As though you'd served on board a ship.

POLLY. So, mother dearest, please begin!
 You see the state he's getting in;
 Remember that your little whim
 Is something wholly new to him.

ALL. With a yeo heave ho! my lads,
 When the breezes blow, my lads,
 We'll luff the ship
 And a hornpipe trip,
 With a nimble toe, my lads.
 When we hear the seagull's cry,
 To the sandy shore we fly,
 For who would choose
 To open pews
 While the waves are rolling high?

(*Hornpipe*).

WIDOW. I sometimes think it's very sweet
 To be so nimble on the feet;
 Without a hornpipe I could not
 Endure my unexciting lot.
 This harmless habit day by day
 Drives all the cares of life away!

POLLY. We like to see you ease your pain,
 So, mother dearest, dance again.

Captain Billy

ALL. With a yeo heave ho! my lads,
When the breezes blow, my lads,
 We'll luff the ship,
 And a hornpipe trip,
With a nimble toe, my lads.
When we hear the seagull's cry,
To the sandy shore we fly,
 For who would choose
 To open pews
While the waves are rolling high?

(Hornpipe).

(They all dance off L.U.E. Enter CAPTAIN BILLY R.I.E.)

CAPT. So I am in Porthaven once more, after an absence of ten years. All, there's my cottage! I wonder whether my Emma is lying peacefully in the little churchyard, or whether she takes in washing. It is sure to have come to one or the other. My idea is that she is not sleeping in the churchyard. Emma had the appearance of a woman who would take in washing when driven to the last extremity. And then our little Polly--why, Polly must have grown up by this time. But this is weakness! It is not worthy of a pirate. Heart up, man, think of your long career of crime, and be merry and cheerful once more! And here is the old "Blue Dragon"! Surely Samuel is not to be found within--they can't all have survived my ten years' absence. What ho there, landlord!

Enter SAMUEL CHUNK from "Blue Dragon."

CAPT. Samuel, by all that's blue! How are you, messmate?

CHUNK. Why, who do you mean to say you are? Not--not Billy--oh, no, Captain, I'll not believe that! You're trying to frighten me.

CAPT. Billy it is, you white-livered publican!

CHUNK *(sits down R)*. I thought you were dead or drowned, or shot or hung, and that everything was nice and comfortable, and now you go and turn up like this! Oh, Billy, one doesn't look for consistency in pirates, but after ten happy years without your company this is more than usually thoughtless of you!

(Weeps).

CAPT. Don't take on so, Samuel You are not well--try a little sarsaparilla.

CHUNK. What can sarsaparilla do for the victim of remorse?

CAPT. Remorse, Samuel? Oh, this is positive childishness! You, a man absolutely steeped in crime, by proxy, you--a robber, an assassin--by proxy--you talk of remorse? Oh, pooh, Samuel!--pooh! *(takes stage L)*.

CHUNK *(gets up)*. And who was my proxy? You--you--you! Oh, why did I ever enter into this criminal partnership?

CAPT. Because you thought it would be a paying concern. You found the capital and I was to be managing director; you were to take five per cent. interest on your capital and ten per cent. of the gross receipts, the remainder was to belong to me as recompense for the great personal risk I ran.

CHUNK. Yes, Billy, I thought that just and equitable.

CAPT. Then what have you to complain of? I remitted you your share of the profits regularly every month by registered letter.

CHUNK. You did, you were most punctual in your payments.

CAPT. I daresay you wonder that I never feel remorse for my piratical career, but I don't. If ever man had an excuse for turning pirate, I had. Brought up with my twin brother in the paths of rigorous orthodoxy, taught by a fond mother that a dissenting chapel was a plague spot upon the face of the earth, imagine my feelings when immediately after the death of our beloved parent my twin brother deliberately turned his back upon the orthodoxy I delighted in and joined the Plymouth Brethren! Oh, Samuel, it nearly broke my heart, and in the excess of a righteous grief I purchased the cruiser "Lily," A1 at Lloyds, and became a pirate without delay.

SONG.-CAPTAIN BILLY.

Captain Billy

CAPT. A pirate bold am I,
 They call me Captain Billy,
A trim built craft,
Both fore and aft,
 Is the pirate cruiser "Lily."
But oh, I sit and sigh,
 When I think how I and brother
Had lots of grub,
And a Saturday tub,
 From a fond and foolish mother!

BOTH. Then here's a health to Billy,
Commander of the "Lily";
 And drink the toast
 On ev'ry coast,
From far Japan to Chili!

CAPT. She trained us in the way
 That every good boy goes in,
And we were told
Our hands to fold
 And turn our little toes in.
She taught us day by day
 No chapel door to enter
Where weekly flocks
Unorthodox
 The bold and bad Dissenter

BOTH. Then here's a health to Billy,
Peru and Piccadilly
 Will drink the toast
 With every coast
From far Japan to Chili.

CAPT. To man's estate we grew
 Without unseemly frolic,
Till in the prime
Of summer time
 Dear mother had the colic,
Alas! we scarcely knew
 We'd seen the last of mother
When brother Jack
Arrayed in black
 Became a Plymouth Brother.

BOTH. Then here's a health to Billy,
Peru and Piccadilly
 Will drink the toast
 With every coast
From far Japan to Chili.

CAPT. I wept to think he should
 From orthodoxy gyrate
And in my grief

Captain Billy

I sought relief
 By starting as a pirate.
And now, in cause of good
 I give no vote or proxy
My heart went dead
When brother said
 Good-bye to orthodoxy.

BOTH. Then here's a health to Billy,
 Commander of the "Lily,"
 And drink the toast
 On every coast
 From far Japan to Chili.

CHUNK. It must be a consolation to you to feel that you did your very best to punish your dissenting brother.

CAPT. It is. I have endeavoured to stamp out his branch of the family, and when you sent me word, twenty years ago now, that Jack was dead I hastened to take his little son to Africa. Immediately upon our arrival I took him for a walk in the great desert of Sahara. I regret to add I lost him there. He has never been heard of since, and I have inherited my brother's estates.

CHUNK. Oh, William, what a very bad man you are!

CAPT. No, Samuel, I am not wholly bad. I sold the estates by auction, but I remitted you ten per cent. of the gross sum they realized by registered letter, as usual.

CHUNK. You did. I remember signing the receipt for it. It was over two pounds, Billy, so I signed across a stamp. I, too, have been a bad man, but I could not bring myself to defraud the Revenue.

CAPT. As for my brother's boy, even if he survived the terrors of the desert, no one would have any clue to his identity. Before I took him out and lost him, I marked all his linen with the name "Christopher Jolly" in bold and distinct characters.

CHUNK. Christopher Jolly? The name seems familiar.

CAPT. Impossible! It was entirely my own invention. The boy's real name, as you know, was Cherubim Jackson.

CHUNK. You did the child a true service in making the alteration.

CAPT. Of course I did. No young man called Cherubim could ever have got on in life. For instance, he could never have gone on the Stock Exchange.

CHUNK. I have it! Christopher Jolly! Why, Billy, there's a gentleman of that name staying at the "Blue Dragon" now!

CAPT. Nonsense!

CHUNK. There is indeed; and what's more, he's in search of his certificate of birth!

CAPT. Phew! (*overcome*).

CHUNK. He's at the church now examining the registers.

CAPT. You cut out the page that contained the entry, didn't you, Samuel?

CHUNK. Of course I did; but he's looking for Christopher Jolly, bless you, not Cherubim Jackson!

CAPT. Ha, ha, ha! What a joke! But I should like to make certain that he's our man. Has he any luggage with him?

HUNK. Only a bag. I'll fetch it.

[*Exit into "Dragon."*]

CAPT. (*going R*). Is remorse going to stir in this weatherbeaten bosom of mine after all these years? Perish the thought! (*looking off L.*) But who comes this way? No--yes--no--great heavens! my wife!

Enter WIDOW JACKSON L.U.E.

CAPT. Emma! (*WIDOW stares at him*). Why don't you know me, Emma?

WIDOW. William! (*faints in his arms.*) Oh, William, do you mean to say you've come back after leaving me in peace all these years?

CAPT. That's the idea, Emma.

Captain Billy

WIDOW. I have schooled myself to think that you were dead.

CAPT. I too fancied *you* might be no more, but I find you alive and apparently in the enjoyment of rude health. Am I wrong in supposing that you take in washing, Emma?

WIDOW. You are. Perhaps you wonder how I eked out my scanty income during the ten years that you left me entirely on my own resources.

CAPT. Do not be hard on me, Emma! I knew you had a small sum judiciously invested--in the three per cents I think.

WIDOW. The three per cents it was, William; but amidst buccaneering pursuits, did no whisper ever reach you of their conversion into two and three quarter per cents through the treachery of a Chancellor of the Exchequer?

CAPT. Never! Had I known that a member of the Government had dared to tamper with my Emma's income, I should have sailed my cruiser "Lily" up the Thames, and have ordered my pirate crew to sack the offending creature's official residence! Oh, I promise you, Emma, that when Captain Billy stood across his prostrate form he should dearly have repented his Budget proposals.

WIDOW. Oh, William, my hero! But alas! you never knew how at times I longed for a postal order from you!

CAPT. It must have been a hard struggle, my poor Emma.

WIDOW. Fortunately, through the timely decease of old Mrs. Bunning, the post of parish pew-opener became vacant, and our vicar kindly appointed me her successor.

CAPT. A pew-opener--come, Emma, this is better than taking in washing! And our little Polly?

WIDOW. Polly is eighteen, and she is a Board School teacher.

CAPT. A Board School teacher! And her father a pirate! (*with emotion.*)

WIDOW. Oh, William, promise me that the authorities shall never know your dreadful vocation! Polly would be dismissed after such an exposure. Think, William, think what the evening papers would say.

CAPT. (*groans*). I know, Emma--another Board School scandal!

WIDOW. It would be unpleasant for me also.

CAPT. It would. A sober, respectable pew-opener with a pirate for a husband! It would be out of place!

WIDOW. At any rate, *I* should be out of place--the vicar would, of course, request my resignation. And oh! William, I give out that I am a widow woman!

CAPT. You do? Have you got yourself entangled? Have you had any offers of marriage, Emma?

WIDOW. Not one.

CAPT. I thought not. Well, you can tell your neighbours that you believed me dead, but that I have turned up again. You need not mention that I am a pirate, as you think it would ruin your prospects. Tell them some plausible lie! Say that I travel in tinned meats--they will take these daggers and knives for sardine tin-openers. But, belay there! I must renew my acquaintance with Samuel's mild ales, for I am thirsty!

[Exit into "Blue Dragon."]

WIDOW (*gazing tenderly after him*). William is thirsty! What a rush of old memories those simple words bring back!

SONG.-WIDOW.

I thought my dashing buccaneer
Had wrecked his pirate boat 0!
And so I dropped a tender tear
Upon his ugly photo.
I quite forgot the life he led
Had fitted him for jail 0!
And round his undeserving head
I placed a saintly halo.

But though you led a shocking life,
O Billy boy, you did 0!
I'd rather smile as William's wife
Than weep as William's widow.

Captain Billy

For him I wore, without ado,
The willow and the weed 0!
I thought he'd fallen victim to
Some Government torpedo.
In various ways I labelled him--
"Deceased," "defunct," and "late" 0!
Yet now he turns up fresh and trim
As any new potato.

But though you led, &c.

(At end of song, re-enter CAPTAIN BILLY from "Blue Dragon.")

WIDOW. Aren't you hungry too, William? If you have taken no food since morning, you must be faint.

CAPT. I confess I *should* like a poached egg, Emma.

WIDOW. Come into our little cottage, William, and I will make your heart glad with one. Oh, I am so rejoiced that absence has improved you so much--you were a terrible bully once, but now you are as gentle as a pirate can be.

CAPT. My winsome Emma! Ten years of pew-opening has taught you the art of saying pretty things!

[Exeunt into Cottage.]

Enter POLLY and CHRISTOPHER, L. U. E.

JOLLY. The result is disappointing, but one thing we *have* discovered. A leaf has deliberately been cut out of the register, not hastily torn out in the mad temptation of the moment, but slowly and laboriously cut away with a pair of nail-scissors.

POLLY. Oh, Christopher! I may call you Christopher now that you have spoken words of love to me, may I not?

JOLLY. Certainly, my darling. Your mother left us alone in the vestry poring over the register together. Your pretty curls were tickling my cheek, and I could not restrain my feelings. I said I loved you, and so I do, Polly. I love you as a pupil teacher is not often loved. But until that certificate is forthcoming, we can never be married.

POLLY. Never be married! Oh, Christopher, why?

JOLLY. My darling, you surely would not marry a man whose age you did not know?

POLLY. Oh, Christopher, my precious, your personal appearance pleases me very much! Why should I trouble about your age?

JOLLY (*goes to seat R.*). I fear you have not given the matter sufficient consideration, Polly. How would you feel if the certificate were found, and showed that you had married a man old enough to be your grandfather? Or, possibly, I might turn out to be years younger than you are. Would you like to have it said that you had entrapped a mere boy into marriage?

POLLY. I never thought of that!

JOLLY. It is most careless of them at Somerset House. In making their entries I suppose my name was overlooked; and this culpable official negligence has blighted two young lives.

POLLY. One *young* life, my darling; and another of absolute uncertainty.

JOLLY. I accept the correction. And yet I like to think that I am young; it gives me so much longer to find the certificate in.

POLLY. My mother may know something of the missing leaf. Suppose we ask her? (*getting up and going L.*).

JOLLY. Well, darling (*looking at watch*), my meat tea is just due.

POLLY. But surely a meat tea sinks into insignificance beside our future happiness! Here comes mother!--and whoever is that strange man with her?

Enter WIDOW and CAPTAIN BILLY from cottage.

WIDOW. Polly, this gentleman wants to see you

Captain Billy

(*turns up and down L.*).

POLLY. Oh mother, is it possible that I have not given satisfaction as a pupil teacher? (*Aside*) That imposing uniform! (*To CAPTAIN*) Are you the Chairman of the London School Board, sir?

CAPT. Not I! Why Polly, don't you know me? Here give us a kiss?

JOLLY (*Coming L.*). Excuse me, sir, but this young lady has entered into an agreement with me under which I become sole licensee in the matter of taking kisses from her lips.

POLLY. Remember, Christopher, that I reserved the rights of mother, and of Great Aunt Jane. They were vested interests.

CAPT. And how about your father?

POLLY (*coming L.*). My father! why, surely--ah, no! my father is dead!

WIDOW. No, Polly, he is alive! He has returned to his wife and child.

POLLY. Oh, father dear, I didn't know you! Of course I'll kiss you.

CAPT. One moment, Polly (*wipes his mouth*). I have just had a poached egg.

(*CAPTAIN embraces POLLY; WIDOW goes over L.*)

JOLLY. Oh, Polly, I have turned quite sick and giddy at the sight of your father. Why does he carry all those knives about with him?

CAPT. Never you mind, young sir! What's your name?

JOLLY. Christopher Jolly.

CAPT. Christopher Jolly! (*stagger back into WIDOW's arms*). Ah, no, no! There is some mistake.

JOLLY. Your father seems to have turned sick and giddy too, Polly.

CAPT. (*seated*). Where were you born? Who were your parents?

JOLLY (*coming C.*). I regret that I do not know. I built castles and dug pits to receive my infant form in the sand of the great desert of Sahara.

CAPT. The great desert of Sahara? (*Aside*) Retribution for my iniquity is overtaking me in its worst form!

QUARTETT.

POLLY, WIDOW, CHRISTOPHER, *and* CAPTAIN.

JOLLY. It's unpleasant, mia cara,
 For a baby to be left
 In the desert of Sahara
 Of relations all bereft.

POLLY. Free from chains that daily trammel
 Every English baby born,
 He can ride upon a camel
 And a perambulator scorn.

ALL. Tinkle! tinkle! bells of baby
 From the distant desert sound,
 Will he learn his C and A B,
 Where no Board School can be found?

WIDOW. Though by niggers kindly treated,
 It is very plain to see
 That he's longing to be seated
 On a European knee!

POLLY. In his pretty baby prattle
 His surprise he will express
 At their foreign tittle-tattle,
 And the absence of their dress.

Captain Billy

ALL. Tinkle! tinkle! bells of baby,
From the distant desert sound,
Will he learn his C and A B,
Where no Board School can be found?

Enter CHUNK with bag from Inn.

CHUNK. Here's the bag, Billy (*sees JOLLY*).

JOLLY. *My bag!* What are you doing with it, you scoundrel?

CHUNK. Oh, sir, pray don't call me by that dreadful name! I know I am a scoundrel, but don't remind me of it!

(CAPTAIN R. *to* CHUNK.)

CHUNK. I will confess everything! Twenty years ago, Billy, when I sent you word that your brother had died in my arms commending his baby boy to your tender care, I thought only of his estates and of the ten per cent. which would be mine if they passed into your hands, and I deliberately concealed a fact which would have melted your heart.

CAPT. What was it, Samuel? Speak, or I feel I shall hurt you very much!

CHUNK. I did not tell you that your brother had returned once more to the paths of orthodoxy before he died. He bade me inform you that he had withdrawn from the allurements of the Plymouth Brotherhood, and I never gave you the information.

CAPT. Then for twenty long years I have been a pirate when I needn't have been one; for twenty long years I have wallowed in crime to no purpose! (*JOLLY comes R.*) You, sir, are that ill-treated baby. I am your uncle--William Jackson--usually known as Captain Billy. Little Polly is your cousin.

JOLLY. And the lady who is so proficient in the hornpipe is my aunt? Oh, this is too much! (*turning up stage*).

CAPT. I can only express my regret for having inadvertently lost you when taking you for a walk in the desert (*goes L.*).

JOLLY. It was certainly careless of you.

(*JOLLY and POLLY go up a little.*)

WIDOW. Oh, William, you seem to have been a worse man even than I thought you!

CAPT. I was undoubtedly, Emma; but remember, it was Samuel's fault. Of course I shall remodel all my plans for the future; my idea is to travel for a large firm of soap manufacturers. I have done with the wickedness and deception incidental to a pirate's career, and I shall impose on no one, I shall speak the simple truth. Their soap will undoubtedly be the best, and I shall not hesitate to say so.

CHUNK. Good morning (*turns up and comes down L.*).

WIDOW. My brave husband!

POLLY. Why, Christopher, your name cannot be Jolly; if your father and mine were brothers, it must be Jackson.

JOLLY. Christopher Jackson; how odd it sounds!

CAPT. No, my boy, not Christopher--but--but Cherubim!

JOLLY. My Christian name is Cherubim? (*CAPTAIN wrings his hands silently and nods assent.*) It is a blow, but I must bear it like a man.

POLLY. Oh, I don't like the idea of being Mrs. Cherubim!

JOLLY. You desert me in this great sorrow? Oh, Polly, I did not think it of you!

POLLY. No, no, I did not mean it! When a pupil teacher loves she loves for ever! We will bear this trial together. Cheer up, Cherub!

CAPT. And now, Emma, before you see the last of Captain Billy, before he becomes merged in William Jackson, the respectable traveller in soap, say you forgive him for his criminal career, and join in the jolly old pirate chorus he was so fond of hearing!

Captain Billy

FINALE.

BILLY. By fate released at last
 From twenty years' dilemma,
 I'll spend my days
 In constant praise
 Of dear devoted Emma.
 And, blotting out the past,
 I'll better my condition,
 By finding scope
 For Someone's soap
 On a ten per cent. commission.

ALL. Then here's a health to Billy,
 Commander of the "Lily";
 And drink the toast on ev'ry coast,
 From far Japan to Chili!

CURTAIN.