

FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

(WITH WHICH IS AMALGAMATED "THE DREADNOUGHT.")

No. 760, Vol. XV, New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending January 1st, 1916.]



A KNOTTY PROBLEM—FIND JIMMY SILVER—CAN YOU SPOT HIM?

THE ROOKWOOD PANTOMIME!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story, introducing JIMMY SILVER & CO. at Rookwood.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Rather Mysterious.

"The sun was shining on the sea,
Shining with all his might,
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright.
And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Tommy Dodd.
Tommy Dodd was surprised.
He was coming down the junior

passage on the Classical side at Rookwood. He was coming to the end study to speak to Jimmy Silver, the junior skipper, on the great and all-important subject of football. He was going to point out to Jimmy Silver that, excellent as the Rookwood junior team undoubtedly was, it could be further improved by the inclusion of one more Modern chap in its ranks—Tommy Dodd being of the Modern side himself.

And as he approached the study he heard Jimmy Silver's well-known

voice reciting those extraordinary lines.

No wonder Tommy Dodd ejaculated "My hat!" Jimmy Silver's voice in the study went on:

"The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand.
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand!
'If this could be swept away,
They said, 'it would be grand!'"

"What the merry thunder!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd.

He kicked the study door open. Jimmy Silver & Co. were all at home. Jimmy Silver had a book in his hand, from which he was reading. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were listening to him. The Fistical Four of the Fourth all looked round as Tommy Dodd appeared in the doorway.

Jimmy Silver waved the book at him.

"Run away and play, Doddy! Busy!"

"What the dickens are you at?" demanded Tommy Dodd. "What's that rot you're spouting?"

"Rot?" repeated Jimmy Silver indignantly. "Haven't you ever read 'Alice in Wonderland'? Where were you brought up?"

"Some kids' book?" said Tommy Dodd.

"Fathead! It's a great classic, and you can get it for fourpence-halfpenny," said Jimmy Silver. "You benighted bounder, haven't you ever heard of the Walrus and the Carpenter?"

"Blessed if I have!" said Tommy

Dodd. "Blessed if I want to, either!"

"Isn't that just like one of those Modern duffers?" said Jimmy Silver, appealing to his chums. "All they think about is mathematics, and German, and stinks, and book-keeping, and horrid things like that. They don't learn Latin, and they don't read 'Alice in Wonderland.' They don't read 'Alice Through the Looking-glass.'"

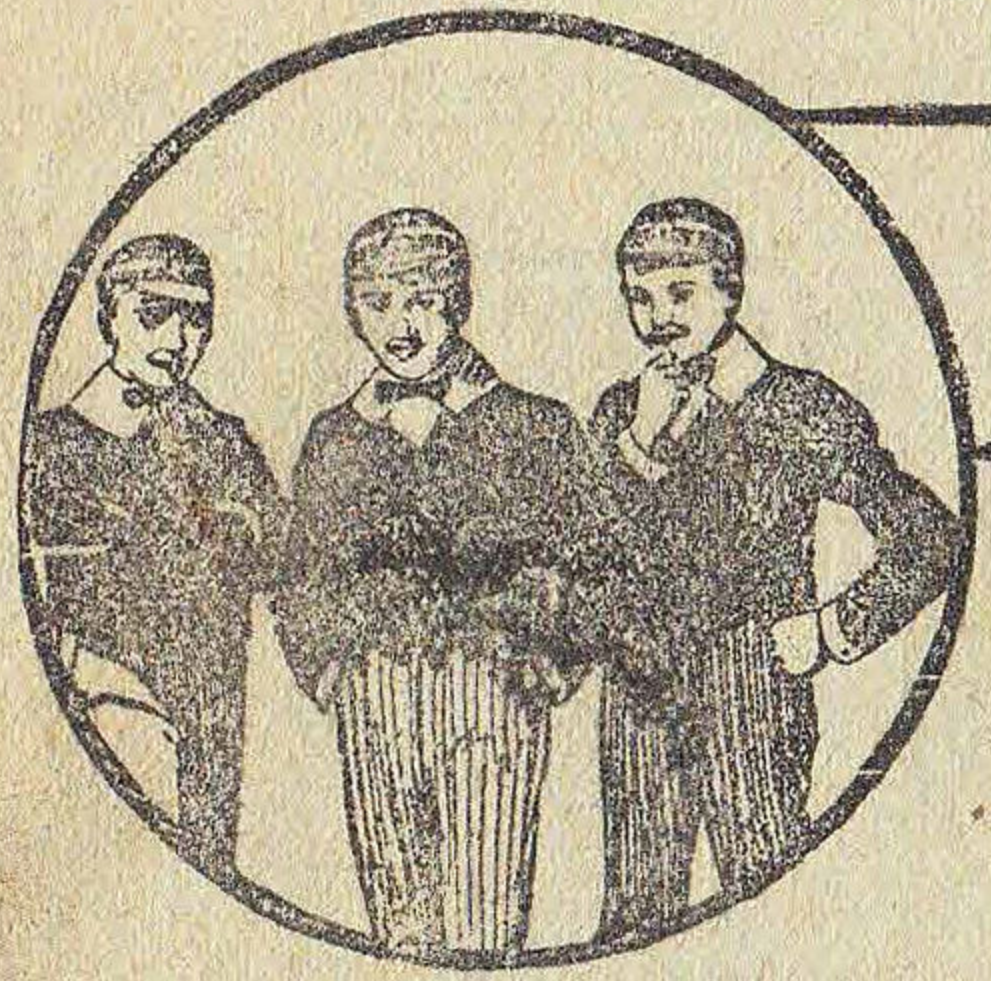
"Rats!" said Tommy Dodd. "How could Alice get through a looking-glass?"

"Easy enough in a fairy tale, you duffer."

"Oh, blow fairy tales!" said Tommy Dodd, who was a practical youth. "I didn't come here to talk fairy tales. I came here to talk footer."

"That's another subject you don't learn on the Modern side," grinned Lovell.

Tommy Dodd sniffed.
"We could play your heads off, anyway. Look here, Jimmy Silver,
(Continued on the next page.)



THE ROOKWOOD

(Continued from the previous page.)

PANTOMIME!

what about young Lacy for the eleven? I suggest that you should drop out Flynn to make room for him."

"Go and suggest that to Flynn," said Jimmy Silver. "I advise you to see that he hasn't the family shillelagh near at hand, that's all."

"Oh, don't be funny! I consider—"

"I'll tell you what," said Jimmy Silver. "Now you're here, we'll try to enlighten your benighted Modern mind a bit. Listen to this."

And Jimmy Silver restarted after the interval, so to speak:

"If seven maids, with seven mops, Swept it for half a year, Do you suppose, the Walrus said, That they would get it clear? 'I doubt it,' said the Carpenter, And shed a bitter tear. 'Oh, Oysters, come and walk with us!' The Walrus did beseech. A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk, Along the briny beach—"

"Cheese it!" roared Tommy Dodd. "What on earth are you spouting that piffle for?"

"Listen to the Modern Hun!" said Jimmy Silver, more in sorrow than in anger. "He calls it piffle."

"I don't seem to see much sense of it myself," ventured Lovell.

"Bow-wow!"

"But it will be all right for the pant—" began Newcome.

"Dry up!" rapped out Jimmy Silver.

"Sorry! I forgot that Modern bounder. Do run away and play, Duddy!"

"The pant!" repeated Tommy Dodd. "What do you mean by a pant?"

"Guess again!"

"I don't know what a pant is," growled Tommy Dodd, puzzled, and glaring at the four grinning Classics.

"If you mean pants—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then what on earth do you mean?" roared Tommy Dodd.

"Nothing that a Modern bounder would understand," said Jimmy Silver soothingly. "Run away and play marbles!"

"I believe you're off your silly rockers!" snapped Tommy Dodd.

"Go hon!"

"If you're getting up some wheeze against our side, I warn you that you'll get it where the chicken got the chopper," said Tommy Dodd darkly.

"My dear man, we'd forgotten there's such a blot on the landscape as a Modern side at all," said Jimmy Silver affably. "Run away, and let us forget such painful things."

"Fathead!"

"Good-bye!"

"Silly ass!"

"Farewell!"

"Burling chump!"

"Adieu!"

Slam! Tommy Dodd departed, closing the door with a slam that rang the whole length of the passage. Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled in chorus.

"The Dodd bird is puzzled,"

grinned Jimmy. "He won't guess in a month of Sundays. Though you jolly nearly gave it away, Newcome, you duffer, if I hadn't stopped you before you got the word out."

"Oh, he didn't spot it!" said Newcome.

"If he did, he would chip in and try to muck up the show. We've got to keep it dark till we spring the great announcement on them, and invite them to see us in all our glory," chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"And then the giddy Moderns will grind their tusks, you bet. Now, about the parts. Who's going to be the Walrus?"

And the Fistical Four entered into deep and earnest discussion.

The 2nd Chapter. Simply Awful.

"Gracious goodness!"

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, uttered that exclamation in a faint voice.

He staggered back.

It was deep dusk, but the light was not yet on in the passages. It was close on Christmas, and the winter evening was very early. Mr. Bootles had come upstairs, and stepped along the Fourth Form passage in his brisk, jerky way. Naturally, there was no thought of danger in the Form-master's mind. What danger could threaten in the junior passage at Rookwood?

Mr. Bootles was going to call at Oswald's study for certain lines which Dick Oswald had apparently forgotten. But he forgot all about Oswald and his forgotten lines as he stepped into the dusky passage.

His face went white, and his scanty locks bristled on his head under his mortar-board.

"G-g-gracious g-g-goodness!" he stammered.

Before his eyes, almost under his feet, looming out of the dusk of the passage, was a fearful object.

A gigantic animal—whether it was a rhinoceros or a hippopotamus the agitated gentleman could not discover—was creeping along the floor towards him. So far as Mr. Bootles could see, it was a huge animal with a thick, brownish hide, a gigantic head with whiskers like a cat, and two gleaming, glittering, awful eyes of green.

It made a crackling and swishing sound as it moved ponderously along. It stopped as suddenly as Mr. Bootles, as it came face to face with the Form-master.

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Bootles. He made a wild bound for the stairs.

The huge animal was swishing about clumsily, and to the startled mind of the Form-master it seemed that the terrible beast was pursuing him.

Mr. Bootles was not an athlete, but he cleared the stairs at a speed that would have done credit to the nimblest fag at Rookwood. He did them three steps at a time, like lightning, and landed at the bottom gasping, where he lost his footing, and rolled over on the mat.

He sat up breathlessly, and yelled: "Help!"

A study door was flung open, and Monsieur Monceau, the French master, rushed out.

"Vat is zat? Monsieur Bottles!"

"Help!" moaned Mr. Bootles.

Monsieur Monceau rushed to him and picked him up. Mr. Bootles leaned helplessly on the French gentleman.

"Vat is it zat happen?" he asked anxiously. "You fall down zose stairs viz yourself, isn't it?"

"Danger! Fly!"

"Mon Dieu! Vat?"

"Fly!" shrieked Mr. Bootles.

"But I cannot fly, my

dear monsieur!" gasped the French master. "I am not vat you call airman!"

"Run!"

"But vat—"

"It is pursuing me—the awful creature—a wild beast that has escaped from some menagerie!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "It is in the junior passage!"

"Ciel!"

"I fear that some of the juniors may have been devoured! Those eyes—those fearful eyes!"

"Mais, mon cher, monsieur, it eez impossible. Zere can be no vile beast," stammered Monsieur Monceau. "How shall he come viz himself?"

"I have seen it! Look up the stairs! Is it coming?"

Monsieur Monceau, astounded, gazed up the staircase. There was no sign there of any wild beast.

"I assure you zat you are mistaken, monsieur. You deceive yourself viz your eyes in ze dark. I vill go and see."

"Come back!" shrieked Mr. Bootles, as the French master mounted the stairs. "You may be torn to pieces!"

But Mossou sped up the stairs intrepidly. Mr. Bootles clung to the banisters and panted. Was it possible that his eyes had deceived him? He listened in anguish for a sound from above.

There was a sudden pattering of feet on the stairs, and Mossou came tearing down, his eyes wild and his mouth wide open.

"Courez!" he shrieked. "Run viz you!"

"You have seen it?"

"Oui, oui, oui—c'est, terrible! Courez!"

"Help!"

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Bulkeley of the Sixth, arriving on the spot.

Fellows were gathering round on all sides, in utter astonishment.

"Zat terrible beast—"

"There is a wild animal loose in the school," panted Mr. Bootles. "Keep away from the stairs. Prepare to flee if it should come down. You may be torn to pieces—devoured! Oh, dear me!"

"A wild animal!" said Bulkeley. "Yes, a fearful monster, with dreadful, green, glittering eyes—"

"Then we'd better tackle it, sir; it may do some harm to the juniors up there," said Bulkeley.

"Bulkeley, the danger—"

"If there's really a wild animal, sir, in the junior passage, I can't stay here," said Bulkeley. "I'm captain of the school!"

"You—you are right, Bulkeley. Stay a moment—arm yourself—wait till I get a poker! I shall come—I shall certainly come!"

"I vill get mon epee," panted Monsieur Monceau; and he dashed into his study.

He reappeared with his "open" the army sword which Mossou retained as a souvenir of his old military days.

"Follow me!" he shouted, brandishing the sword.

"Look out!" shrieked the Shell.

There was a general scampering to get out of reach of Mossou's trusty blade.

There might or might not be danger from the supposed wild beast in the Fourth-Form passage, but there was decidedly danger from Mossou's deadly weapon.

"Pray take care, Monsieur Monceau!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "Wait till I get a poker!"

There was wild excitement by this time. Several prefects of the Sixth seized pokers and cricket-bats to arm themselves for the fray. Astounding as was the news that a wild beast was loose in Rookwood, it seemed impossible to doubt it, when both Mr. Bootles and Monsieur Monceau had seen it.

Certainly a lion or a tiger might have escaped from some menagerie, though how it had got upstairs in Rookwood School without being seen was a great mystery.

"Follow me!" shouted Mossou. He led the way, sword in hand. Mossou was as brave as a lion, and he faced the unknown danger as his countrymen faced the savage Huns in beautiful France.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came next, with a cricket-bat, and then Neville, with a stump, and then Mr. Bootles, with a big poker. After them came several more seniors, with what weapons they could lay their hands on.

And from the hall flew a crowd of startled fellows watched them

breathlessly, ready to run for their lives if the wild beast overcame that formidable array.

The 3rd Chapter. Not Dangerous!

"Voila!" shrieked Monsieur Monceau.

There it was! In the dusky passage, dimly lighted by the big window at the end, the whole party caught sight of the huge, strange animal.

Fortunately, it was not advancing on them.

It was wriggling and writhing along the passage with a swishing, crackling sound as of crackling cardboard.

The green glimmer of its eyes could be seen in the dusk, though its head was turned away. It was almost at the other end of the passage by this time, and seemed to be making for the end study.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Bulkeley. He had had his doubts, but he had to believe in the monster now.

"Wh-what is it?"

"It's a rhinoceros!" exclaimed Neville.

"More like a walrus."

"Walruses are not dangerous, I believe, unless attacked," said Mr. Bootles. "Pray be careful!"

"Sui-vez-moi!" shouted Monsieur Monceau valiantly; and he rushed along the passage. "I vill run him zrough! Ah-h-h-h!"

"After him!"

Study doors were opening on both sides of the passage, but Bulkeley shouted to the juniors to keep in their rooms. The whole party followed the Frenchman fast.

Just as if the strange monster had heard and understood the French master's words, it was wriggling wildly along the passage to escape. Apparently it was more frightened than ferocious.

With a loud swishing and crackling, it whisked into the end study, and the door of that celebrated apartment slammed.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "That dreadful animal has sufficient intelligence to close the door!"

"Extraordinary!"

"After him!"

The hunters rushed on. Monsieur Monceau reached the end study first, and grasped the door-handle.

The door was flung wide open. The light was on in the study.

"Voila!" yelled Monsieur Monceau. "Follow me! Slay ze brute!"

The whole party prepared to charge.

There was the fearsome beast, under their eyes, plainly revealed by the light in the study.

It was evidently a walrus, and it was floundering wildly. The eyes gleamed and glittered with a greenish light.

It floundered round the table wildly.

"Follow me, mes garçons! Fear nothing!" shouted Mossou. "With one zrust of my blade—"

"Yew-ow! Keep off!"

Monsieur stopped dead, the trusty sword nearly dropping from his hand. He stood rooted to the floor.

"It—it speaks viz itself!" he stammered.

It was amazing, certainly, but undoubtedly the walrus was speaking. From the deep mouth came a terrified yell.

"Keep him off! Keep that sword away! Oh, my hat!"

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles.

"It is zat I dream!" gasped Monsieur Monceau. "For it eez impossible zat a walrus he shall speak!"

Bulkeley gave a roar. He recognised the voice of the walrus.

"Jimmy Silver, you young rascal!"

"Silver!" stuttered Mr. Bootles. "Silver!" roared Mossou.

"Oh, crumbs!" came from the walrus. "Oh, dear! Keep that blessed sword away. I don't want to be stuck. Oh, dear!"

"Ciel! How lucky it shall be zat I do not give him zat zrust!"

"Silver!" shouted Mr. Bootles, crimson with wrath. "What is the meaning of this masquerade, sir?"

Jimmy Silver plaintively. "I was only practising."

"Practising!"

"Yes, sir. I'm the Walrus!"

"The—the what?"

"The Walrus, sir. Lovell's, the Carpenter."

"Is the boy mad?"

"It's our Christmas pantomime, sir!" gasped the Walrus. "This is my rig for the panto, sir. I'm the Walrus. We're doing 'Alice in Wonderland,' as a panto!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bulkeley.

"Bulkeley, there is no cause for merriment," Mr. Bootles was wrathful. He turned hot all over as he remembered his sudden flight from what had proved to be a junior in a cardboard and cloth walrus outfit.

"Silver, how dare you be guilty of this—this absurdity. You might have—ahem!—you might have frightened someone in—in the dark!"

"I—I never thought of that, sir!" stammered Jimmy Silver. "I didn't know you were coming up, sir! Of course, though, I knew that you couldn't be frightened, sir!"

"Ahem! Quite so, Silver. I was alluding to the boys," said Mr. Bootles hastily. "I was very much startled, however!"

"I am sorry, sir!" said the Walrus meekly. "I was jolly frightened myself, when Mossou got after me with his sword."

Monsieur Monceau beat a hurried retreat, trying to conceal the sword under his coat-tails. Under the circumstances, the sword was superfluous. Mossou was glad when he got the trusty blade out of sight in his study.

"Silver, if—if you venture to play such a trick again, you will be punished severely. I forbid you to put on that ridiculous outfit at all, in the future, under any circumstances whatever. You will take five hundred lines!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Do not utter ridiculous ejaculations in my presence, Silver. Boys, you need not crowd round—kindly calm yourselves; there is no occasion whatever for excitement. As you see, it was simply a foolish trick."

This was rather cool of Mr. Bootles, who had certainly been the most wildly-excited person present. The Form-master rustled away, and the prefects followed him, grim.

But a crowd of juniors crowded round the study door, watching with great amusement Jimmy Silver's efforts to get out of his walrus' skin.

"Where's Lovell?" yelled the Walrus. "Come and undo me, you fathead!"

Lovell, and Raby, and Newcome, hurried in. They had gone to the tuck-shop for supplies for tea, and had returned to find the passage in an uproar. They were chuckling spasmodically.

"Oh, Jimmy, you ass!"

"Jimmy, you duffer!"

"You've done it now!"

"You chortling asses!" roared the indignant Walrus. "It's all your fault. You've stuck me in this, and I can't get out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme out!" roared Jimmy Silver. "I'm nearly suffocating in this. I'll dot you in the eye, Lovell."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Co. struggled manfully with the walrus-outfit. It was really a very clever contrivance, and had cost the Fistical Four no end of time and trouble. It was made of cardboard and canvas, strongly sewn, and was very thick and heavy. The huge headmask was a very good imitation of a walrus. The eyes were formed of two little green electric torches, sewn in their places. Jimmy Silver's own eyes were invisible inside, his own head not filling half the space inside the walrus' head.

Jimmy's outer casing was released at last, and the big head was pushed back, and Jimmy Silver's crimson face appeared from the walrus' neck. He glared at the hilarious crowd of Fourth-formers.

"You cackling duffers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow—I'm nearly suffocated!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Drag this blessed rig off, you howling asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver struggled free at last. Lovell, and Raby, and Newcome, wiped their eyes.

"Oh, Jimmy!" gasped Lovell. "You've done it now. The panto's knocked on the head—you heard what Bootles said. We shall have to leave out the Walrus!"

"All your fault, fathead!"

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THE ROOKWOOD

(Continued from the previous page.)

PANTOMIME!

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, do stop cackling—there's nothing to cackle at!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 It was quite a long time before the cackling ceased in the end study. For in spite of Jimmy Silver's assertion that there was nothing to cackle at, his chums persisted in thinking that there was—and they cackled.

The 4th Chapter.

Tommy Dodd Thinks It Over.

"Bowled out!"
 Tommy Dodd came into his study on the Modern side, in an extraordinary manner. He seemed to be performing a mixture of an Irish jig and a Highland fling. Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle, his study-mates, stared at him in amazement.

Tommy Dodd jiggled joyfully round the study table, evidently in a state of great hilarity.

"Phwat the thunder—" exclaimed Doyle.

"What's biting you?" demanded Cook.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tommy Dodd, still jiggling. "Bowled out! Shown up! Unmasked! Done to the wide! Ha, ha, ha!"

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle jumped up, grasped their hilarious study-leader by the shoulders, and jammed his head emphatically against the wall. Then Tommy Dodd roared—not with laughter.

"Yow! Chuck it, you fatheads!"
 "Then tell us what's the matter entirely, you ass."

Tommy Dodd calmed down, and rubbed his head.

"It's those Classical duffers!" he said. "It's all out—their giddy secret, you know. You remember I told you they were plotting something the other day in their study. Newcome was saying something beginning with 'pant' when Silver cut him short. I knew it was a wheeze. Well, it's out!"

"And what is it?" demanded Cook.

"They're getting up a Christmas pantomime!"

"Bejabbers!"
 "'Alice in Wonderland' as a panto!" yelled Dodd. "And Jimmy Silver is the Walrus! And he's nearly scared Bootles to death in his walrus' outfit, and he's got five hundred lines, and the panto's knocked on the head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "They thought it was a wild beast escaped from a menagerie—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Mossos got after it with his old sword, and jolly nearly pinned Jimmy to the floor!"

The three Tommies shrieked.

"Oh, my hat!" said Tommy Cook. "So that was the dodge—and it's all up. Blessed if I should have thought of a pantomime!"

"Like their cheek!" said Tommy Dodd. "They haven't asked us to show 'em how to do it! Getting it up on their Classical own, you know. I suppose they were going to invite us to the show before break-up. Of course, they knew we'd put a spoke in their wheel if we knew, so they kept it dark. And now it's all out!"

"Faith, it's not a bad idea, if they could pull it off," said Tommy Doyle. "Just like those cheeky Classical bounders. If we'd known—"

"If we'd known, we'd have bagged the idea, and done it better," said Tommy Dodd. "Too late now, as we break up for Christmas the day after to-morrow. Rather a pity—we could have played their heads off at panto as well as at footer."

"Perhaps they'll bring it off all the same," said Cook.

"Bootles has dropped on it. The Walrus will have to be cut, anyway. Bootles is fed up on walrus!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a knock at the door, and Tony, the boot-boy, grinned into the

study. He had a note in a grubby hand.

"Master Dodd!" he said, and he handed over the note and vanished.

Tommy Dodd, somewhat surprised, opened the note. Then he gave a shout.

"My hat! Classical cheek, if you like!"

The note was from Jimmy Silver. It ran:

"The Classical Pantomime Company have the pleasure of requesting the presence of Masters Dodd, Cook, and Doyle at their great performance to-morrow night, in the Fourth Form-room, at seven precisely.

"The Great New Pantomime,

know in time we'd have pantomimed their heads off! If they wanted it to be a success, they should have begged us to help. Well, as they clearly don't want it to be a success, as they didn't ask us to help—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, it's up to us to see that it isn't a success. Let's take a crowd of Moderns, and rag the blessed pantomime!"

Tommy Dodd wrinkled his brows. "Bet you they'll be ready for that," he said. "Jimmy Silver will have a crowd of Classics ready for a row."

"Look here, we're not going to let 'em pull it off!" roared Tommy Cook indignantly. "What's the Modern side coming to, I'd like to know? Are they going to be allowed to wind up the term with a gloat?"

"Never!"

"Then what can we do but rag them baldheaded?"

Tommy Dodd shook his head.

"This wants thinking out," he said. "I'm going to ask some questions on the Classical side about the panto, and have a big think."

"Better rag 'em!"

"Bow-wow!"

Tommy Dodd strolled over to the Classical side. Now that the secret was out, it was evidently useless to keep the pantomime dark, and the Classics were quite willing to talk about it.

"Sure, we are going to be done!" said Doyle.

Tommy Dodd snorted.

"You leave it to me!" he said. "I'm going to think!"

Tommy Dodd did think.

It was evidently up to the Modern heroes to dish the Classical pantomime somehow. But how? That was the question. Cook's suggestion of ragging the performance was not exactly feasible, in Tommy Dodd's judgment, for it was certain that Jimmy Silver would not neglect to guard against an obvious move like that. It was likely enough that he would persuade some good-natured prefect to be present, in which case raggings would be distinctly "off."

But Tommy Dodd's big think did not seem to materialise. At bedtime he had to confess that he hadn't got it yet.

But some time after lights out there was a sudden chirrup from Tommy Dodd's bed in the Modern dormitory. He sat up.

"You fellows awake?"

"Grooh!" came sleepily from Cook.

"Wake up, fathead!" said Tommy Dodd excitedly. "I've got it!"

"Eh? Wharrer got?" mumbled Cook.

"The wheeze!"

"Oh! Goo-nigh'!"

"You sleepy cuckoo, don't you want to hear it?"

Do you think we're going to chuck it after all that trouble?"

"But Bootles—"

"Besides, haven't we sent the Modern worms an invitation to see the pantomime in the Form-room this evening?"

"I told you it was a bit too previous."

"Oh, rats! Bootles or no Bootles, it's coming off, all the same. Now that the Moderns know, they'd snigger us to death if we chucked it."

"Well, we shall have to cut out the Walrus!"

"Impossible! I'm the Walrus!"

"You could come in in the chorus as an oyster!" suggested Raby.

Jimmy Silver gave his chum a freezing look for that unfortunate suggestion.

The general manager of the Classical Pantomime Company was not likely to come in in the chorus.

"The Walrus is the great figure in the panto, as we've written it," he said. "It would be like leaving the Prince of Denmark out of 'Hamlet' if we left out the Walrus. He does all the best bits."

"Yes; you've given yourself a jolly good part!" said Newcome.

"Of course, as the best actor—"

"Bow-wow!"

"If we chuck the Walrus, we may as well chuck the whole panto," said Jimmy Silver. "But we're not going to. We've got to get round Bootles."

"But we can't. He was scared to death last evening, and he won't get over it before next term. All the fags are cackling about the way he was scared."

"He's a good little ass, though! He don't mean to ask me for those five hundred lines—just on Christmas, too!"

"He won't forget how he was scared," said Lovell. "It's N.G. He's forbidden the Walrus, and there you are! He knows we know he was terrified, and he can't get over it."

"Bosh! Leave it to your Uncle James. We're going to put it nicely to Bootles," said Jimmy Silver. "We'll all got to his study together."

"And ask him? It's N.G."

"No; thank him!"

"Thank him for what?" demanded the Co., with one voice.

"For his bravery in coming to our rescue last night, when he thought we were in danger."

"Oh, my only hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Soft sawder, by gum! It might work."

"He's a nice little man, and we're going to be nice to him," said Jimmy Silver. "Besides, it was brave of him to come rushing along with a poker, wasn't it, when he thought there was a wild griffin or unicorn or something in the passage?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Then come on, and let's show some proper gratitude. And don't grin, you duffers! One grin may ruin the whole bizney. Look grateful!"

"How the dickens does a chap look grateful?"

"Well, put on a rather soft, dying-duck look!"

Exactly how to look like dying ducks was a puzzle to Raby and Lovell and Newcome. But they resolved to do their best, and they followed the captain of the Fourth to Mr. Bootles' study.

Jimmy Silver tapped discreetly at the door.

It was a critical moment. The success of the Rookwood pantomime depended upon the way Mr. Bootles' fur, so to speak, was stroked.

"Come in!"

Mr. Bootles' expression was not promising as the four juniors meekly entered his study. Mr. Bootles was good-tempered and kind-hearted. But he more than suspected that he had shown fright the previous evening—he was not sure, but he suspected it. He feared that the juniors were grinning over it behind his back. And that was more than enough to make the kindest Form-master very grim.

"What! What! You have brought me your lines, Silver?"

"Ahem! No, sir."

"As we are so close upon the Christmas vacation Silver, you may leave your imposition till next term," said Mr. Bootles, still very stiffly. Annoyed as he was, he would not mar breaking-up for the junior with so heavy an impot now that he was quite calm.

"Thank you so much, sir!" said Jimmy meekly, feeling quite assured that Mr. Bootles would not ask for the lines next term. "You are very kind, sir. But—but it was another matter I came to speak about."



The heavy, clumsy movements of the Walrus were decidedly comic, and there was a roar of laughter when he bumped into the Gryphon, and sent him staggering back, to sit down with a terrific bump!

'Alice in Wonderland' will be presented by the Classical Pantomime Company, in their well-known inimitable style.

"No charge for admission, so Moderns can afford to come. They will only be expected to put on clean collars, as it is a special occasion."

The three Tommies read that missive, and looked at one another.

"Cheek!" said Tommy Cook.

"They're going it all the same, though Bootles is down on the Walrus," said Tommy Dodd. "I suppose they think they'll get round Bootles somehow—he's a good-natured little ass! They didn't mean to tell us until to-morrow, but they know we've heard that rumpus on the Classical side, so they've taken the bull by the horns. Awful cheek!"

"It's up to us!" said Cook.

"To go, do you mean?"

"Oh, rats! To muck it up!" said Cook emphatically. "It's as good as a challenge to us. If they'd let us

Oswald, who was to play Alice, and Jones minor and Hooker and Flynn, who all had parts, had lots of information. They were quite ready to explain to Tommy Dodd how the Modern side was to be outshone, out-classed, and completely put in the shade on the morrow evening.

Tommy Dodd listened with an air of humility, apparently confessing to the painful fact that this time the Moderns were simply nowhere.

But when he came back into his study he was grinning.

"Well?" said Cook and Doyle together.

"They've got it all cut and dried, Jimmy Silver's written the 'book,' and the bounders have been mugging up their parts for a week or more. They've kept it awfully dark from us. Jimmy Silver plays the Walrus, and, of course, he's written himself a good part—the Walrus comes in in nearly every scene."

"Cheeky ass!" growled Cook.

"And what are we going to do?"

"Grooh! Mornin'!" mumbled Cook.

"Look here—"

"Snore!"

"I say, Tommy—"

"Snorrrrrr!"

Tommy Dodd decided to leave it till the morning.

The 5th Chapter.

Gratitude!

"It's got to be did!" said Jimmy Silver positively.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome looked dubious.

"We've got it all mapped out," said Jimmy warmly. "I've been practising the Walrus no end, and you've got on rippingly as the Carpenter. Raby is a first-class Gryphon, and Newcome is a toppin' Dormouse. Oswald makes a lovely Alice, with a golden wig and his chivvy chalked. Flynn is first-rate as the Mad Hatter, and Jones minor as the March Hare. And Topham does all right as the Mock Turtle."



THE ROOKWOOD

(Continued
from the
previous
page.)

PANTOMIME!

"My time is valuable, Silver."
"Certainly, sir. But—but we felt that under the circumstances, sir, we couldn't do less than come here and thank you, sir."
"For what, Silver?" asked the Fourth Form-master, puzzled.
"For what you did last night, sir." Mr. Bootles coloured.
"The less you refer to that absurd matter, Silver, the better."
"I can't help it, sir," said Jimmy, respectfully but firmly. "You believed that a wild animal was loose in the Fourth-Form passage—"
"Silver!"
"And without stopping to think about your own safety, sir, you rushed to help us, believing that we were in danger—"
"Ah!" Mr. Bootles' frowning brow relaxed.

"For all you knew, sir, it might have been a lion or a tiger," said Jimmy Silver, in an awe-stricken voice. "And you came up with only a poker. Of course, sir, we know that as we're in your Form, we can always depend on you to guard us if there should be any danger. But we felt, sir, that we ought to come and thank you. I can't help thinking, sir, that some masters would have left us to chance it."
"Ahem!"

"You see, sir, if it had really been a dangerous wild beast, that poker wouldn't have been much good. You might have been torn to pieces. But you didn't stop to think of that."
Mr. Bootles smiled.
"It is quite true, Silver, that I did not pause to reflect upon the inadequacy of my weapon," he said genially. "And it is certainly true that I believed that a dangerous wild beast was there, escaped from some menagerie. But you may always be sure, my boys, that if danger should threaten, your Form-master would not be found wanting."

"And we want to thank you, sir," said Jimmy Silver.
"Thank you so much, sir," said Lovell, and Raby, and Newcome, in a sort of chorus of gratitude.
Mr. Bootles beamed.
"Well, well, I am glad that you show this appreciation, my boys," he said. "The affair was—ahem!—absurd, but at the time it was far from appearing absurd; and I was greatly concerned about your safety. I may remark, Silver, that your make-up was a very clever one—very clever indeed."

"Yes, sir, we'd taken a lot of trouble with it," said Jimmy Silver regretfully. "It will rather muck up our poor old pantomime to have to leave the Walrus out, but after giving you all that trouble, we can't expect you to overlook it."
"That would be asking too much," said Raby, with owl-like gravity.

"Not at all—not at all," said Mr. Bootles kindly. "I have no desire to be hard upon you, Silver, or to spoil your—ahem!—little entertainment. You acted very thoughtlessly; but I am sure that no harm was intended. I withdraw my prohibition."
"Oh, sir!"
"Proceed with your little entertainment as originally arranged, Silver," said Mr. Bootles magnanimously.

"Oh, sir, you are a brick!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, with genuine gratitude this time. Then he flushed scarlet. "I—I mean—excuse me, sir, I—I meant to say you are awfully kind, sir."

Mr. Bootles smiled. A spontaneous expression of regard from his pupils was by no means displeasing to the kind gentleman, even if couched in somewhat unacademic language.

"I understand you, Silver. Quite so—quite so. You may go."
"Thank you so much, sir," chorused the Fistical Four, and they withdrew from the study in great delight; leaving Mr. Bootles much comforted in his mind.

Jimmy Silver frowned a little, however, as they went down the passage.
"He is a brick," he said. "It occurs to me that it was rather rotten to butter him up, when he's such a ripping good sort. But—but we do

feel grateful, though, don't we? And after all, it was plucky of him to come along with that poker—though I'm jolly glad he didn't get a lick at the Walrus with it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"And we'll jolly well work hard next term, and please him," said Jimmy Silver. "Next term we won't rag the Moderns so much, but we'll stick at work and make Bootles proud that he's got us in his Form—what!"
"Ahem! Yes."
"And we'll mug a bit in the vac, too, so as to come back and surprise him at the way we've got on."
"H'm! Certainly."

And those good resolutions having eased the consciences of the young rascals, they proceeded contentedly to the preparations for the pantomime—in which the Walrus was to figure as planned. Whether those excellent resolutions were carried out, however, was another point. Schoolboy memories are short.

The 6th Chapter.

A Modern Improvement.

After lessons that day—the last lessons of the term—the Fistical Four were very busy.

Preparations for the Rookwood pantomime were in full swing. That pantomime was to be the grand wind-up to the term, and incidentally to show the Moderns that, in competition with the Classics, they were simply nowhere.

Almost to a man, the Classical juniors lent their aid.

Even the slackers, Townsend and Topham, were in the cast for the pantomime, which was a numerous one. Jimmy Silver's skilful hand had made a delightful hash of those two wonderful fairy books, "Alice in Wonderland," and "Through the Looking-Glass." Naturally, Jimmy had given the Walrus a splendid part, but there was plenty to be done by the Gryphon, the Mock Turtle, the Mad Hatter, the March Hare, the Dormouse, the White Knight, Humpty-Dumpty, and the rest of the remarkable characters.

The Moderns looked on and sniffed. They were convinced that a pantomime in which no Modern had a hand was doomed to blank failure.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. went on their way smiling.

The three Tommies smiled, too. Doubtless they had their own secret reasons for smiling.

Seven was the hour fixed for the performance, and long before that hour the stage had been rigged up at the end of the Form-room, and the curtains arranged, and the many actors were getting into their striking costumes.

Dressing-rooms, naturally, were lacking, and the schoolboy pantomimers dressed in their own studies. They had to come downstairs in their costumes to get into the Form-room by the door at the upper end behind the curtain. But there was no danger now of anyone being scared by suddenly meeting a Gryphon, a Walrus, a Mock Turtle, or any other fearsome beast in the passages or on the stairs. Indeed, when Mr. Bootles suddenly came upon a Gryphon in conversation with a bearded Oyster, he only smiled and passed on.

Jimmy Silver's outfit as a gigantic Walrus was the most elaborate, and it was the most difficult to assume. In the end study, he was far from finished, when Lovell, and Raby, and Newcome were ready. Jobson of the Fifth, a good-natured senior, who had kindly consented to act as prompter and call-boy, and several other things, came along to call them.

"Just gone seven," he said. "They're beginning to stamp on the floor in the Form-room. Ain't you kids ready? You begin, you know."
"Ready in two ticks," said Jimmy Silver.

"Some of the Moderns are pelting the curtain already," said Jobson, and he walked away whistling.
"You fellows get on," said Jimmy

Silver. "You open the scene, you know, with Alice. I suppose Oswald's ready. I don't come on for a quarter of an hour."

Oswald, in a skirt, a blouse, and a golden wig, with a pink-and-white face, grinned into the study.

"Ready!" he said.
"Get on and start," said Jimmy Silver. "I'll be in time."
"Right-ho!"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome followed Oswald down the passage. There was plenty of time for Jimmy Silver, and he did not hurry. The Walrus was to be a work of art.

The three Tommies were chatting at the head of the stairs as Lovell & Co. came along.

"Going to start?" asked Tommy Dodd affably.

"Yes; you'd better look sharp if you want seats," said Lovell.

"Yes, we may as well be getting along," remarked Tommy Dodd, slipping off the banisters.

The Classics went downstairs. The three Moderns remained on the landing, grinning at one another.

"Silver's not due for a quarter of an hour yet, according to programme," remarked Tommy Cook.

"They're starting," said Doyle, as the strains of a fiddle came from the direction of the Form-room. Lennox of the Shell, who was a violinist, supplied the orchestra.

"Time we called on our friend Jimmy," murmured Tommy Dodd.

The three Moderns strolled down the passage to the end study.

The door was open, and they looked in.

Jimmy Silver was standing before the glass, on the walrus' hind legs. Only his face in the glass could be seen of him, and over that he was fitting the huge cardboard and canvas head of the Walrus.

The three Tommies chuckled softly.

Tommy Dodd opened the door of the box-room at the end of the passage, reached inside, and drew out a sack and a coil of cord, evidently placed there in readiness. Then the three entered the end study.

Jimmy Silver looked round from the glass.

"Hallo! Why ain't you in the audience?" he asked.

"We've come to lend you a hand, dear boy!"

"Thanks! I don't want any help!"
"Your mistake, you do! Shut the door, Cook!"

The door closed.

"Here, no larks!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a rush, the three Moderns were upon the captain of the Fourth.

In the cumbersome outfit of the Walrus, Jimmy had simply no chance in a struggle.

He bumped down on the floor with a loud creaking and crackling from the walrus-skin.

"Oh! Ow! Help—yoooog!"

Tommy Dodd's hand was over Jimmy's mouth in a twinkling.

He was bundled out of the walrus' garb, and, struggling in the grasp of the raiders, he was pinned down, while the sack was passed over his head.

From within the sack there came wild gurgles.

Round the sack the cord was passed and tightly tied, pinning Jimmy Silver's arms down to his sides.

Then Cook and Doyle lifted him—Tommy Dodd opened the door—and the unfortunate Classical was rushed across into the box-room.

The box-room door closed.

Jimmy Silver was disposed of. The raid had been a complete success. For once Jimmy Silver, wide-awake as he was, had been taken entirely by surprise.

Tommy Dodd remained alone in the end study. He closed the door hastily, and with equal haste donned the walrus outfit.

It was roomy enough for a much bigger fellow than Tommy Dodd. In a few minutes he was inside it, and had fastened the various buckles, straps, and safety-pins by which the costume was secured.

Then he grinned into the glass and adjusted the headpiece.

It came down over his face, completely covering it. Small holes in the thick mask allowed for sight and breathing. Tommy Dodd turned on the two electric torches fixed in the mask, and the green eyes glittered and gleamed.

From inside the walrus' head came a joyous chuckle.

The Walrus was ready for the Rookwood pantomime, only the occupant of the costume was a Modern instead of a Classical. That was all the difference; but it was a very considerable difference.

Tommy Dodd, chuckling, added a few finishing-touches, and then the door of the study opened, and Jobson's lean form appeared.

"Just on your cue, Silver!" said Jobson.

"I'm ready!"

It was a muffled voice that came from under the walrus' head, and it might have been Jimmy Silver's or Tommy Dodd's or anybody else's, so far as the sound went.

"Then you'd better come along," said Jobson.

"Right-ho!"

The Walrus, on his hind legs, followed Jobson from the study. He glanced at the door of the box-room. It was closed. Not a sound came from the room. Cook and Doyle were keeping their prisoner very quiet.

The Walrus grinned under his mask, and floundered away down the passage after Jobson.

In the box-room, a furious junior was writing in a sack, mumbling in muffled tones all sorts of bloodcurdling threats.

Two Modern juniors who were sitting on him only grinned and chuckled.

"Sure, it's all serene, bedad, Silver me bhoy," said Tommy Doyle. "The Walrus won't be missed; Tommy Dodd's going to see to that!"

"He'll make it more exciting, you know," chortled Tommy Cook.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver wriggled spasmodically. But he could only wriggle. For once Jimmy Silver's luck was out!

The 7th Chapter.

A Very Wild Walrus.

"Bravo!"
"Good old Jimmy!"
It was a buzz of applause in the Form-room transformed for the nonce into a theatre.

The Walrus had arrived. All the fellows knew that Jimmy Silver was to play the Walrus, hence their greeting. It was impossible to see anything of the schoolboy actor excepting the walrus' costume.

Not a fellow dreamed that a change had been made. And Tommy Dodd did not intend to enlighten them.

Alice and the Gryphon and the Mock Turtle and the Mad Hatter were holding the stage, when the Walrus floundered in. In the wings were a crowd of Oysters, ready to play their part.

The heavy, clumsy movements of the Walrus were decidedly comic, and there was a ripple of laughter as he came lumbering on.

But the laughter was louder when he bumped into the Gryphon, and sent him staggering back, to sit down with a bump on the stage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Carpenter—Lovell—followed the Walrus on, having been waiting for him in the wings. The Walrus whisked round, and bumped into Lovell, and the Carpenter went sprawling.

"G-g-great Scott!" ejaculated the Carpenter. "You silly ass, Jimmy, th-ain't in the programme!"
Crash! Bump!

(Continued on the next page.)

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THE ROOKWOOD

(Continued from the previous page.)

PANTOMIME!

The Walrus seemed to be running amuck.

He charged across the stage at the Mock Turtle, and floored him by sheer weight; he whirled round at the Mad Hatter, and floored him, and he whisked after the March Hare, who dodged wildly.

"You silly ass!"
"Play the game, Silver!"
"No skylarking now, you ass—you're mucking up the panto!"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the audience, greatly tickled by hearing those remarks proceeding from mock turtles, gryphons, mad hatters, and oysters.

"Go it!" shrieked Towle of the Modern side. "Play up! Give 'em beans, Walrus!"

Bump, bump bump!
"He's potty!" yelled Lovell.
"He's off his rocker!"
"Stop him!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The audience yelled. The sight of the cumbersome Walrus charging about the stage and knocking all the actors flying, fairly brought the house down.

Some of the fellows thought it was a knockabout turn designedly introduced into the panto; others thought that Jimmy Silver was larking, or that he had gone suddenly off his "rocker."

But whatever was the reason of the Walrus' strange and unaccountable actions, it was certain that the effect was uproarious.

That scene was greatly enjoyed—excepting by the actors.

They did not enjoy it. They dodged round the stage wildly to escape the furious charges of the huge walrus.

Lovell and Townsend and Flynn and several others collared him desperately to drag him off the stage.

But the Walrus was too bulky to be easily handled.

And he was hitting out with his flappers, too; and his flappers were big and heavy, and came lashing round like flails.

Bump, bump bump!
Yell—roar—whoop!
"Go it!" shrieked the audience.
"Pile in, old Walrus! Go it! Give 'em jip!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's mad!" shrieked Lovell, sitting up dazedly and rubbing his nose.
"He's as mad as a hatter!"
"Stop him!"
"Rescue!"

"All hands on deck!" roared Towle from the front seats. "Collar the Walrus! Ha, ha, ha! This takes the cake!"
It did!

The Walrus remained in possession of the stage. Gryphon and Mad Hatter and Mock Turtle & Co. crowded into the wings in dismay. The Walrus lay down in the centre of the stage and seemed to go to sleep.

"Call this a panto?" chuckled Lacy. "More like Bedlam! Classical duffers!"

"Wake up the Walrus, you Classical asses! Get on with the washing!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What the merry thunder does it mean?" gasped Lovell breathlessly, in the wings. "What is Jimmy Silver playing the giddy goat like that for?"

"Yow-ow!" mumbled Raby, nursing his nose, where a heavy flipper had smitten him. "He's mad! Stark, staring, raving potty!"
"Grooh! My eye!"

"Yow! My napper!"
"He must be potty!" howled Flynn. "But, sure, the silly spalpeen isn't going to muck up the pantomime! Collar him and drag him off!"

"The audience won't stand this!" said Newcome desperately. "They'll be going out. Bulkeley's gone already, Jimmy's mucking up the whole show with his tomfoolery!"

"He's forgotten his lines, and he's doing knockabout rot to fill up, I suppose," groaned Lovell. "Was there ever such a born idiot?"
"Yank him off, then!"

"Jimmy!" said Lovell, in a stage-whisper from the wings. "Jimmy, old man, don't be such an ass! You're spoiling the show!"
"You're mucking it all up, Jimmy!"
"Come off, old chap!"

There was a deep snore from the Walrus. Apparently he had gone to sleep in the middle of the stage.

"He can't be asleep!" growled Raby. "He's humbugging us! Let's yank the silly idiot off! Pile in, all of you, and we'll jolly well bump him, too!"

There was evidently nothing else to be done, unless the Rookwood pantomime was to be abandoned at that early stage.

An army advanced on the Walrus from both wings—led by the Gryphon on one side and the Mad Hatter on the other.

stage. They knew the voice of their leader, and they understood.

Even the Classics in the audience shrieked with laughter as they realised the jape that had been played on the Classical Pantomime Company.

The rush of the Moderns saved the Walrus from dire vengeance. The rest of the pantomimers, with their costumes in tatters, were struggling to get at him. There were some wild and whirling minutes on the stage, while two or three seniors in the seats shouted in vain for order.

Then the Modern crowd retreated from the stage, carrying the rescued Walrus in their midst.

With yells of laughter they retreated from the Form-room. In the passage they were joined by Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle. Tommy Dodd's head emerged from the Walrus' head, and he grinned at the infuriated Classics and kissed his hand to them from the Form-room door.

"Thanks for a ripping evening!" he shouted. "You chaps can play in pantomime—I don't think!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Moderns retreated across the quadrangle to their own side, carrying off the Walrus triumphantly in their midst.

The Rookwood pantomime had come to a sudden end.

Even Jimmy Silver, when he was

TALES TO TELL!



Our weekly prize-winners. Look out for YOUR winning storyette.

IN HIS OWN COIN.

Dandy (who has swaggered into a village shop): "Do you sell puppy biscuits in this one-eyed little shop?"
Shopkeeper: "Certainly, sir. Shall I put them in a bag for you to take home, or will you eat them here?"
Sent in by J. Connolly, Liverpool.

HIS ONLY CHANCE.

"Little boy," said the old gentleman, "why do you carry that umbrella over your head? It's not raining."
"I know," replied the little boy.
"And the sun is not shining."
"I know."
The old gentleman looked perplexed.
"Then why do you carry it?" he asked.

He went to the little village post-office, and, filling up a form, he handed it over the counter, and then left the shop. Once outside he started to gaze upwards, and continued his gazing for quite a quarter of an hour. Then he stamped into the shop once again in a state of annoyance.

"When be you a-gwin' ter send off that thur telegram o' mine?" he asked.

"Why, it's gone long ago," replied the post-office official.

"That I know it ain't," exclaimed Hodge, "for I've been waiting outside and watching them wires for the last quarter of an hour, and it ain't gone yet."—Sent in by H. Brown, East Ham.

THE RECRUIT WHO WAITED.

A countryman, having joined the Army was being put through his first drill. The sergeant, in stentorian tones, shouted the commands:

"Right wheel! Left wheel! Right wheel!"

The recruit moved not an inch.

"Why don't you obey orders?" thundered the sergeant.

"When you make up your mind what you want me to do, I will," answered the recruit blandly.—Sent in by E. Brett, Liverpool.

DOUBLE DANGER!

An old lady who lived alone outside a small village was very nervous of Zeppelins, so she made careful inquiries as to her best course.

"I don't think there is much to worry about," said the vicar of the parish in answer to her questions. "You had better do as the others are doing—sleep in the cellar."

With profuse thanks the old lady went off to alter her domestic arrangements. But in half an hour she was back again full of anxiety.

"The cellar's all right for Zeppelins," she said, "but what if some of those submarines come?"—Sent in by F. Melville, Edinburgh.

PATERNAL EXAMPLE.

"I hear, my boy," said the fond father to his young hopeful, "that you are in the habit of telling falsehoods. Always tell the truth, and you will never get into any trouble. Will you promise me that?"
"Yes, father," replied the youngster, "I will."

"That's good," said his father. "Now just go and see who that is knocking at the door. If it's Mr. Bingley, say I'm not at home!"

—Sent in by Sidney Clark, Keewick.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE.

A friend called on a merchant who did a large Continental business for the purpose of offering him his sympathy.

"This war must hit you very hard," said the consoler.

"Very hard," reiterated the merchant. "I've over eleven hundred pounds owing to me in Germany, and it is touch-and-go whether I ever get it back again. Still, we've got to put up with something for our country."

"I'm glad you take it so cheerfully," retorted the other.

"Well," said the merchant, "I owe sixteen hundred pounds to firms in Germany."—Sent in by F. Andrews, Deptford.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

He was a wealthy old Jew, with a brand-new suit that fitted him like a glove, and a glossy silk hat, white spats, and jewellery which showed only too plainly that he was a man of money.

He was just approaching his gorgeous mansion when a ragged, down-at-heel tramp touched him on the sleeve. The wealthy Jew turned round on the man with a glare of disgust. To think that anyone should have the audacity to clutch him by the sleeve!

"What do you want?" he growled.
"Give us a penny for a bed, guv'nor," he pleaded.

Mr. Isaacs looked surprised.
"Where's the bed?" he asked.—Sent in by A. W. Ives, Hull.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

Readers are invited to send on postcard storyettes or short interesting paragraphs for this feature. For every contribution used the sender will receive a money prize. All postcards must be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND and "Gem" Library, Gough House Gough Square, London, E.C.



Monsieur stopped dead, the trusty sword nearly dropping from his hand. He stood rooted to the floor. "It—it speaks viz itself!" he stuttered. It was amazing, certainly; but undoubtedly the walrus was speaking.

The audience looked on in great delight.

There was a yell of warning to the Walrus.

"Look out, Jimmy!"
"Look out in goal, Walrus!"

But the Walrus was looking out. As the exasperated pantomimers closed on him and collared him he leaped up on his hind legs, and his flippers thrashed out with terrific vim.

"Help!"
"Oh, my napper!"
"Stoppin'! Yooocop!"

The struggle was terrific. Costumes came almost into rags as the Walrus struggled and scrambled with the whole pantomime company clinging to him.

"Give the beast beans!" panted Flynn. "The panto's mucked up, and we'll muck up Jimmy Silver, too, the spalpeen!"
Bump, bump!

"Yarooop! Rescue, Moderns!" yelled the Walrus.

Lovell almost fell down.

"Tommy Dodd!" he stuttered.
"Tommy Dodd!" shrieked the audience.

"Where's Jimmy Silver?" yelled Lovell. "Oh, crumbs! Bump the Modern beast!"

Like one man, the Modern part of the audience rose and rushed to the

found in the box-room and rescued from the sack, wasn't inclined to make any attempt to get on with it.

The audience were gone, and were laughing themselves husky in the passages and the studies. The costumes were in a state that required endless repair before they could be presented to the public eye again. And Mr. Bootles, frowning, had looked up the Form-room. Evidently pantomimes were off!

"Dished!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "Oh, my hat! I'll scalp Tommy Dodd next term!"

"We'll rag 'em to little pieces," said Lovell, "next term!"

Vengeance certainly had to be postponed till next term, for in the morning Rookwood broke up for the Christmas holidays.

But as the larks drove away from the old-school Classics and Moderns for once forgot their feud, and they waved their hands and shouted "Merry Christmas!" to one another, in spite of the sad "muck-up" which had befallen the Rookwood Pantomime!

THE END.

(Next Monday's magnificent, long, complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. is entitled "Jimmy Silver's Journal." Don't miss it!)

"Cause when it rains pa wants it," answered the youngster, "and when the sun shines ma wants it, and it's only this kind of weather that I can get a chance at all."—Sent in by Ernest C. Higgs, Willesden Junction.

A PUZZLE FOR MA.

"Ma," said little Willie, "have I been a good boy lately?"

"Yes, dear," answered the fond mother, "a very good boy."

"And do you trust me?" pursued Willie.

His mother smiled sweetly.

"Why, of course," she answered. "I trust my own little boy."

But Willie was not satisfied yet.

"I mean, do you really and truly trust me, you know?" he continued.

"Yes, I really and truly trust you," said his mother. "But why do you ask?"

"Because," explained Willie, "if you trust me as you say you do, why do you still hide the cake?"—Sent in by N. Walker, Liverpool.

HE WAITED IN VAIN.

Hodge was a farmer, and had never sent a telegram in his life until the day his son was awarded the D.C.M., when he felt it incumbent upon him to wire his congratulations to his gallant offspring.