

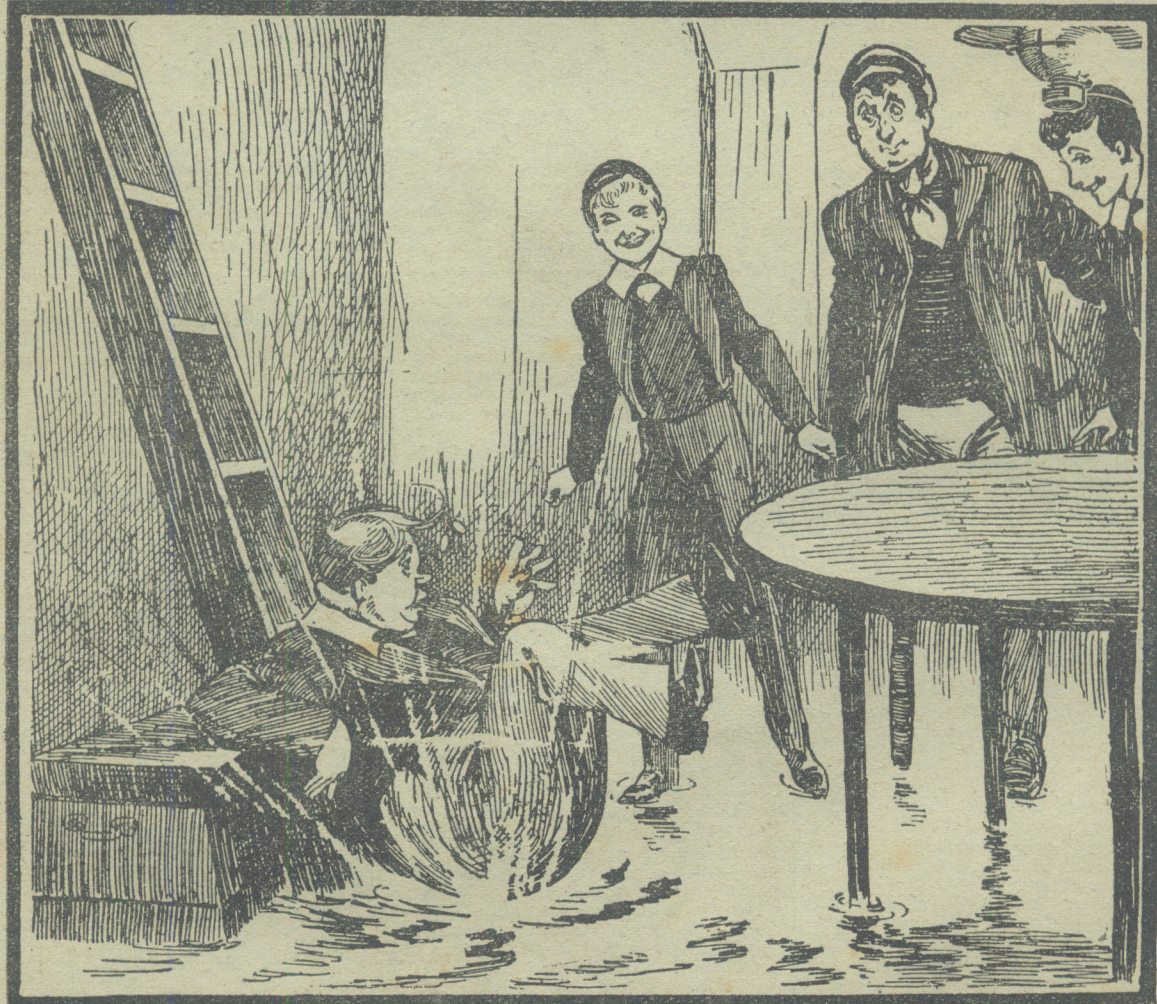
THE ALL-SCHOOL-STORY PAPER!

The
Penny Popular

Week Ending
April 21st, 1917.

No.
237.

Three Complete Stories of—
HARRY WHARTON & Co.—JIMMY SILVER & Co.—TOM MERRY & Co.



BILLY BUNTER'S GREAT FALL!

(An Amusing Incident from the Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co.,
contained in this Issue.)

THE ROOKWOOD WAXWORKS!

A Splendid Long, Complete
Story, dealing with
the Early Adventures of
JIMMY SILVER & CO.,
the Chums of Rookwood.
— BY —
OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver Knows What to Do.

WHAT are we going to do?" asked Jimmy Silver, sitting on the table in the end study at Rookwood, and looking at his chums, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby. "What are we going to do, kids? Have you thought?"

"Thought!" said Raby. "I've been thinking all day, till I've got a pain in my brain, and—"

"And nothing's come of it," said Lovell; "which is the usual result of Raby's cogitations on any subject!"

"Well, I—"

"Dry up, Raby, and go on thinking!" said Jimmy Silver. "No good talking if you haven't thought of anything. What about you, Lovell?"

"I'm in the same boat with Raby," said Lovell frankly. "I haven't thought of anything, either."

"Which is the usual result of Lov—" began Raby.

"Oh, rats!" said Lovell. "Don't borrow my smart sayings like that, Raby. Have you thought of anything, Jimmy? I believe you have, by the gleam in the corner of your eye."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I have an idea," he replied.

"Then get it off your chest, my son!" said Lovell. "I don't suppose it's a very good one, but get it off before it vanishes—quick!"

But Jimmy Silver seemed to be in no hurry. He thrust his hands deep in his trousers-pockets, and a very thoughtful expression came over his keen face. The chums waited for him to speak with some impatience.

There was something "on" at Rookwood, and the chums of the end study—known, since the coming of Jimmy Silver to the school, as the Fistical Four—had met in council to discuss a most important matter.

Coombe Church had been in need of repairs for the last fifty years or so, and at this time the vicar was raising a fund to get the necessary work done. It was a praiseworthy object, but cash came in slowly, and the idea had been mooted at Rookwood of doing something to help it on.

The Sixth Form had really started the plan, but when it was known that the Sixth were going to give a theatrical entertainment in aid of the church fund, every other Form in the school was fired by the ambition to go and do likewise.

The Moderns followed the example of the Sixth. They didn't get up a theatrical representation, but Tommy Dodd, Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle planned an entertainment, in which con-



"Ladies and gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver, advancing to the front of the stage, "you here behold the famous Rookwood waxworks, the pride and glory of this ancient college, which have performed—I mean, been exhibited—before all the crowned heads of Europe and America—"

juring and reciting played a prominent part.

And when the Classics heard what was being planned by the Moderns, of course they were not to be left behind.

The Classics were bound to do something to show that they were not to be put in the shade by the Moderns. But what were they to do?

That was the question which troubled the peace of the end study.

The Sixth had had first chance, as it were, and the Moderns had followed it, and there seemed to be nothing left for the Classics to do.

But the Fistical Four, who claimed to be the heads of the Fourth—a claim which was fiercely contested by the heads of the Moderns, Dodd, Cook, and Doyle—put their heads together over the matter.

As Jimmy Silver remarked, it was simply an impossibility for the Classics to sit down and do nothing while the Moderns were distinguishing themselves.

"Well, what's the wheeze?" demanded Lovell, after waiting a full minute for Jimmy to speak. "Have you got one, or were you rotting?"

"I reckon I've got one!"

"Then let's hear it!"

"What price a waxwork exhibition?"

Jimmy Silver asked the question quite coolly. Lovell, Newcome, and Raby stared at him. Jimmy Silver met their amazed stares without flinching.

"What price a waxwork exhibition?" asked Lovell slowly.

"Did you say a waxwork exhibition, or did my eyes deceive me?" asked Raby.

"That's what I said," said Jimmy Silver. "A waxwork exhibition would

knock spots off the Sixth Form theatricals and the Moderns mouldy old conjuring!"

"Yes," said Newcome sarcastically, "it's a jolly good wheeze! We could get a ripping set of waxworks for a couple of hundred pounds!"

"Or we could hire them for thirty quids!" said Raby. "I've got fifteen pence to put towards it."

"And I've got ninnepence," said Lovell. "Which shall it be, Jimmy—shall we hire 'em or buy 'em outright?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"My dear chaps, I know real waxworks would be expensive, and a bit beyond our means," he remarked; "but that's not the idea."

"What the dickens is the idea, then?"

"Suppose we gave a waxwork exhibition, and got up a number of Classics as waxwork figures, and—"

Lovell, Newcome, and Raby gave a simultaneous start.

"Ripping!" they shouted, in chorus, falling on Jimmy Silver's neck, and hugging him. "It's a great wheeze! We'll take the shine out of the Moderns!"

And the Fistical Four sallied forth in search of Hooker, Jones minor, and Selwyn, whom they decided would be suitable to assist them in the great scheme.

The Classical chums were speedily gathered together, and the wheeze was excitedly explained.

"I'm agreeable!" said Hooker immediately.

"Quite so!" said Jones minor and Selwyn together.

"You see," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully, "it will need all our brains on the subject to make it a success. You will have to make-up with grease-paint, and wigs, and theatrical costumes, to represent famous characters. The audience will suppose you are real waxworks."

"Will they?" said Lovell doubtfully.

"Yes, if we do the trick properly. I shall be spokesman, and make speeches explaining to the audience about the figures, and Robinson can wind you up."

"Robinson can do what?"

"Wind up the figures. He might as well do something for once. He can't very well refuse, as it's for a good cause."

"If Robinson starts winding me up there will be ructions!"

"Don't be an ass, Lovell! He'll go behind you with a rattle, and make a row, which will make the audience think he is winding you up!"

"Oh, I see! I don't mind that."

"Then you'll all move your arms and legs, and so on, and the people'll think we've got a set of waxworks that will knock spots off Madame Threeswords!"

"Good!" said Newcome. "Is there going to be a chamber of horrors, though? If so, that's where Hooker and Selwyn will come out strong!"

"I'll chamber of horrors you!" exclaimed Hooker. "You—"

"Hold on! Don't start rowing! Newcome, shut up! I'll keep peace in this party if I have to knock all your heads together!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Let's get on with the washing! I'm going to be spokesman. Lovell can make up as Napoleon."

Lovell struck an attitude, and thrust his hand into his breast. Hooker looked at him curiously.

"Is he going to do that?" he asked. "I don't want to be critical, but what about the audience? They'll wonder if he's off his giddy rocker, you know!"

"Quite so!"

Lovell turned red, and Jimmy Silver went on hastily:

"Hooker will be Julius Cæsar."

"Good!" said Hooker. "That will suit me down to the ground! Ah, the Ides of March are come!"

"Oh, I say! He's not going to recite, is he?" asked Lovell, in alarm. "If Hooker recites, you know, you can't expect me to stand in the same row with him. It's asking too much of any man, and you know I'm not strong."

Hooker looked daggers at him. Jimmy Silver hurried on.

"Jones minor will do for a cavalier."

"Quite so!" said Jones minor promptly.

"Raby can represent an Irish moonlighter. Newcome can make up as Nelson, and Selwyn will do as a British general."

"Good idea. But about the costumes?"

"We can hire the props at the costumiers in Coombe."

"And the paint?"

"Same place. They sell it, and they'll tell us what we want besides. We shall have to get a little practice at making up, of course."

"And when is it coming off?" asked Hooker.

"Oh, you'll wash it off with hot water after the exhibition!"

"Ass! I mean when is the exhibition coming off?"

"Why couldn't you say so, then? Lemme see, the Sixth are giving their rotten dramatic show on Wednesday evening. The Head has allowed them the hall to give it in, and the charge for the admission of the public is a shilling a head. The Moderns have bespoke the hall for Thursday, to give their rotten conjuring stuff. We shall have to give our exhibition on Friday, I suppose."

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That will give us time to get ready. The fund closes on Saturday, so we shall be just in time."

"Good! And we'll only charge a shilling for admission, and then we'll get a lot in, and half-price to the lower Forms."

"Good!"

And they all shook hands upon it solemnly.

By the Wednesday half-holiday the Classics had obtained the costumes and all the paraphernalia they required, and they worked hard to make themselves look as much like the personage they had been assigned to represent.

"Jolly good!" said Jimmy Silver at last. "I think it will be a ripping success. Now get all that stuff off and let's have tea."

In the absorbing interest of their occupation the chums had forgotten tea-time, and they suddenly made the discovery that they were ravenously hungry. Jimmy Silver made the tea and laid the table, while the others removed the rig-out.

"Now buck up with it," said the leader of the Fistical Four, "or we shall be late for the Sixth Form Piffle Society's dramatic representation."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Two of the Shows.

IT is not our intention to give a description of the Sixth Form dramatic performance. It must have been good, because all the Sixth in the front seats clapped and cheered most heartily, and Dr. Chisholm and the vicar applauded.

But for these circumstances, some of the audience might have thought that it was bad. The Fistical Four and their companions applauded, too, but, as Jimmy Silver remarked, they were not applauding the acting.

"These chaps don't know how to do things," Jimmy Silver remarked. "But we ought to encourage them, and they'll make greater efforts in the future. They don't do things in our style, of course. But we ought to encourage the Sixth."

"Good!" grinned Hooker. "Let's applaud for all we're worth. But, I say, did you ever see anything in all your natural so absolutely rotten?"

"No; I don't think I ever did."

"Bulkeley's cuckoo," said Lovell. "The rest are silly cuckoos. Let's cheer the asses!"

The Fourth Formers cheered the performers for the good of the cause. The scene finally ended amid a scene of enthusiasm.

The vicar clapped because the fund was being raised for his church. The masters clapped because the cause was a noble one. The Sixth clapped because the actors belonged to the Sixth. The Lower Form boys clapped because the Sixth clapped.

The outsiders clapped because everybody else did, and they thought the vicar must surely know whether the performance ought to be clapped or not.

Consequently, there never was such a clapping heard before within the walls of Rookwood, and the blushing actors came many times before the curtain to receive their calls.

"Awful piffle," said Jimmy Silver, as the chums went out of the hall with the crowd. "I reckon our waxworks will give that stuff the giddy knock."

The next day the Sixth Form Dramatic Society carried their heads very high. They went about, as Jimmy Silver remarked, looking as if they were a Seventh or Eighth Form instead of a common or garden Sixth. The chums sniffed at their cheek, and the Moderns joined heartily in the sniffing.

The Moderns seldom agreed with the Classics in anything, but they did agree that the airs the Sixth put on over that dramatic performance were simply idiotic.

Prompt to time that evening the Classical chums were in the hall for the Modern show.

Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook, in evening-dress, were there to give their conjuring tricks, and the hall was very full.

All Rookwood had come, and many from Coombe and the countryside. The vicar was there, of course, and he had brought his wife and daughter.

The performers had nothing to complain of in their audience, a numerous one, and quite ready to applaud whatever was done on the stage, good, bad, or indifferent.

But the conjurers were nervous.

Tommy Dodd asked for a watch to perform the ancient trick of smashing it up, and then returning it intact to the owner.

The vicar, with an expansive smile, handed up an enormous silver watch. It was a watch which, to judge from its bulk and appearance, had been in the vicar's family for years, if not for generations. Tommy Dodd took it with a bow, and the trick proceeded.

Something went wrong. Afterwards, Tommy Dodd could not quite explain how it was. He blamed Tommy Cook. But as Tommy Cook blamed Tommy Dodd as much as Tommy Dodd blamed Tommy Cook, it was impossible to tell which was in fault.

But certainly something went wrong, for Tommy Dodd did not smash up a bogus watch, and then restore the vicar's timepiece with the usual flourish.

He smashed up the vicar's watch, and turned almost cold when he discovered what he had done. He went on smashing mechanically, wondering what on earth he should do, and the audience clapped. He had so evidently broken up the vicar's watch, that even the Classics were impressed.

"Well, that's smart of Doddy," said Jimmy Silver. "I'd swear that was the real watch he was smashing."

"And now, gentlemen, Mr. Dodd will restore the watch to its owner," piped Tommy Cook.

The vicar rose with a smile still on his face. But as he caught sight of Tommy Dodd's expression, the smile died away. He held out his hand. Tommy Dodd, turning quite pale, placed the smashed watch in it. The vicar's face was a study.

"This—this—this is my watch!" he murmured.

"Ye-e-e-es, sir," said Tommy Dodd. "Something went wrong. I—I think—I—"

The vicar's feelings when he saw the wreck of the family timepiece may be imagined. But he proved himself an old sport, as Tommy Dodd said afterwards. He put the broken watch quickly in his pocket, and worked up a smile.

"Wonderful!" he said.

The audience did not see the broken watch, or detect the sarcastic inflection in the vicar's voice. Only a few near the vicar knew the truth. Tommy Dodd's ears were burning as he listened to the applause and clapping.

Fortunately the entertainment improved as the conjurers regained their nerves. It ended amid cheers, and then the recitations began. The conjuring, the Classics had decided, was rot. They came to the conclusion that the recitations were the same, only more so.

"The Charge of the Light Brigade," recited by a fellow who forgot half the words, and "Kissing Cup's Race," by Tommy Doyle, who forgot three-

quarters of it, did not have an exhilarating effect upon the audience.

They began to melt away. When Towle gave "Casabianca," the hall was half empty. When he finished it, only a dozen people remained.

Then Tommy Dodd came on to give "The Women of Mumbles' Head," and the doctor and the vicar retreated quietly. Tommy Dodd finished, and awoke to the fact that only the Fistical Four and their companions remained in the hall.

"Go on!" said Hooker encouragingly. "We're going to stick it out to the end, if it kills us!"

"Keep it going," said Jimmy Silver. "They've all gone but us, but we're game."

It was Tommy Cook's turn next, with "The Heroic Fireman." The comrades stood it out manfully, and waited for the next. Leggett was the next on the programme, with "King Robert of Sicily." The Fistical Four waited, but he did not appear. They shouted for him, but he did not come.

"My hat!" said Hooker. "They're gone!"

The Moderns were indeed gone. The rest of the recitations remained unrecited, and the Classical chums marched out of the hall.

"Well," said Jimmy Silver, "I reckon we shall knock that show, kids!"

And the others "reckoned" the same.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Waxworks.

THE following day was a busy one for the Classical juniors. The waxworks were to appear at eight in the evening, and most of the work fell upon Jimmy Silver, as manager and master of the ceremonies.

Jones minor and Selwyn had to be driven to constant rehearsals of their parts in the intervals between school work, and, of course, the hardest part was to make them stand still in the style of living pictures.

All the juniors found that hard. One would shift, or twist, or sniff, or sneeze every few moments. They were almost the despair of Jimmy Silver, but he stuck to it.

And, indeed, after some practice, the youngsters did very well. Jimmy Silver promised to keep the audience as far away from them as he could, but it was certain that most of the spectators would want to see the waxworks close at hand.

"You must simply stick it out," said Jimmy Silver. "Do your best, that's all. Mind you don't forget what my signals mean when I make them. You look ripping in that giddy toga, Hooker—you do, really!"

Hooker drew up his draped figure. He rather fancied himself as Julius Caesar.

"And you're all right as Nap," said Jimmy Silver, turning to Lovell. "Remember about the fist in the coat. Don't sneeze if you can help it."

"Right you are!"

"You'll have to put on cloaks to get down to the hall without being spotted," said Jimmy. "We'll get into the hall by the entrance at the upper end, from the passage, so we're not likely to be spotted. It's getting near the time."

Then Robinson walked in.

"Ready, Jimmy?"

"Yes. Have you got the rattle?"

"Here you are," said Robinson, producing it. "I know what I've got to do. I say, you've made up their faces wonderfully! Anybody would think they were wax."

Robinson spoke truly. The make-up and the costumes were equally good, and

Jimmy Silver was pardonably proud of his work.

"Are they going into the hall, Robinson?" asked Jimmy.

Robinson grinned.

"Rather! They're going in in crowds. There are a lot of people from Coombe, and some from Laleham. All the school will be there, too."

"Good! We'll give them a good show."

"Most of the fellows don't believe there are any waxworks," said Robinson. "Of course, I've kept mum. They'll soon see for themselves."

Robinson was right there. Scepticism as to the reality of the waxworks was very rife in the school. Some of the fellows even declared that the whole thing was a gigantic hoax of the end study, but others pointed to the fact that Jimmy Silver had certainly obtained the Head's permission to use the lecture-hall.

There was a great deal of curiosity on the subject, and quite a scramble for seats. The hall was filled by a quarter to eight, and fellows were still dropping in.

A good many people had to stand. It was pretty clear that, from the financial point of view at least, the waxwork exhibition would be a success.

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The audience watched the clock. The curtain was down upon the stage. Jimmy Silver was too businesslike to keep his audience waiting a minute after the appointed time.

Promptly as the school clock rang out the hour of eight, the curtain went up. It went up without a hitch, and the scene prepared by the Classical chums of the Fourth was disclosed.

There was a murmur of admiration in the hall. The scene was really a striking one. Jimmy Silver, in evening-dress, with a gorgeous waistcoat, and a rose in his button-hole, stood as cool as a cucumber. He had never been known to lose his nerve, and he was all there now.

Robinson stood at the back of the stage, looking rather self-conscious. Set out in a row facing the audience were the waxworks.

"Good!" exclaimed a score of voices.

They were really good. There was Napoleon, in coat and cocked-hat, his arms folded, his features bearing a striking resemblance to the portraits of the great Corsican.

There was Julius Caesar, in toga complete, with severe features and a wreathed brow, looking as natural as life.

There were Nelson and a British general, a cavalier, and an Irish moonlighter. Six waxwork figures, all of the best.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver, advancing to the front of the stage, "you here behold the famous Rookwood waxworks, the pride and glory of this ancient college, which have performed—I mean, been exhibited before all the crowned heads of Europe and America—"

"How many crowned heads in America?" sang out Tommy Dodd's voice from the body of the hall.

Jimmy Silver ignored the frivolous question.

"They are now exhibited, positively for this night only, for the benefit of the fund with whose object you are all acquainted," said Jimmy Silver.

"Hear, hear!"

"You will understand," went on the showman, "that these are not common or garden waxworks. When wound up they move like real human beings, and by the aid of my wonderful gift of ventriloquism—ahem!—I can make them speak in voices that sound perfectly natural."

"Bravo!"

"Rats!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bunkum!"

"I shall be pleased to put it to the proof, for the satisfaction of the audience," said Jimmy Silver. "Any gentleman who doubts the reality of the exhibition has only to get upon his hind legs and look."

A fat, country lad rose from his seat. "May Oi come on and look at them close, measter?" he inquired.

Jimmy Silver frowned.

"I am afraid you will obstruct the view of the audience—"

"No, he won't," said Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook, who sat just behind the country youth. "Let him come on! Why shouldn't he? Go on, kid!"

"Certainly, if you like!"

Jimmy Silver had to consent. The country youth advanced upon the dais, looking very red, but quite resolved to examine the waxworks closely, and satisfy himself.

He looked at Napoleon. Napoleon kept an absolutely unmoved face, staring straight before him at the audience, and the country youth was satisfied.

He passed on to Julius Caesar, and thought he detected a slight twitch of the Roman's eyelid. His hand went closer to the waxwork, with a pin in it. The next moment there was a terrific yell that nearly made the countryman jump out of his boots.

He stared at the figure. Hooker had recovered his coolness in a second, and he was still staring straight before him, his hand half raised, as if to address the Senate.

"Who! He he—"

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver blandly, "you see there the wonderful ventriloquism of which I told you. I ask you candidly whether that howl did not sound as if it proceeded from the throat of the waxwork figure?"

"It did indeed!" said Dr. Chisholm, smiling.

"Wonderful!" gasped the vicar. "This is indeed marvellous! Such skill in the difficult art of ventriloquism is exceedingly rare in a lad so very young."

The doctor smiled, but did not reply.

"Bravo!" shouted the audience.

"But, measter," began the country youth, gaping at Jimmy Silver—"but—"

Jimmy Silver bustled him off.

"You are interrupting the proceedings!" he said severely. "You've satisfied yourself, and now sit down, and don't obstruct the view."

And the country youth subsided. "They be real flesh and blood, feyther, I believe!" he confided to an old farmer sitting next to him.

The farmer sniffed the sniff of superior knowledge.

"Thee beest a vool, Garge!" he replied. "Did thee ever see a huming being with such a face as that? It's very good for a waxwork, but it's nothin' like a real huming face, my boy."

Julius Cæsar heard the remark, and he looked daggers at his frank critic.

The farmer gasped as he saw it.

"The thing's bewitched!" he muttered. "I'll swear I saw its face move!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Dodd and Cook.

"Good old waxworks! There's a lot of hanky-panky about them, I fancy."

"Ladies and gentlemen—"

"You've said that before!"

"The exhibition of the wonderful mechanical waxworks will now proceed."

"Let her rip!"

"Boy!" Robinson did not move.

"Boy! Wind the waxworks!"

"Are you talking to me, Jimmy Silver?"

"Yes. Wind the waxworks!"

"What do you mean by calling me boy? I'm in the same form as you are, and—"

"Wind the waxworks!" hissed Jimmy Silver.

And Robinson rather sulkily obeyed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Classics Take the Cake.

THE audience looked on with deep and intense interest as Jimmy Silver gave his instructions to Robinson. The latter moved behind the waxworks, starting with Napoleon. He made a noise with the rattle, keeping the latter well out of sight of the audience.

There was a gasp of amazement from the people in front.

Napoleon withdrew his hand slowly from the breast of his coat, and raised it as if to screen his eyes from the light, in the well-known Napoleonic attitude.

"Wonderful!"

"Bravo!"

"Splendid!"

Most of the Rookwood fellows in the hall looked sceptical. They smelt a rat, so to speak. But they were too loyal to give the game away. They cheered, and the rest of the audience took it all in good faith. There were over a hundred strangers present, and to them the waxworks were waxworks, whatever they were to the boys of Rookwood.

"Boy! Wind up the next figure!" said Jimmy Silver, with a wave of the hand.

Robinson stepped behind Julius Cæsar, and the rattle rattled again. The spectators watched with great interest.

Julius Cæsar lowered his oratorical right hand, and gripped his sword, and slowly and solemnly drew it from the scabbard.

"Wonderful!"

Napoleon was standing shading his eyes, Julius Cæsar with his sword in the air, motionless as statues—or waxworks.

"Boy, wind up the next figure!"

Robinson went to the British General and wound him up. He raised his hand in salute to the audience, who cheered again.

So on with the Cavalier and Nelson. Nelson put his telescope to his blind eye, and they cheered.

Then Robinson came to the Irish Moonlighter.

He gave an extra loud rattle, and the Moonlighter was observed to give a start. Jimmy Silver looked daggers at him, and then, to the amazement of the spectators, the Moonlighter spoke apologetically.

"I'm very sorry Silver, but the beast absolutely startled me, he did!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tommy Dodd.

"Good old Raby!"

"I'm very sorry! I am—"

"Shut up, you fool!" hissed Jimmy Silver, forgetting himself for a moment.

"You utter ass!"

"Who are you calling an ass?"

"Silence!"

"That's all very well—"

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver hurriedly, "this is the climax of the show, the dialogue between myself and the waxwork figure, conducted by means of my ventriloquism."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hold your tongue, you silly fathead!" whispered the Cavalier, bending a little towards the Moonlighter. "Don't you—"

"Rats to you! Who are you talking to?"

"You silly ass!" whispered Julius Cæsar.

"What, are you starting, too?"

Jimmy Silver gripped the unruly waxwork by the shoulder.

The audience were nearly in convulsions by this time. Raby's unguarded speeches had completely given the show away. They rolled in their seats, and simply howled at the sight of Jimmy Silver's frantic efforts to still keep up appearances.

"Dear me!" said the vicar. "They are living persons, after all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook.

Jimmy Silver shook the obstinate Moonlighter violently.

"Will you shut up?" he panted.

"Can't you see—"

The Cavalier brought down a gauntlet with a thump upon Raby's chest, and stopped him.

"Will you shut up?"

Raby staggered for a moment, and then he went for the Cavalier. The gauntlet went with a crash to the floor, and the moonlighter's shillelagh followed it. Then the audience had the unexpected treat of beholding a Cavalier in close combat with an Irish moonlighter.

"Buck up!"

"Let him have it!"

The Cavalier hurled the moonlighter down, and sat on his chest. That was more than Lovell could stand. The hilarity of the audience was increased by the sight of Napoleon Bonaparte seizing the Cavalier by the shoulders to drag him off.

It was time for the other members of the company to chip in, and Hooker lost no time about it. He collared Lovell, and Napoleon and Julius Cæsar went rolling on the floor together.

Jimmy Silver looked on in utter dismay, so did the British General and Lord Nelson. The noise was terrible. There was no stopping the combat. Jimmy Silver rang down the curtain, and the scene was shut off from view at last. The audience was almost in hysterics.

Even the Head was laughing, even the vicar was cackling away, and the tears were running down almost every face. Dodd and Cook were screaming, and throughout the hall rose wave on wave of laughter.

The show was over; nothing more was to be seen, though sounds of strife could still be heard behind the scenes. The audience dispersed; and, utterly as the waxwork show had been given away, they all agreed that the Classics' entertainment had knocked the previous ones completely—though in rather an unexpected manner.

"It was all through that ass Raby," said Lovell, afterwards, as he wiped off the grease-paint and bathed a black eye. "We might have known he would muck it all up!"

"Never mind!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Everybody says it's the best show they've seen for a long time, and so long as it was a success one way or another, we needn't grumble. We've taken the cake, and that's enough, I reckon."

And the other members of the Fistical Four "reckoned" likewise.

THE END.

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