

THE ROOKWOOD RAIDERS

A Play in Verse for Amateur Actors.

Introducing -

JIMMY SILVER & CO OF ROOKWOOD. ~.

[NOTE.—This play may be performed by readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, without fee or licence, on condition that the words, "By permission of the Editor of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on each programme.]

HINTS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF WOULD-BE PERFORMERS.

- (1) The part of Tubby Muffin (which is the biggest in the Play) should be allotted to a plump performer, and one who can memorise well.
- (2) A special guard should be set over the tuck before the curtain rises—otherwise the audience will gaze upon an empty tuck-shop!
- (3) If Eton jackets are unobtainable the Play can be performed in everyday garb.
- (4) Ask your favourite master to undertake the part of Mr. Bootles.
- (5) Be sure to hold several rehearsals before the actual performance, to ensure that every member of the cast is word-perfect.
- (6) Don't "rush" the performance—otherwise it will prove too short. Speak slowly and distinctly, and above all, be natural. The audience will then refrain from hurling bad eggs and other missiles at the performers.
- (7) The Editor of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL will be glad to receive reports of each performance of the Play.

Characters :

JIMMY SILVER	..	..	..	..	} Members of the Classical Fourth.
LOVELL	..	..	..	..	
RABY	..	..	..	..	
NEWCOME	..	..	..	..	
PEELE	..	..	..	..	} Three of the black sheep.
GOWER	..	..	..	..	
LATTREY	..	..	..	..	
HANSOM	..	..	..	..	A conceited Fifth-former.
TUBBY MUFFIN	..	..	..	..	The glutton and spy of the Classical Fourth.
SERGEANT KETTLE	..	..	..	..	Proprietor of the school tuck-shop.
MR. BOOTLES..	..	..	..	..	Master of the Classical Fourth.

Also a score of the rank and file of the Fourth.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The School Tuckshop.*

(JIMMY SILVER & Co. are within. SERGEANT KETTLE waits expectantly for orders.)

SILVER :

In funds at last ! My worthy aunt
Has forwarded a fiver !

LOVELL :

You lucky dog ! Your comrades can't
Make merry with a stiver !

SILVER :

But you are going to join with me
In one gigantic bust-up ! See ?

RABY :

You fellows must agree this whim is
A most delightful one of Jimmy's !

LOVELL and NEWCOME : Yes, rather !

SILVER :

Five quid will clear this blessed shop
Of buns and tarts and ginger-pop !

SERGT. KETTLE :

This afternoon, gents, I surmise
I'm getting in some fresh supplies.
I shall be pleased, without a doubt,
To see my patrons clear me out !

SILVER :

You chaps ! We'll have tremendous fun ;
I'll stand a feed to everyone !

LOVELL :

Yes, that will be a ripping wheeze ;
Just let them order what they please !

(JIMMY SILVER walks to the door and makes
a megaphone of his hands.)

SILVER :

Walk up, my merry friends, walk up !
And sample what you like !
Come and partake of bite and sup,
Ere Kettle goes on strike !

LOVELL (over SILVER'S shoulder) :

Although you chaps might think it odd, he
Is standing treat to everybody !

CHORUS FROM WITHOUT : Hurrah !

(Enter a crowd of juniors, with TUBBY MUFFIN first and foremost.)

TUBBY MUFFIN :

I say, you fellows, I will eat
A loaf, a tin of potted meat,
Some marmalade, a pot of jam,
Twelve doughnuts and a round of ham !

SILVER :

Dry up, you fat and greedy freak !

LOVELL :

I've never heard such frightful cheek !

MUFFIN :

Oh, really ! I've not finished yet !
That's not enough for me, you bet !
I want some jam-tarts (tuppenny ones) ;
I want a crowd of currant buns,
And in my hunger I'll devour
Six rabbit pies within the hour ;
Some maids-of-honour (just a score) ;
I'll tell you if I want some more ;
Some treacle tart, dished out in doles,
And half a dozen sausage rolls.
Then (if I find I have more room)
Some whipped-cream walnuts I'll con-
sume.

So get a move on, Sergeant Kettle !

I'll show you that I'm on my mettle !

RABY :

If Tubby Muffin shifts all that,
By Jove, he'll wax exceeding fat !

NEWCOME :

The silly, gormandising coon
Will go off like a toy balloon !

SILVER :

A fiver would not be enough
To buy that quantity of stuff !

MUFFIN :

Starvation has me in its grip !
I cannot let this prospect slip !

PEELE :

Now, Sergeant Kettle, look alive !

GOWER :

Hand over ginger-pop for five !

LATTREY :

I vote we rush the counter first,
And let old Kettle do his worst !

SILVER :

Just hark at them, the awful cads !
I vote we chuck them out !

LOVELL :

Hear, hear ! Such aggravating lads
We'll swiftly put to rout !

(The juniors make a movement towards
PEELE & Co. They stop short as HANSOM
of the Fifth enters.)

HANSOM :

Look here, you greedy, wolfish mob—

HOW TO MAKE UP THE CHARACTERS



JIMMY SILVER



SERG^T KETTLE



MR BOOTLES



PEELE



LOVELL



LATTREY



RABY



NEWCOME



GOWER



HANSOM



TUBBY MUFFIN

NEWCOME :

Remove your face ; it makes me sob !

HANSOM :

Disgusting orgies such as these——

SILVER :

Now, Hansom, turn the tap off, please !

HANSOM :

Excessive feeding is a crime——

RABY :

Then Hansom should be doing time !

(*Loud laughter.*)

HANSOM :

Now, Sergeant Kettle, buzz about,
And help me put these rascals out !

SERGT. KETTLE :

No, Master Hansom, I will not !
You're simply talking tommy-rot !
These gents are here to buy my stuff ;
Clear out, or else I'll cut up rough !

HANSOM :

How dare you order me to clear,
You pudding-headed profiteer ?

SERGT. KETTLE (*advancing round the counter towards HANSOM*) :

You call me names ? My eye ! Here goes !
Take that—and that—both on the nose !

(*HANSOM staggers back as the infuriated Sergeant attacks him.*)

SILVER :

Our Sergeant's of a fighting race ;
He scraps like Wells or Beckett !

LOVELL :

Just look at poor old Hansom's face !
The Sergeant's tried to wreck it !

SERGT. KETTLE (*still attacking HANSOM*) :

I'll clear you out, and quickly, too !

HANSOM :

Ow ! Keep him off ! Yow ! Groo !
Yaroooooh !

(*Exit HANSOM, pursued by SERGT. KETTLE and a roar of laughter. In due course, the SERGEANT returns, and is kept very busy serving tuck.*)

MUFFIN : I say, you fellows, please don't squeeze !

RABY (*smacking his lips*) :

I've never tasted tarts like these !

MUFFIN :

You fathead, Silver ! Mind my " pop " !

SILVER :

Get out of this confounded shop !

LOVELL :

Yes, Tubby fairly fills the place !

Let's send him flying into space !

(*A number of boots clump together on TUBBY MUFFIN's person, and he disappears through the doorway.*)

VOICE FROM WITHOUT :

You beasts ! You rotters ! Just you wait !

NEWCOME :

These buttered scones are just first-rate !

(*PEELE, LATTREY and GOWER struggle to get near the counter, but they are beaten back, and are unsuccessful in their efforts to take part in the feed. Meanwhile, the good things are disposed of, and all the juniors, with the exception of PEELE, LATTREY, and GOWER, leave the tuck-shop. SERGEANT KETTLE disappears behind the scenes.*)

PEELE :

We didn't get a single crumb !

GOWER :

No, rather not ! I feel quite glum !

LATTREY :

Those cads monopolised the show !

PEELE :

It really is too thick, you know !

GOWER :

Renewed supplies will be here soon :
They're coming in this afternoon.

PEELE :

Then why not raid the jolly lot ?

LATTREY :

It's far too risky, is it not ?

PEELE :

Not if we came at dead of night,
With stealthy footsteps creeping ;
We'll raid the place by candle-light,
Whilst everyone is sleeping !

GOWER :

But Sergeant Kettle would awaken——

LATTREY :

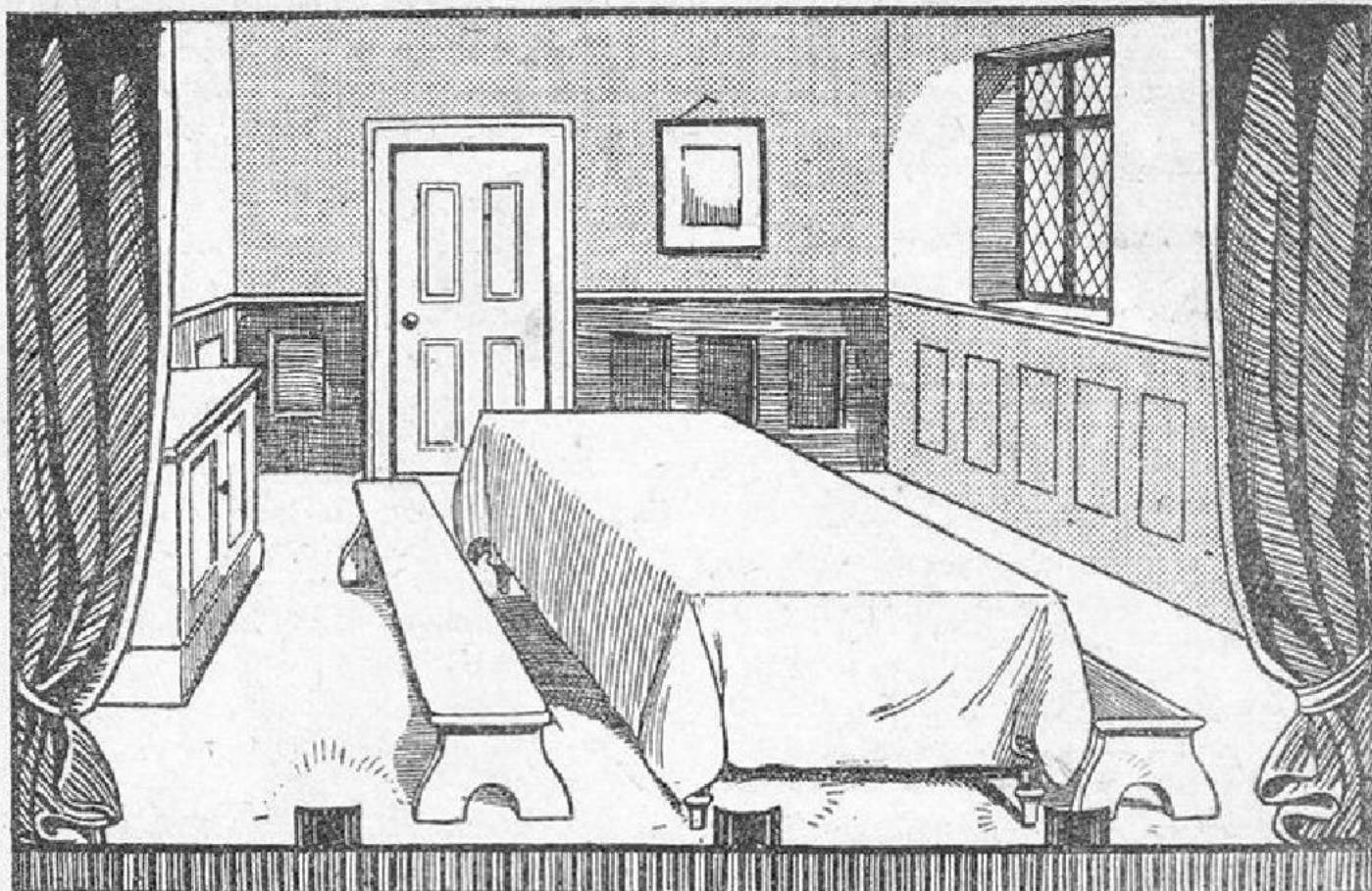
And we should be severely shaken !

PEELE :

The crusty warrior won't be there,
A fact of which I am aware.
He's going to shut his merry shop
And to the village blithely hop.

GOWER :

That's ripping ! We can raid the tuck——



This is how the stage should be set in the Dining Hall scene. If a door cannot be arranged at the back of the stage, the performers can enter from the wings. Everything shown is quite plain, and should cost very little to set up.

LATTREY :

And scoff it, too, with any luck.

PEELE :

At night's most witching, solemn hour,
When midnight booms out from the
tower,
We'll quit our beds, so snug and warm,
And then evacuate the dorm.

GOWER :

Then hither will we make our way,
And climb in through the window, eh ?

LATTREY :

We'll cart the grub away in sacks——

PEELE :

And swiftly cover up our tracks.

GOWER :

Of course, we must keep strictly mum
About this little scheme, by gum !
I shouldn't like to see our stuff in
The grasping hands of Tubby Muffin !

PEELE :

This secret is between us three,
And no one else shall share it, see ?
We'll let no others queer our pitch,
And all will go without a hitch.

LATTREY :

Now, having planned our dark devices,
We'll melt away like strawberry ices !
(Exit the three plotters.)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The School Tuckshop (by night).*

(PEELE, GOWER and LATTREY, are within.
Candles are burning on the counter. The
rascals are busy cramming food into sacks.)

PEELE :

Tuck—glorious tuck ! What deeds of
shame
Have been committed in thy name !

GOWER :

Grub—glorious grub ! What acts of vice
You drive us to, 'cos you're so nice !

LATTREY :

Tarts—goodly tarts ! How sweet you are,
When viewed beneath the midnight star !

PEELE :

Come to the slaughter like a lamb
Ye dough nuts ! Shed your strawberry jam !

GOWER :

Ye shrinking maids-of-honour, come !
We'll eat up every giddy crumb !

LATTREY :

Oh pies of ham and veal delicious,
You make me feel extremely vicious !

PEELE :

Fill high the sacks with tempting tuck !
Keep going, boys, and show your pluck !

GOWER (*in alarm*) :

Quick ! Put the candles out ! I hear
The sound of footsteps drawing near !

LATTREY :

Oh, crumbs ! If it should be a master
Our raid will end in dire disaster !

(*The candles are swiftly extinguished, and the
three juniors step back hastily into the gloom.*)

Enter TUBBY MUFFIN.)

MUFFIN :

Phew ! There's a ghastly smell about—
A smell of candles just put out !
I rather fancy Gower and Peele
And Lattrey have come here to steal !

(*TUBBY MUFFIN flashes an electric torch,
and the light reveals PEELE & Co. shrinking in
the background.*)

MUFFIN :

Ha, ha ! I've caught you in the act !
These bulging sacks with tuck are packed !

PEELE :

You spy ! You interfering worm !

GOWER :

I vote we make the beggar squirm !

LATTREY :

He heard us leave the dorm. no doubt,
And came to see what we're about.

MUFFIN :

My sense of duty—very strong—
Demands that I report you ;
I guessed that you were doing wrong,
And now, by Jove, I've caught you !

PEELE :

If you should dare to play the sneak—

GOWER :

We'll pulverise you, you fat freak !

LATTREY :

We'll paste you so that your own mother

PEELE :

Will promptly take you for another !

MUFFIN :

I care not for your empty threats ;
You'll have to pay for this, my pets !

GOWER :

Now, look here, Tubby, don't be mean !

MUFFIN :

You'll get it in the neck, old bean !

LATTREY :

Don't tell old Bootles ! I should dread—

MUFFIN :

It's all serene—I'll tell the Head !

PEELE :

You duffer ! We shall all be sacked !

MUFFIN :

I hope you will—and likewise whacked !

(*At this juncture the candles are re-lighted.*)

GOWER :

If you'll consent to let us off
And not to do your worst,
We'll undertake to let you scoff
Enough to make you burst !

MUFFIN :

Ah, now you're talking ! Pass that
sack,
And I'll commence my little snack !

PEELE :

It isn't safe to linger here,
With people on the prowl ;
I think perhaps we'd better clear.
Wherefore that savage scowl ?

MUFFIN :

Look here, I mean to have my whack—

LATTREY :

You chump ! You'll get us all the sack !

GOWER :

I vote we take the sacks away,
And put them in our study ;

PEELE :

Good egg ! It isn't safe to stay ;
Mind you don't make them muddy !

(*PEELE & Co. heave the sacks towards the
exit.*)

MUFFIN :

You stingy beasts, I give you warning——

GOWER :

Your feed must wait until the morning !

LATTREY :

We will not touch a scrap to-night,

We'll get it safely out of sight.

MUFFIN :

Look here, I'm hungry as a hunter !

PEELE :

You're just as bad as Billy Bunter !

MUFFIN :

I do not know who Bunter is,

And neither do I care ;

But I'm resolved to get to biz,

And have a feed, so there !

GOWER :

The silly, gormandising fool !

Give him a pie to keep him cool !

(LATTREY dives his hand into one of the sacks, and produces a pie, which he hands to TUBBY MUFFIN.)

MUFFIN :

It's seldom I resort to flattery,

But you are quite a sportsman, Lattrey !

PEELE :

To-morrow morning, you may rise

With eager, hungry, bulging eyes ;

Then to our study swiftly scoot,

And help yourself to all the loot !

MUFFIN :

Friend Peele, you are a king of virtue !

For those kind words, I'll never hurt you !

LATTREY :

Listen ! I thought I heard a thump——

GOWER :

The wind outside, you silly chump !

PEELE :

Now, Tubby ! Give us all a hand ;

We hope you clearly understand

That in the morning you may come

And feed until the final crumb

Is stowed within your inner man,

It is a fact, old chap—you can !

MUFFIN :

I'm longing for the rising-bell

To rouse me from my slumber ;

And first thing in the morning—well,

I'll quickly shift this lumber !

GOWER :

Come on, you rellows ! Mind the step !

PEELE :

Are you all right behind, there——

LATTREY :

Yep !

(The candles are extinguished. Silence reigns in the looted tuckshop. Exit EVERYBODY.)

END OF ACT. II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—The Fourth Form at breakfast in Hall. MR. BOOTLES presides at the head of the table.

SILVER :

Once more we sit to do our stuffin'——

LOVELL :

Say ! What's become of Tubby Muffin ?

RABY :

It isn't often Tubby misses

A gorgeous breakfast such as this is !

NEWCOME :

The bacon will get cold and dry

Unless the duffer's pretty fly !

MR. BOOTLES :

Of Muffin I can see no trace,

I gaze upon an empty place.

Where can the foolish boy have got to ?

When he arrives, I'll tell him not to !

SILVER :

Well, that sounds Irish, if you like !

LOVELL :

Perhaps young Tubby's gone on strike :

MR. BOOTLES :

The prospect will be very stormy

If Muffin chooses to ignore me.

How dare he stay away from hall ?

I do not like his style at all !

PEELE :

Some one has left him in the lurch :

Please, sir, may I conduct a search ?

MR. BOOTLES :

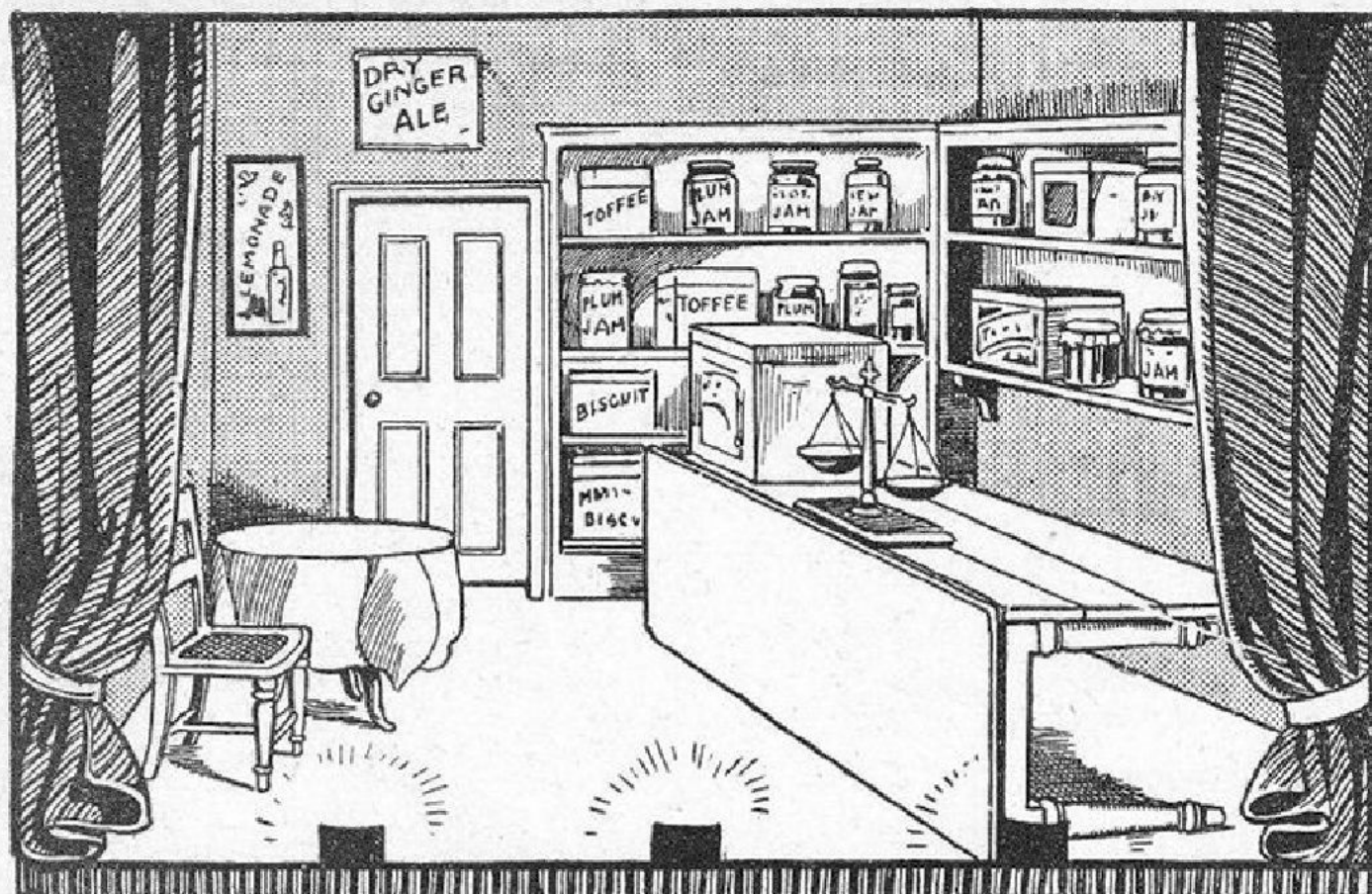
Yes, Peele ; but do not be too rough in

Your handling of the errant Muffin !

(Exit PEELE. He returns in a few moments with TUBBY MUFFIN. The fat junior has smears of jam on his cheeks, and his pockets are bulging.)

MR. BOOTLES :

Now, Muffin, you are very late !



A simple and cheap setting for the Tuck-Shop scene. No elaboration is required, but a clever stage-manager can introduce novelties likely to amuse the audience

MUFFIN :

That's so, sir. Brekker had to wait !

MR. BOOTLES :

Where have you occupied yourself ?

MUFFIN :

In Peele's big cupboard—every shelf.

MR. BOOTLES :

Why did you not come into hall ?

MUFFIN :

I couldn't hear the bell at all !

MR. BOOTLES :

That is a paltry, lame excuse !
I must deplore, with strong abuse
Your laziness ; and in addition
You'll write me out an imposition !

MUFFIN :

Oh, crumbs !

(TUBBY MUFFIN seats himself at the table, and starts unloading his pockets. A large variety of cakes and pastries is spread out on the table.)

SILVER :

Where did you get that little lot ?

MUFFIN :

That is my business, is it not ?

PEELE :

You duffer ! Put that stuff away—

MUFFIN :

These doughnuts are first-rate !

PEELE :

Quick ! Hide the blessed lot, I say—

MUFFIN :

These currant-buns are great !

LOVELL :

Say, have you robbed a baker's shop ?

NEWCOMBE :

Or caught the house-dame on the hop ?

MUFFIN :

I will not satisfy your questions,
Nor listen to your base suggestions.
This tuck is all my own, I guess.
Delicious ? Echo answers " Yes ! "

SILVER :

I really think you have been scrumping,
In which case, you deserve a bumping!

MUFFIN :

Oh, really, Silver! All this tuck
Was handed to me for my pluck!
And if you say I looted it
You shall not get a single bit!

MR. BOOTLES :

I must request you to keep silence;
Your voices can be heard a mile hence!

MUFFIN :

Sir! Silver's made a big mistake——

MR. BOOTLES :

Wherever did you get that cake?

MUFFIN :

A hamper came to me this morning——

MR. BOOTLES :

The post is not yet in. Take warning!

MUFFIN :

Ahem! I had some money sent——

MR. BOOTLES :

You're telling falsehoods with intent!

MUFFIN :

Oh, sir! I wish you would believe me!

MR. BOOTLES :

How dare you, Muffin, thus deceive me?

MUFFIN : A wealthy relative of mine——

SILVER :

Oh, stow it, Tubby! Draw the line!

MR. BOOTLES :

You have upon the table there
A most extensive bill of fare!
No hamper came; you had no money;
It therefore seems extremely funny
That you should come into possession
Of such a hoard. Now, make confession!

(Enter SERGEANT KETTLE. He stumps up
to Mr. Bootles, furious and distracted.)

MR. BOOTLES :

How dare you come in here like this?
Dear me! Is anything amiss?

SERGT. KETTLE :

Sir, in the watches of the night
Some scamp or scamps unknown,
Have ransacked my emporium, quite!
They haven't left a bone!

MR. BOOTLES (rising to his feet) :

Why, Sergeant Kettle, you surprise me!
You did your duty to apprise me.
You say that everything was taken?

SERGT. KETTLE :

Down to the last half-pound of bacon!

MR. BOOTLES :

A midnight raid! Perhaps it may be
The work of Silver, Lovell, Raby——

SILVER :

I fear you've made a big mistake,
For we should never undertake
To raid the tuck of Sergeant Kettle's
And rob the roses of their petals!

MR. BOOTLES :

But Sergeant Kettle's not a rose——

LOVELL :

A red one, judging by his nose!

(Laughter.)

MR. BOOTLES (sternly) :

This merriment and vulgar chatter
Must cease! This is a serious matter!

SILVER :

We are not guilty, I avow, sir——

NEWCOME :

We'll prove it to you here and now, sir!

SERGT. KETTLE :

If I might make so bold, sir,
I think young Muffin rolled, sir,
Into my shop at night-time,
And had a very bright time!

MUFFIN :

Oh, really, sergeant——

SERGT. KETTLE :

Stealing I bar, gent!

MR. BOOTLES :

Now, Muffin, what have you to say?
How did those foodstuffs come your way?

MUFFIN :

Oh, crumbs! I really couldn't tell you!

MR. BOOTLES :

In that case, I shall soon compel you!

MUFFIN :

I—really, sir, I didn't steal!
Don't let me come a cropper, Peele!
And please do all that's in your power
To save me from a licking, Gower!

LATTREY :

Shut up! or else my boot you'll feel!

MR. BOOTLES :

Lattrey, stand up! And Gower and
Peele!

(The three rascals, with their knees fairly
knocking together, rise in their places.)

MR. BOOTLES :

I am convinced that you three raided——

MUFFIN :

You're perfectly correct, sir—they did !

MR. BOOTLES :

Silver ! I very much regret
That you were taxed with this, and yet
The evidence all seemed to fit——

SILVER :

You couldn't help it, sir, a bit !

MR. BOOTLES :

You wretched boys who shrink before me,
Must all admit the outlook's stormy !
You are convicted of a theft
Mose base, unscrupulous, and deft !
And Dr. Chisholm soon shall know
The shady depths to which you go.
I mean to take you all before him,
And there and then I shall implore him
To castigate you one by one——

MUFFIN :

I say, you chaps, what ripping fun !

MR. BOOTLES :

You, Muffin, will be punished, too !

MUFFIN :

Oh, crumbs ! I wasn't—didn't—Groo !

MR. BOOTLES :

The four of you shall come with me
To Dr. Chisholm's sanctum ;

SILVER :

Their chivvies I should love to see
As soon as he has spanked 'em !

(Exit MR. BOOTLES, followed by PEELE,
GOWER, LATTREY, and TUBBY MUFFIN in a
doleful procession.)

SERGT. KETTLE :

I wish, young gents., as how I were
The public executioner !

NEWCOME :

Let's drink to the confusion, boys,
Of every tuckshop wrecker !

SILVER :

Hear, hear ! And then we'll taste the joys
Of this most tempting brekker !

CUR TAIN



In order to prolong the evening's performance it may be a good idea to introduce a Pierrot troupe at the conclusion of the play. A few rousing songs and a little music, with no dull intervals, is certain to go down well