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## A PAGE TORN OUT

(Continued from page 16.)

Bastable walked up the road, intend-  
ing to meet Pansy. The murmur of  
the river running at his side, seem-  
ed to have assumed a new music. He  
was striding along when he heard his  
name called, and, looking round, saw  
the landlord of the inn beckoning to  
him. He turned, and the man came to  
meet him.

"Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Bastable,  
sir," he said, "but there's two gen-  
tlemen here on a walking-tour that's  
come over the pass from Martledale  
on their way to Hildesbury. They  
don't want to be too late in there.  
Can you tell them that short cut over  
the fell, sir? You know it better than  
I do, for all I'm a native."

"Yes, I can tell them," replied Bast-  
able.

He followed the landlord within the  
house, and in the entry came full  
upon one of the strangers, a red-  
faced, aggressive-looking man in a  
cheap knickerbocker suit and an imi-  
tation Homburg hat, who was smok-  
ing a rank cigar. At sight of Bast-  
able this person stopped and stared.  
Bastable, too, stared at him. And  
Bastable grew strangely quiet.

"This gentleman can tell you sir,"  
began the landlord.

The red-faced man recovered him-  
self. He smiled disagreeably.

"Ah!" he said. "Perhap the gen-  
tleman'll have a word with me out-  
side?"

He almost shouldered Bastable away  
as he strolled out; but Bastable fol-  
lowed him quietly. They walked  
down the road together till the man  
stopped and faced him.

"Ah!" he said. "So it's you, is it?"

"That," replied Bastable, "seems an  
unnecessary question."

"Oh, indeed!" said the other. "It  
does, does it? And I suppose it's  
necessary to ask what you may be do-  
ing here?"

"It is certainly no business of  
yours," answered Bastable.

"Isn't it, my lad! That we'll soon  
see," retorted the man. "I'm begin-  
ning to understand something. Mr.  
Landlord there told us of a swell  
who'd been stopping with the rich  
old farmer here for some time, and  
was cutting a big dash and making  
up to the only daughter. I suppose  
you ain't the swell, eh?"

"Look here," said Bastable, in a  
low voice, "you have no right—"

"Oh, then you are the swell, are  
you?" interrupted the other. "Very  
good. Then it's my duty to step  
across there and inform the good gen-  
tleman and his lady—and the daugh-  
ter—that they've got an ex-convict  
on the premises. That's all!"

Bastable's breath came quick and  
his voice grew lower. "I know," he  
said, "that you have always hated me  
because I reported conduct of yours  
which led you to be punished by your  
superior officers; but now—"

"Yes, and now I'll have my knife  
into you for it!" retorted the other,  
savagely, turning away. "I know  
where pa-in-law lives—the landlord  
pointed the place out. I'll spoil your  
game, my lad."

BASTABLE let him go and stood ir-  
resolute. He wandered a little  
way along the road by which he be-  
lieved Pansy was to return, but again  
stopped, wondering what to do. This  
irresolution lasted for some minutes;  
then he suddenly clenched his fists and  
set off for the Abbey Farm.

He let himself in by the garden  
door, which gave access to his own  
sitting room, and was crossing it  
when he saw that the door between it  
and the great kitchen was open, and  
that the detective was already there  
talking to the old farmer.

"And having been concerned in the  
case myself, it's my duty to warn you  
who this man is," he was saying.  
"You can depend upon it, sir, he's  
marked you down—he's after what he  
can get. The landlord across there  
did tell me as how you've got a won-  
derful lot of old silver—priceless, he  
said—in the house; well, it's a mar-  
vel he hasn't pinched it, or some of  
it, already. Now it's no use your look-



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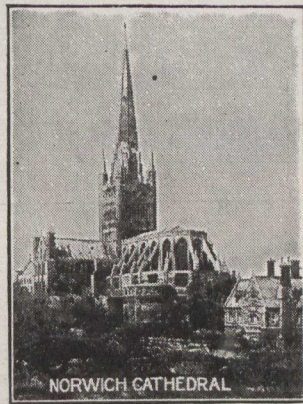
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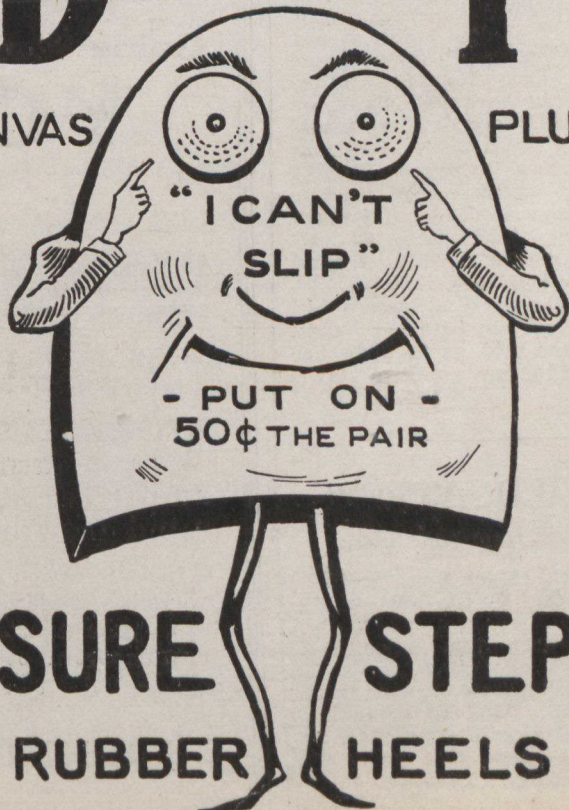
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