

CHUCKLES $\frac{1}{2}$ IS THE NEW COLOURED COMIC!

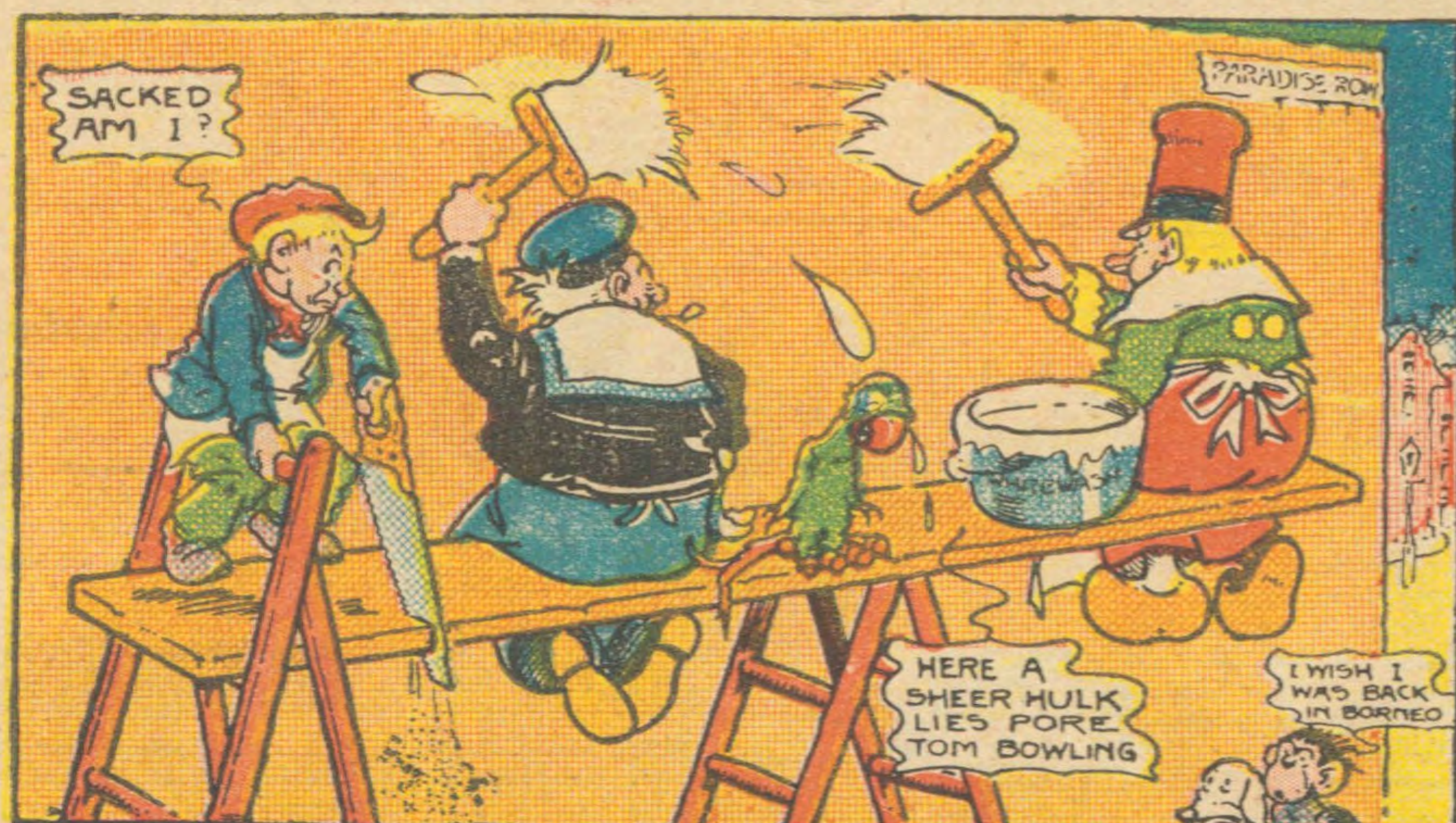


No. 3. Vol. 1.

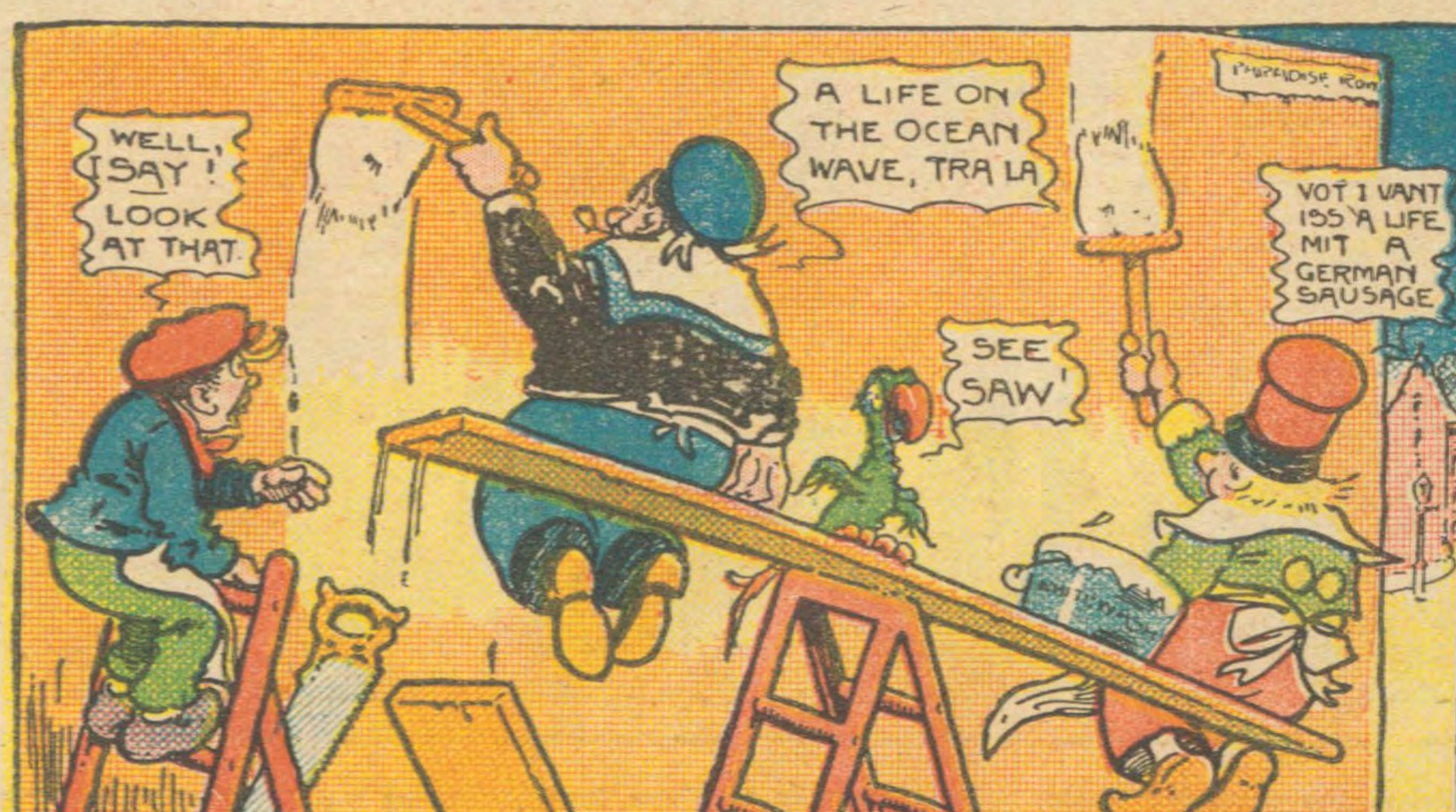
PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.

January 24, 1914.

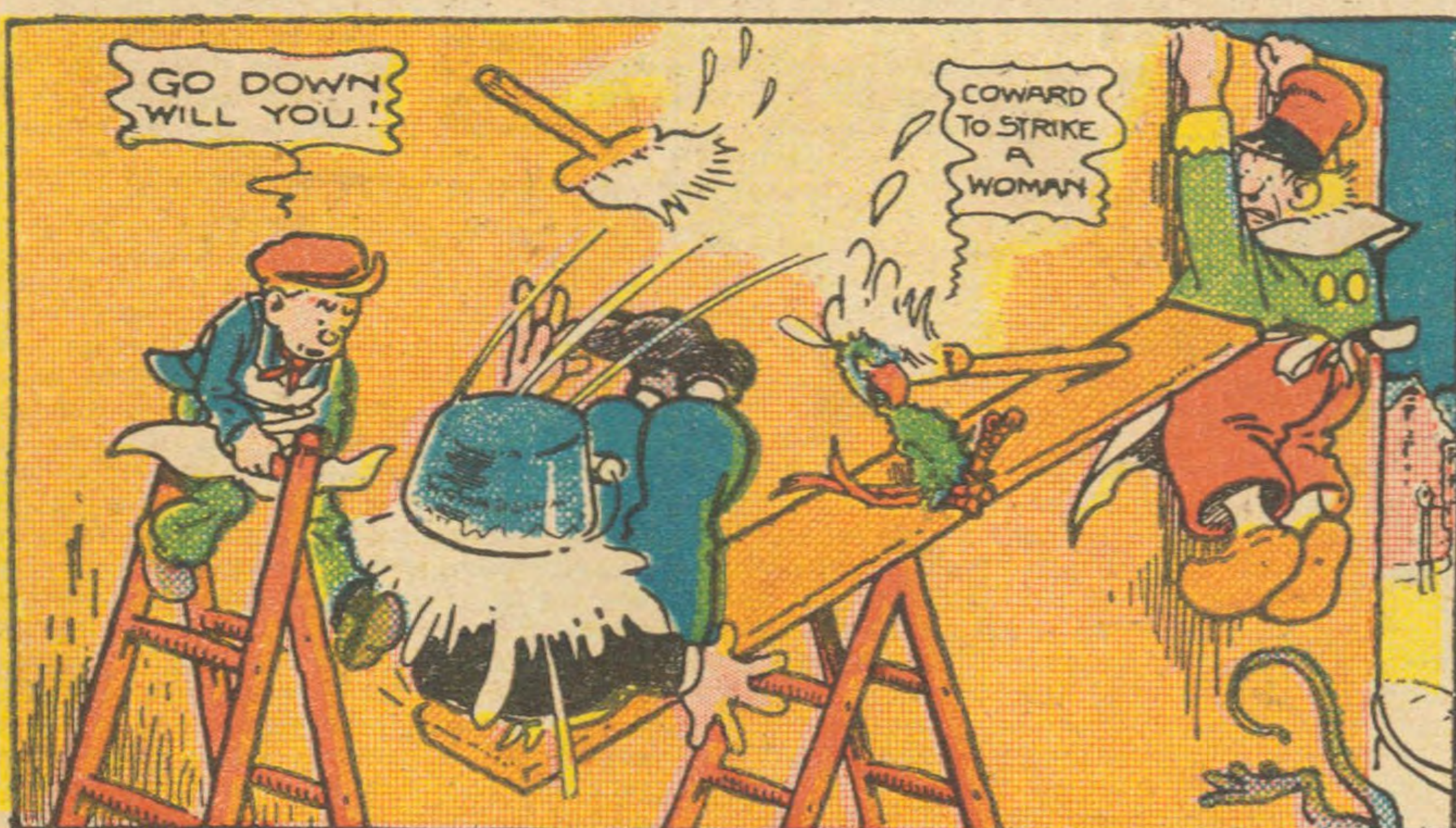
BREEZY BEN AND DISMAL DUTCHY GET A WHITE-WASHING JOB!



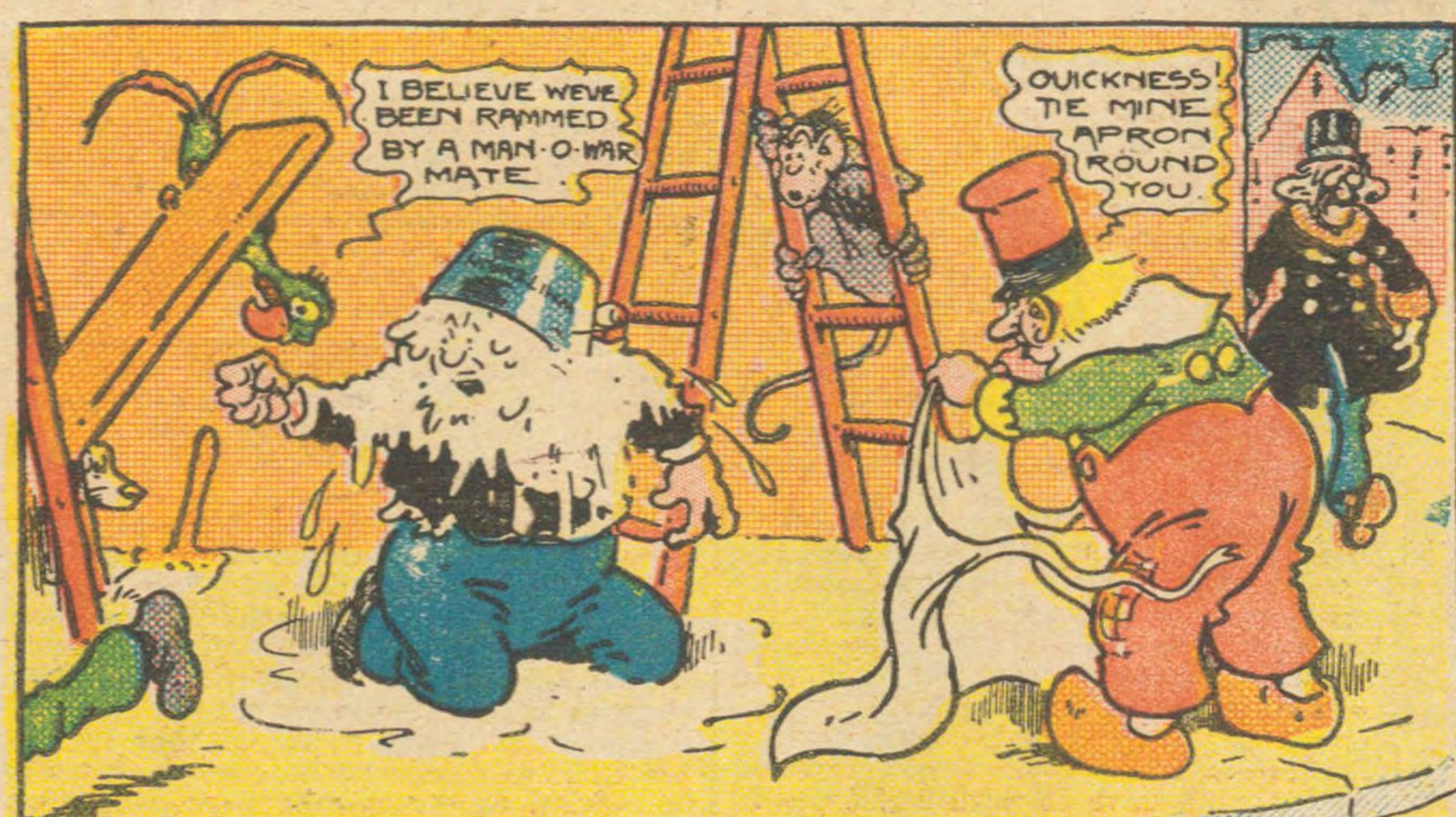
1. Breezy Ben and Dismal Dutchy have got a job! Yes, a white-washing contract. And all was going top-hole bar one thing. They had taken a boy on at £1,000 a day, and after he had helped a few hours, they decided to sack him before his wage became due. "Sacked by you two, am I!" said the kid, as he plied the merry saw, while Ben and the parrot had a duet.



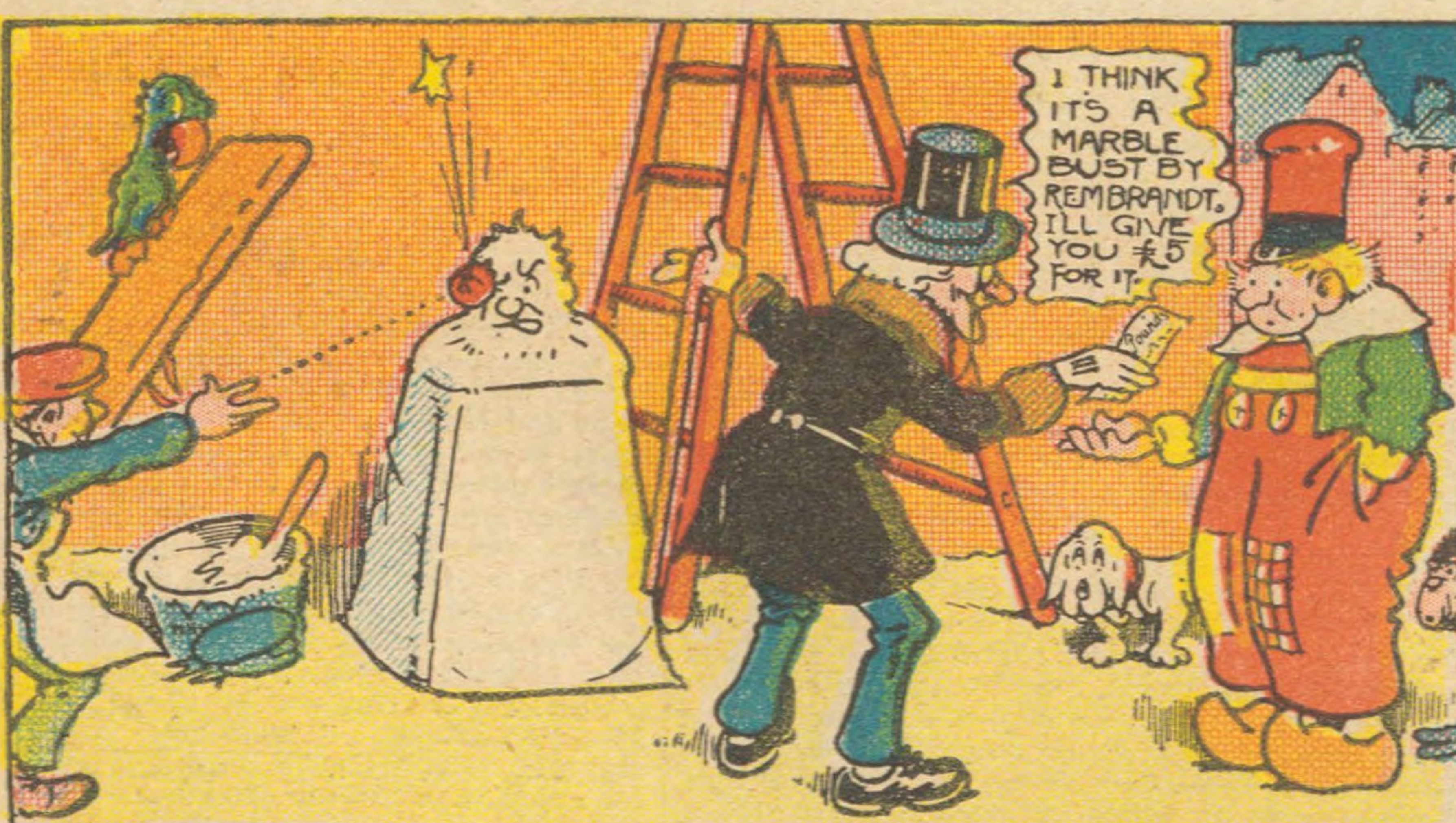
2. And in one minute the deed was doodled, and the kid revenged. Oh, was it! Crumpets! if the thing didn't just balance! And as they went up and down the white-washing did itself. "Feels sorter if the old ship had got a roll on her, doesn't it, Dismal? I ain't got me land legs yet!" sang Breezy Ben. "Well, of all the bloomin' sorce!" said the kid. "All me work fer nixy."



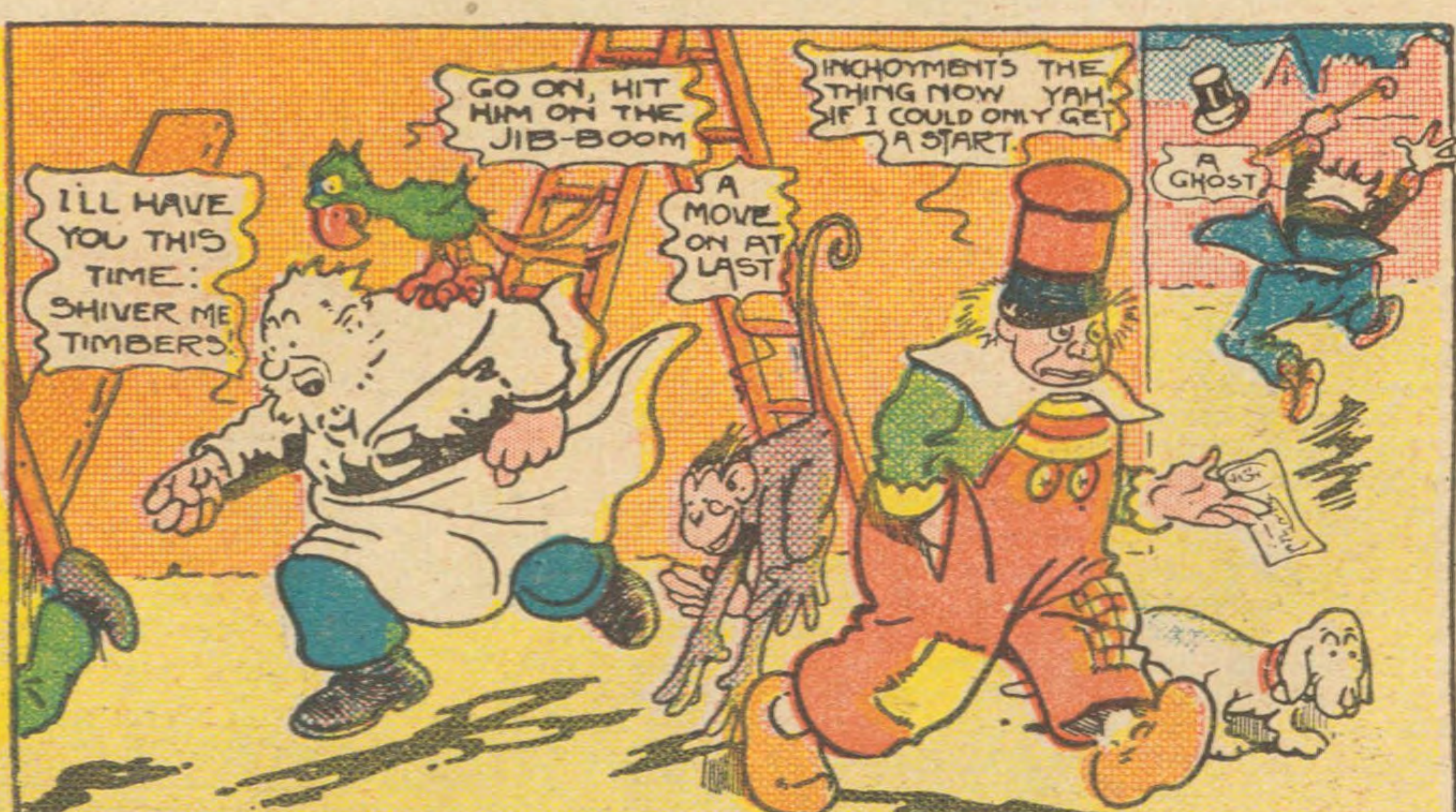
3. "I can't stand this!—darn you, go!" continued the nipper, as he gave the whole shebang a mighty help on with his foot. "Mate, we've struck a typhoon!" shouted Ben. "Reef the mainsail, you lubbers!" But Dismal Dutchy knew a better tip than that, and hung on to the top of the wall till the weather improved.



4. And when Dutchy had safely descended, he spotted an old gent coming along who might mean business in the art line, so he turned to Ben. "Der vitevashness vos nodings in der cash line for brass; pop mine apron round you mit quickness, an' we'll try someding or oder vot's fresh." "Port yer helm, mate! what's the idea?" said Ben.



5. But then the gent arrived, and, sure enough, Dismal Dutchy was right. "Where are you taking that piece of statuary?" said he. "Der Pritish Mausoleum, I tink, vant to buy it from me. It vos very rare. It vos done by der Dutch." "Why, I've got it!" said the delighted gent. "It's the great lost bust of Megaloppitos, by Rembrandt! I'll give you five pounds for it, sir." "Dirty cheap, but I take 'im," said Dutchy. But just ther the great Megaloppitos received a tomato on the west eye.



6. And, as you know, boys, there isn't a statue living who's going to stand that kind of thing. No, sirs; there are limits. "Hoist me storm-anchor! Shiver me barnacles! But I'll have that kid, if I run from here to Orstralia!" yelled Ben. "A ghost!—it's a ghost!" shrieked the gent. "Help! Fire!" And as he vanished into thin air, Dismal Dutchy said: "Sausages mit gurkins, mit onions! Ach! Pless der vitewashments! Yah! but I know vot I vill do next week! I vill—" (Here, don't give the game away, Dismal!—EDITOR)

THE NEW BOY!

A Magnificent, Complete School Tale, dealing with the adventures of Trumper & Co., of Courtfield Council School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Oh, I—I can't help my squint, you know!" stammered Henry Arthur Smith, shrinking back from Bolsover's threatening glare. "P-p-please, I can't help it! I can't help my face any more than you can help yours, please!" There was a yell of laughter from the juniors. (See Chapter 1.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Not to be Caught Napping!

"Look out!"

"We're looking out!"

"The look-outfulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton put his head out of the gateway of Greyfriars, and glanced up and down the long, white high-road. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, and there was no man.

"Nobody in sight," he said.

"He's not coming," said Bob Cherry. "It was all swank."

"Yes, rather."

There was half a dozen Remove fellows in the gateway, all keeping watch. It was a Saturday afternoon—a half-holiday at Greyfriars. Most of the fellows in the other Forms were on the playing-fields; but Harry Wharton & Co., for once, were not thinking of football.

They were thinking of Dick Trumper, the leader of the Courtfield County Council School fellows. And they were on the watch.

There was a keen rivalry between the Greyfriars juniors and the Courtfielders. They met in football and cricket, in which honours were generally divided. They also met in rows and rags, in which fortune favoured sometimes one party and sometimes the other.

But until now the rags had always been outside the school gates. In the lanes round Greyfriars, or in the streets of Courtfield, there had been many an encounter; but Trumper had determined, like Scipio, to carry the war into Africa. The Greyfriars fellows ragged the Courtfielders in Courtfield, and Trumper had declared that he would return the compliment by japing Harry Wharton & Co. in their own study in the Remove passage at Greyfriars—a determination that was received with broad grins by the heroes of the Remove. And Trumper had furthermore declared that it was upon that special Saturday afternoon that he would do it.

The Famous Five chuckled at the idea. How Trumper was to penetrate into Greyfriars and run the gauntlet of the whole Remove without being captured, bumped, ducked, and boiled in oil, was a mystery. But Trumper was known to be a fellow full of resource, and so, when Saturday afternoon came, the Removes were very much on the watch.

Harry Wharton & Co. were at the gates—looking out. Other fellows were posted to do sentry duty at various points, to signal to the rest if the Courtfielder made an attempt to get in over the walls, or by the tradesmen's entrance, or by any nook or corner. And to make assurance doubly sure, Johnny Bull and Tom Brown were stationed in the Remove passage itself, in case the enemy should succeed in getting in, and penetrating into the house. If he should get as far as the Remove passage, he would be collared there, and the Remove would gather and make an example of him.

For an hour the juniors had been on the watch, but there was no sign of Trumper.

They wished very much that he would come—and if he came and fell into their hands, they had all sorts of schemes for making him sorry he had arrived.

Bob Cherry looked out of the gates.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed.

There was a rush of the juniors.

"Is it Trumper?"

"Where is he?"

"It's the cab from the station," said Bob.

"We'll jolly well see who's in it. It might be a trick to get in!"

And the juniors waited eagerly for the ancient vehicle to arrive. The station cab came on slowly, and stopped outside the school gates. The crowd of juniors prevented the driver from going further.

"Lemme pass, young gentlemen!" said the driver. "It's a young gentleman for the school."

A silk hat was visible in the cab. There was a growl of disappointment from the juniors. They had hoped that it was Trumper.

"We'll jolly well make sure!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Trumper might have borrowed a silk topper from Lazarus, to take us in. Have him out!"

Harry Wharton opened the door of the hack. A lad in Etons and a silk topper sat there. Wharton looked at him sharply. He had a strongly-built figure, and looked very sturdy; but he was not handsome. A fringe of thick, red hair showed under his silk hat. He squinted so dreadfully that one side of his face seemed to be drawn upon in the squint. His nose was very red, and his eyebrows very black. He stared at Wharton, giving him such a squint that Wharton started back in surprise.

"Is this Greyfriars?" asked the youth in a shrill, squeaky voice.

"Yes," said Harry. "Who the dickens are you?"

"Please I'm the new boy!"

"Promising-looking specimen of a new boy you are, I must say!" growled Bolsover major, staring into the hack. "What's your name?"

"Henry Arthur Smith, please."

"And what do you mean by bringing a squint like that to Greyfriars?" demanded Bolsover, in his most bullying tone. Bolsover major was the bully of the Remove, and he found a special pleasure in ragging and terrifying new boys.

"Oh, I—I—I can't help it, you know!" stammered Henry Arthur Smith, shrinking back from Bolsover's threatening glare. "P-p-please, I can't help it! I can't help my face any more than you can help yours, please!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled with laughter. The Greyfriars Remove were rather a rough-and-ready crowd, and anything in the way of spooniness or softness was not in their line at all.

"What form are you going in, Henry Arthur?" inquired Harry Wharton, with tears of laughter in his eyes.

"The—the Lower Fourth, please."

"My hat, that's our form! Well, you'll be a credit to the Remove, I must say!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Yes, please, I hope so," squeaked the new boy. "My aunt says I'm to try to be a credit to the school, and never join in any rough games."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's have him out!" said Bolsover. "We can rag him till his blessed aunt won't know him, to pass the time while we're waiting for Trumper."

"Let him alone," said Wharton. "What a beastly bully you are, Bolsover! Let the poor boulder alone; he'll get handled enough, I fancy, before he's been many days at Greyfriars. And Trumper may slip in while we're wasting time on him."

He made a sign to the cabby to drive on, and the hack passed through the gateway. The juniors gathered at the gates again, watching for Trumper. But the road remained deserted, and as the time passed on, Harry Wharton & Co. came more and more to the conclusion that Trumper's declaration was swank, and that he did not intend to come at all. But they did not intend to be caught napping if he did come, and their vigilance did not relax for a moment.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

What the New Kid Did.

The hack rolled on up the drive, and stopped outside the schoolhouse. The red-haired passenger descended, and paid the driver, and the cabby, after a curious look at him—which was returned with a terrific squint—drove away.

"Hallo! What on earth's this?" exclaimed Coker, of the Fifth, coming out of the schoolhouse as the new boy stood on the steps.

"If you please, I am a new boy. Can you tell me where Mr. Quelch's study is, please, sir?"

The "sir" mollified Coker, of the Fifth.

"Fifth door down that passage," he said, pointing, and then he walked into the Close.

The new boy grinned. Having discovered which was the study of the master of the Remove, he might have been expected to present himself there without delay. But he didn't. He waited until Coker was gone, and then walked upstairs.

A fat junior met him on the first landing, and blinked at him through a large pair of spectacles. The new boy would have passed on, but the fat junior stopped him.

"Hallo! New chap, eh?"

"Yes, please!" squeaked Henry Arthur Smith. "I'm going into the Remove, please."

"Good! I'm Bunter, of the Remove," said the fat junior. "I say, kid, don't hurry on. You stick to me. I always look after new kids—take 'em under my wing, you know!"

"You are very kind."

"The fact is, I mean to be kind," said Billy Bunter. "I'll show you the way to the tuck-shop, if you like."

"Thank you so much; but I'm not hungry."

"I am," said Bunter.

"If you please, I'd rather go to my study first."

"I'll come with you," said Bunter. "Which is your study?"

"No. 1 in the Remove, please."

"He, he, he! That's Wharton's study. He'll be jolly glad to have a new kid shoved in on him, I don't think!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "Come on! I'll show you the way."

And he linked his arm quite affectionately in that of the new boy, and took him upstairs. "I say," he went on, "I've had a disappointment to-day. A postal-order I was expecting hasn't arrived. Could you oblige me—"

"Hallo! What have you got there, Bunter?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Johnny Bull and Tom Brown were chatting in the Remove passage, and they spotted the new boy at once. They were keeping watch there for Trumper; not that they had the slightest expectation that the Courtfield fellow would succeed in getting into the house with so many fellows on the watch for him outside.

"New chap," said Bunter loftily. "I'm looking after him. Come on, kid!"

"Where is my study, please?" asked Henry Arthur Smith, looking round him with the lost expression of a new boy in utterly strange quarters.

"Here it is," said Bunter, opening the door of No. 1 Study.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Has Quelch had the cheek to plant that specimen on Wharton and Nugent?"

Billy Bunter led the red-haired boy into the study. Henry Arthur Smith blinked round him and squinted at Bunter in a way that made the fat junior jump.

"I—I say," gasped Bunter, "would—would you mind looking another way? It gives me quite a queer feeling when you squint at me."

"Yes, please. I know it is an affliction—"

"Not so much for you as for other people, I should think. I say, old chap," said Bunter affectionately, "I suppose you could lend me five bob—until my postal-order comes, I mean. It will be here by the six post."

"I'm so sorry—"

"Well, if you don't lend me half-a-crown, I'll jolly well lick you!" said Bunter, feeling that he had an easy victim in the new boy. "Now,

then— Oh, my hat! Whadyer up to? Leggo! Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter met with the surprise of his life at that moment. As he advanced upon the new boy the latter suddenly gripped him, and the fat junior was swept off his feet. The study whirled round Bunter.

"Ow! Leggo! I was only j-j-joking! I—Ow—yah!"

The fat junior descended into the passage with a loud concussion, and the study door was slammed after him. There was a shout of laughter from Tom Brown and Johnny Bull as Billy Bunter sat up in the passage, blinking and gasping and groping for his spectacles. The key turned in the lock of the study door. But it was not necessary. Bunter would as soon have entered the lion's cage at the Zoo as No. 1 Study just then. He had had quite enough of the new boy.

In the study the new boy was grinning.

The squint had entirely vanished now. The expression of his face had wholly altered. He listened at the door for a moment and chuckled.

The next proceedings of the new boy would have astonished any Greyfriars fellow who had beheld them. He started by overturning the table in the middle of the room. Then he wrenched up the study carpet, and trailed it over the table, and piled the chairs on it. On the pile he tossed the books from the bookcase, and then lowered the bookcase on the heap. The fender and fireirons were added, and the flower-pot from the window-sill, and then the ashes from the grate were sprinkled over all.

After adding a few more touches to the wreck, he took a chalk from his pocket and wrote on the looking-glass. Then for some moments he stood surveying the havoc he had wrought, his sides shaking with suppressed laughter.

Then he opened the door of the study, and squinted out into the passage. At the end of the passage Johnny Bull and Tom Brown were playing dominoes on a settee. Henry Arthur Smith quitted the study, carefully closing the door behind him, and came down the passage.

The two juniors gave him a casual glance as he passed, and went on playing dominoes. Henry Arthur Smith went downstairs, and strolled along into the quadrangle.

Without any appearance of hurry he walked down to the gates. Harry Wharton & Co. were still there, on the watch.

"Hallo! Here's that giddy freak!" growled Bolsover major.

"Please, has my box come?" asked the new boy in his squeaky voice.

"Haven't seen it," said Harry Wharton good-naturedly. "It's all right, kid; it will come along sooner or later."

"Oh, dear! My aunt said I was to be very careful about my box. I think I had better go down to the station about it."

And the new boy passed out of the gates, and walked away in the direction of Friardale. He passed out of sight at the bend in the lane, and then he stopped, and burst into a chuckle. He stepped through a gap in the hedge, and, under cover of the hedge, he took off his silk hat, and the red hair with it. A closely-cropped head of dark hair appeared in its place. Then he wetted his handkerchief in the ditch, and rubbed his face, and the redness of the nose and the blackness of the eyebrows disappeared. And without the red hair, or the red nose, or the black eyebrows, or the squint, and with the features in their normal repose, the Greyfriars juniors, if they had seen him then, would have recognised him as someone whose name was certainly not Henry Arthur Smith.

He whistled cheerily as he walked away across the meadows. Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. were keeping watch and ward.

The Removes were growing somewhat tired of their vigil. Some of them gave it up, but Harry Wharton and Nugent and Bob Cherry remained. But when dusk descended on the school, and Gosling came out to close the gates, they too gave it up.

"I knew it was all swank," grunted Bob Cherry. "Blessed waste of time! Still, we've got the laugh of Trumper this time. He didn't dare to come!"

And the chums of the Remove proceeded to the schoolhouse. Harry Wharton felt for a match as he entered No. 1 Study. It was very dark there. He uttered a sharp exclamation as he caught his foot in something and stumbled.

"Ow! What on earth— My hat! What silly ass has been here upsetting the things?" he exclaimed. "Get a light, somebody."

Nugent struck a match and lighted the gas.

And as the light illumined the interior of No. 1 Study there was a yell from the chums of the Remove.

"Who's been ragging my study?" roared Wharton.

Bob Cherry gave a roar of wrath, and pointed to the looking-glass.

"Look at that! Oh, Jerusalem! We've been done—diddled, dished, and done!"

The chums of the Remove gazed across the wrecked study at the message written in chalk on the looking-glass. It ran:

"WHO'S TOP DOG NOW?"

COURTFIELD!

THIS IS WHERE WE SMILE!

WITH KIND REGARDS FROM R.

TRUMPER (alias Henry Arthur Smith)!"

"Trumper!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Henry Arthur Smith—the new kid—Trumper! Oh, my hat! He—he—he's been here, after all!"

"And we let him walk in under our noses!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Oh, crikey! Won't they be cackling in Courtfield!"

They were.

THE END.

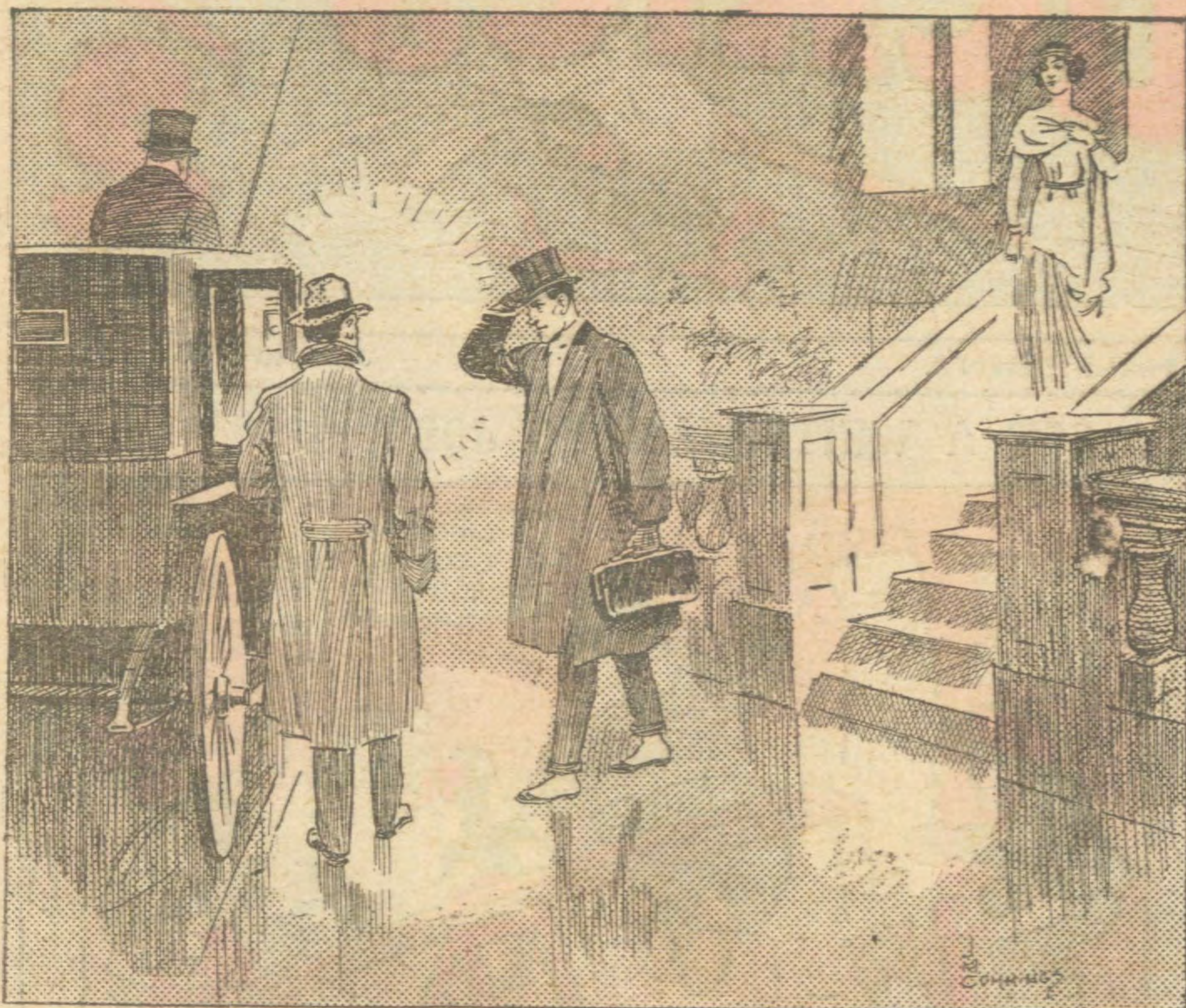
24-1-14

Another Grand School Tale by Frank Richards Next Saturday. Order "CHUCKLES"—½d.—in advance.

The Midnight Operation!

A Thrilling, Complete Story, dealing with the further Amazing Adventures of

FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE.



From the moment Doctor Dyson stepped into the brougham, he vanished as completely and mysteriously as if he had melted into air! (See chapter I.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Strange Disappearance and a Stranger Reappearance.

Between half-past ten and eleven o'clock on a foggy night Dr. Dyson, a rising young surgeon, who had recently established himself in Maida Vale, was called upon by a man who arrived in a brougham, and who gave the name of "Mr. Hood."

Mr. Hood, who appeared to be greatly agitated, explained that his son, aged twenty-two, had been examining a loaded revolver, when the weapon had accidentally exploded, and had practically shattered one of his fingers. He further explained that they had called in their usual medical attendant—Dr. Fox, of Elgin Avenue—and that Dr. Fox, not being an operating surgeon, had advised them to send for Dr. Dyson.

"He says the finger will have to be amputated," said Mr. Hood; "and he told me to be sure to tell you to bring all the necessary instruments and dressings, and whatever anæsthetic you wish to use. He is still at my house, in St. John's Wood Road, and will be glad to render you all assistance in his power."

Dr. Dyson hastily packed his surgical bag, told his sister—who kept house for him—where he was going, and drove off with Mr. Hood in the latter's brougham.

And from the moment he stepped into the brougham he vanished as completely and mysteriously as if he had melted into air.

When his sister came down to breakfast next morning, and learned that her brother had not returned, she began to grow uneasy. Later in the day she went round to see Dr. Fox, who at once declared that the whole of Mr. Hood's story, so far as he—Dr. Fox—was concerned, was an absolute fabrication.

"I know nobody of the name of Hood," he said. "I have seen no young fellow recently with a gunshot wound of the hand. Most certainly I never sent anybody last night to fetch Dr. Dyson."

Half demoralized with fear, Miss Dyson immediately communicated with the police. Inquiries were set on foot, which only disclosed the fact that nobody of the name of Hood resided in St. John's Wood Road, whilst all the efforts of the police to trace the brougham proved utterly unavailing.

Next day Miss Dyson consulted Ferrers Locke; but although the detective threw himself into the investigation with all his accustomed skill and ardour, his efforts proved no more successful than those of the police.

Meanwhile, of course, the newspapers had got wind of the case, and for the next ten days or fortnight the "Mysterious Disappearance of a London Doctor" was the talk of the country.

Then something else occurred to distract the public's attention. Dr. Dyson was forgotten by everybody but his sister and Ferrers Locke and the police, and his "disappearance" was relegated to the far too voluminous list of London's unsolved mysteries.

And that was the end of the first act of one of the most interesting dramas in which Ferrers Locke ever played a prominent part.

The curtain rose on the second act exactly three weeks to the very day after Dr. Dyson's disappearance.

At his rooms, in Norfolk Street, Ferrers Locke had just finished breakfast, about half-past seven in the morning, when his landlady informed him that there was a gentleman downstairs who wished to see him; and when the "gentleman" was ushered up he proved to be Dr. Dyson.

That Ferrers Locke was surprised goes without saying; but the detective's initial surprise was as nothing compared with his bewildered amazement when Dr. Dyson proceeded to relate the following startling story.

"When I followed Mr. Hood to the brougham," said Dr. Dyson, after relating the first part of the story, with which the reader is already familiar, "I saw there was a man inside, and as soon as the brougham started this man and Mr. Hood each whipped out a revolver, and levelled it at my head."

"Mr. Hood then calmly admitted that the story he had told me in my consulting-room was a fabrication. He confessed that he had invented it to induce me to come with him; but he refused to say why he wanted me to come with him, or where he was taking me. He warned me that his companion and the driver of the brougham—both of whom I afterwards found were foreigners, with a limited knowledge of English—were acting in concert with him, and that none of the three would hesitate to shoot me on the spot if I offered any resistance. At the same time, he gave me his word of honour that if I acted sensibly, and made no fuss, no harm whatever would befall me."

"As I was completely in my captors' power, and as they were obviously desperate men, I had no choice but to submit. After I had given my parole that I would not try to escape they blindfolded me with a silk handkerchief. I was thus unable to take note of the streets through which the brougham passed, and all I know is that after driving for about three-quarters of an hour the carriage pulled up, and I was ordered to alight."

I was then conducted into a house, and taken upstairs, and told to sit down. After an interval the bandage was removed from my eyes, and I found myself in a small, cheaply-furnished bedroom. There were four men in the room, three of whom were armed with revolvers. The door had been locked on the inside, and the shutters of the only window had been closed.

"One of the men was Mr. Hood, who appeared to be an Englishman. The second and third were the driver of the brougham and the man who had ridden in the carriage with Hood and myself. Both these were evidently foreigners. The fourth man was lying in the bed, and all I can tell you about him is that he appeared to be a young fellow of twenty-one or twenty-two."

"I think he was a foreigner, but I cannot be sure, for I never saw his face. Why? Because the upper part was concealed by a black velvet mask, and the lower part was covered with strips of sticking-plaster."

"This is your patient," said Mr. Hood, indicating the young fellow who was lying in bed, "and all we wish you to do is to amputate the middle finger of his right hand at the second joint."

"I examined the finger, and found, to my amazement, that it was perfectly sound and uninjured. There was absolutely nothing wrong with it—nothing whatever to call for amputation. It was as healthy a finger, as free from deformity or disease, as any finger I ever saw."

"Naturally, I demanded an explanation; but in reply I was bluntly told it was not my business to ask questions, but merely to do as I was bidden. I appealed to the man in bed, but all he would say was, 'I wish you to do as Mr. Hood says.' It was the curious accent with which he pronounced these words which made me think he was a foreigner."

"You will think I was a coward, perhaps, but in the end, on the understanding that I should be free to leave the house as soon as I had performed the operation, I consented to do what my captors desired. What it all meant I could not imagine; but the fellow himself was apparently willing to have his finger amputated, and I was threatened with death if I refused to perform the operation, so, bowing to the inevitable, I agreed to perform it."

"As I had no medical man to help me, I was compelled to give chloroform myself, in addition to performing the operation. This, as you know, is always a risky thing to do; and just after I had completed the operation, and whilst I was putting in the last stitch, I was horrified to discover that my patient had collapsed. I had given him too much chloroform. He was dying!"

"Never shall I forget the scene which ensued when I announced this fact to Mr. Hood and his two confederates. They brandished their revolvers in my face, and swore the most terrible oaths that if my patient died I should not survive him half a minute. I tried artificial respiration, but without any benefit; and then I said to Mr. Hood:

"If I could procure some capsules of a certain drug named nitrite of amyl I could possibly bring him round. It's the only chance."

"There's a chemist's shop at the corner of the road," he said excitedly. "Write a prescription for what you want, but don't sign it with your own name. Sign it with the name of some other well-known surgeon or physician; then give it to me, and I'll knock the chemist up and get what you require."

"He handed me a sheet of paper, on which I wrote an order for half a dozen capsules of nitrite of amyl, signing it with the name—may Heaven forgive the forgery!—of Sir Andrew Barker. Hood snatched it out of my hand almost before I had finished the signature, and dashed out of the room. Presently he returned with the drug I needed. It acted like magic. My patient quickly recovered, and a quarter of an hour later I was ready to take my departure."

"What happened next you can probably guess. To put the matter in a nutshell, I was curtly informed that I must remain a prisoner in the house until my patient had completely recovered from the effects of the operation, and until the wound was healed. It was in vain that I stormed and protested. A prisoner I remained, dressing my patient's wound each day."

"At two o'clock this morning I was once more blindfolded, led out of the house, and placed in the brougham. Mr. Hood accompanied me, and after an hour's drive the brougham stopped. Mr. Hood then opened the door, dragged me to my feet, and gave me a push which sent me flying out; and by the time I had scrambled to my feet, and had torn the bandage from my eyes, the brougham had disappeared."

"After wandering about for some time, I discovered that I was on Hampstead Heath. When I had discovered where I was, the rest was simple. By four o'clock I was back at my house; and after my sister had told me what she had done, and how she had consulted you, I decided to come here and seek your advice."

"And now that you have heard my story," he concluded, "what do you think of the whole affair? Why was I kidnapped, and compelled to perform that seemingly unnecessary operation? Who were my captors, and what was their object?"

"Those are questions which I cannot possibly answer at present," said Ferrers Locke. "I must have some further information—which I think I can obtain—before I indulge in the luxury of formulating theories. In the meantime, please answer me a few questions."

He questioned Dr. Dyson at great length with respect to the personal appearance of his captors and other details. Then, to the doctor's unexpressed disappointment, he was merely advised to go home, and leave matters in the detective's hands.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Ferrers Locke on the Track.

After Dr. Dyson's departure Ferrers Locke wrote out a circular letter, and took it to a firm of printers in the Euston Road. By eleven o'clock several hundred copies of the letter had been printed, and by half-past eleven they were in the hands of an addressing agency; and that afternoon every chemist within the metropolitan area received the following communication:

"Dear Sir,—Shortly after midnight on January 26th a London chemist was knocked up and asked to dispense a prescription for six capsules of nitrite of amyl. The prescription

was in pencil, and purported to be signed by Sir Andrew Barker. Were you that chemist? If so, please keep this communication private, and wire to me at once to my rooms in Norfolk Street. I will defray all expenses."

"FERRERS LOCKE."

The expected wire arrived about half-past four. It came from a chemist named Howarth, whose shop was situated at the corner of Ashberry Road, Maida Vale, a few hundred yards from Dr. Dyson's house. It merely stated that Mr. Howarth had dispensed the prescription alluded to in Ferrers Locke's circular letter.

A taxi landed Ferrers Locke at the door of Mr. Howarth's shop.

"The prescription was brought here by a gentleman named Wardour," said the chemist. "He knocked me up about half-past twelve. As he had been to my shop before, and as I had no reason to doubt the genuineness of the prescription, I gave him what he asked for."

"He used to live in this road, at No. 19. It's a furnished house, which Mr. Wardour took on a short lease about six weeks ago. He and three companions left this morning. I saw them drive away in a four-wheeler, with a pile of baggage."

"You don't know where they went?"

"I only know that my little girl told me afterwards that she heard Mr. Wardour tell the driver to drive them to Victoria Station."

Fifteen minutes later Ferrers Locke was at Victoria, where a brief inquiry elicited the fact that three men answering to Dr. Dyson's description of his captors, and a fourth man—who was doubtless Dr. Dyson's "patient"—had left by the 9.45 a.m. for Queenboro'.

Now, the 9.45 from Victoria to Queenboro' is a "boat train," and is patronised by those who intend to cross to the Continent by the Queenboro'-Flushing route, which is the favourite route to Berlin and beyond.

The detective interviewed the officials in the booking-office. One of the clerks recognised Mr. Wardour, alias Mr. Hood, at once from Ferrers Locke's description.

"He and his three companions booked through to St. Petersburg," he said.

"And they left here at 9.45 this morning," said Ferrers Locke. "What time is the steamer due to reach Flushing?"

"About half-past six."

"Good!" said Ferrers Locke. "I can catch them at Flushing."

He drove to the General Post Office, from where he despatched a lengthy telegram to the Chief of Police at Flushing. A few hours later he received an answer:

"All four men arrested. Awaiting your instructions."

At half-past six next day Ferrers Locke and Dr. Dyson arrived at Flushing, where the Chief of Police met them at the landing-stage.

"They've confessed everything," was his greeting, spoken in excellent English. "But their confession was superfluous. From the documents found amongst their luggage, it was easy to deduce the whole conspiracy."

"And what was the conspiracy?" asked Dr. Dyson eagerly.

By way of reply, the chief showed them a copy of an advertisement which, in various languages, had appeared at intervals during the past few months in all the principal European papers. In this advertisement—which had been published by order of the Russian courts—a reward was offered for the present address—if living—or for proof of death—if dead—of one Ivan Figorski, who, by the death of several relatives, had unexpectedly become entitled to a fortune of several million roubles. A description of Figorski was appended to the advertisement, which stated that the middle finger of his right hand had been amputated at the second joint in consequence of an injury.

"Figorski died in a Paris lodging-house about three months ago," said the Chief of Police, "and all his belongings, including several papers which proved his identity, were taken possession of by a fellow-lodger, also a Russian, named Treppoff. When Treppoff saw the advertisement which I have just shown you he conceived the idea of passing himself off as Figorski—whom he closely resembled in height and build, and with whose history he was intimately acquainted—and claiming his inheritance."

"There was one great obstacle in his way, however. He was sufficiently like Figorski to satisfy the lawyers, except in one respect. All his fingers were intact. To complete his resemblance to Figorski, therefore, it was essential that he should have the middle finger of his right hand amputated at the second joint."

"The rest you can guess. Treppoff, accompanied by two French confederates, named Monceau and Lerouge, came over to England, and, with the assistance of an Englishman named Thompson, carried out the cunning plot of which you were made the victim."

"It was Thompson, masquerading as Wardour and Hood, who called and lured you away from home. It was Monceau who drove the brougham—which had been hired for the occasion—and it was Lerouge who drove with you to the house in Ashberry Road, which had also been leased for the occasion. It was Treppoff on whom you operated, and it was Treppoff who but for the acumen of Mr. Ferrers Locke would have claimed Figorski's inheritance."

The sequel need not be described in detail. It will suffice to say that after Ferrers Locke and Dr. Dyson had given their evidence the four prisoners were extradited to England, where they were subsequently sentenced to long terms of penal servitude.

THE END.

(Another Ferrers Locke story next Saturday.)

Hand This Copy of "CHUCKLES" to Your Friend. He Will Enjoy Reading About Ferrers Locke, Detective.