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WANTED - A MAN!

APPLY JOHN BULL & CO:

(Late of Dame Europa's School).



A War Story for Big Boys

TOLD BY

Bernard Hamilton.



London:

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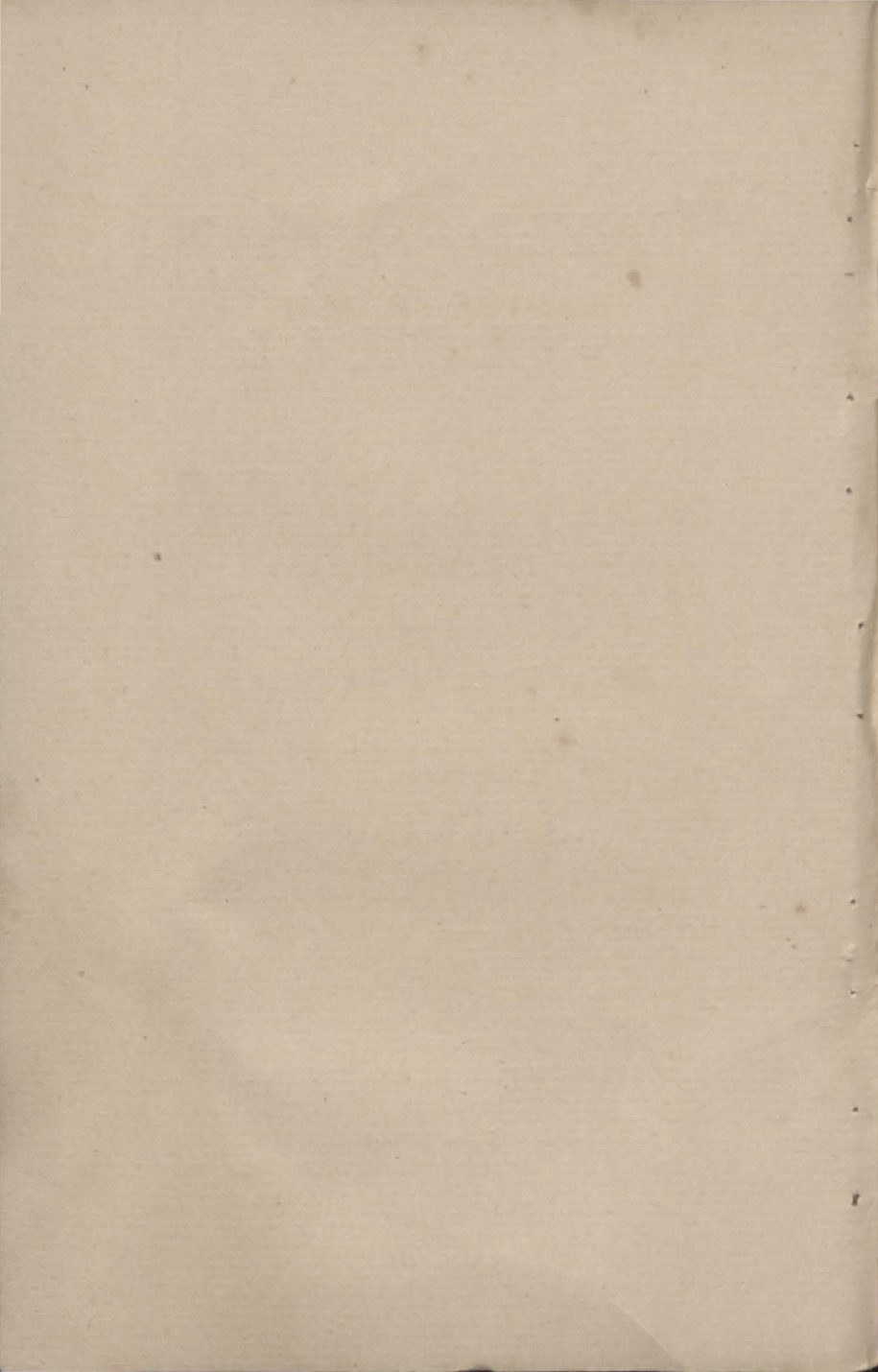
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WANTED - A MAN!

OF DAME EUROPA.

Perhaps you may remember that, quite a long time ago now, there was a row in Dame Europa's School—a row in which William punched Louis' head and by force took back a part of Louis' land, which had, still longer ago, once belonged to William. At that time the head of the school was John Bull. His real name is The British Public.

JOHN BULL LEAVES SCHOOL.

John Bull's school days are over; he is now in the prime of life. He started his career in his father's business house, which is that of an Universal Provider. It is an old firm, practically founded by William Norman, and afterwards carried on, with varying success, under the names of Plantagenet, Tudor, Stuart, and, last of all, Hanover. Until the last-named began to carry on the business, John Bull's ancestors had had to do most of the hard work for nothing, or little. Now, however, he has all the power. The business is worked upon the co-operative basis, thus all employed in it are equally interested in its success. The members of the Family of Hanover have become passive partners,

and are maintained at the expense of the whole undertaking. The Lady who is now the head of that Family has so endeared herself to the workmen by her noble and tactful acts of consideration that they were all glad to see her enjoy leisure, so that she might dispense those courtesies which should be part and parcel of every self-respecting institution.

**FORMER
SCHOOL-
FELLOWS
OF JOHN
BULL, AND
COLUMBIA.**

Meanwhile John Bull's schoolfellows have turned out in all sorts of different ways. Poor Louis has been ruined, and is dead. A red-capped lady has taken over his business. But William has prospered exceedingly—so much so that John and he are the two best off of all those who have been at the school. When William went out into life he was quick to see that he had not had enough education at Dame Europa's, so he has gone on steadily fitting himself for future work by a great deal of private study; in fact, by reason of this rigid self-discipline, he is now a good deal better educated than John, although John does not like to hear this fact when told of it. Moreover, William has exercised his body as well as his brain, so that he is now stronger than any one on land, while John is always the best of all on water.

Now, truth to tell, John Bull has been getting stout. He became so prosperous that he began to leave the management of things to others. So he made too much blood from high living; also, he had a slight touch of a prevailing epidemic, called Decadence. He is not really ill, but he might have taken a wrinkle from his Cousin-German William, and kept himself more "fit."

John's sister, Columbia, who, when a girl, had never been to Dame Europa's school, was a high-spirited young lady; indeed, she was once a bit of a tom-boy. Sometimes John thought she did not know her own mind, yet he felt sure that her heart was in the right place. Sometimes, out of business hours, Miss Columbia tickled John's nose with a straw during his after-dinner nap and woke him up for a bit, but there never was really any bad blood between them.

Although Columbia thought John too old-fashioned and he thought her too young, either would have been eager to help the other if one got into real difficulties. And this was only common-sense, for family trouble to one could only re-act in the end upon the other.

**OF THE
YOUNG
JOHN
BULLS.**

Three other John Bulls—younger brothers of Old John—had set up in business; all three and their faithful black vassal were splendid fellows. The black vassal's business was managed in such a way as to be a miracle of success; moreover, this dark retainer could look after himself in case of a fight.

But with John Bull's brothers it was different; each had enormous tracts of land, but not men enough to fill them; they depended on John for defence; they depended on John, too, for protection against unfair dealing. But John, it must be confessed, did not always do his duty by them, although they were fine fellows, full of life, and proud of John as he was proud of them. They did not shirk, but they looked to John for help if they wanted it, and John's managers (who cared more for John's home affairs) had only one manager to look after the lot of them. All this was

largely due to the way the Old Firm at Home was managed. It was like this:—

**OF JOHN
BULL'S
MANAGERS.**

As I have said, the business of John Bull and Co. was now on a co-operative basis. Moreover, the workmen had a Debating Society, from whose members the heads of departments were selected for a certain time, not more than seven years. The House of Hanover had now no power at all. This Debating Society talked a very great deal, and did very little in proportion to its talk; the real power was in the hands of the managers—high-minded men and absolutely trusted by John Bull.

These managers were divided into two classes—“cultured” men and “business” men. By that I do not mean that the cultured men could not do any business, nor that the men of business had no culture, but the main characteristics of each section of managers are as I have described. Now the “cultured” men were the ruling section of the managers. But all appeared to have one prevailing defect, *viz.*: that all were set upon pleasing the people who had elected them. They had a dislike for taking responsibility, and, when they spoke in public, they often contradicted each other. Also, they were constantly trying to compromise, which is impossible for men in positions of trust—when they do their whole duty; so, even when these gentlemen were at their strongest, they were unstable in their policy. Yet they were the best John Bull had got at home—if we except one, Primrose—who was very popular, and deservedly so. Just then he was not doing any managing.

Of these managers at home we shall hear later, but

abroad, in the Young John Bulls' businesses, there were two who should be mentioned. One of these was the second brother's manager, close to Miss Columbia, and the other was the youngest brother's manager. This man was called Colossus, though his real name was Roads. They called him Colossus of Roads because he wanted to put one foot on a Cape and the other on a Delta, and make an iron road between.

Now this man was called an Imperialist—a name mild people call "Jingo." He had added vast tracts to John Bull's youngest brother's possessions, but he had been forced into retirement by the mild people, who, while perfectly willing to benefit by all that he did, yet abused him; they did not understand his position. These people had never been away from their comfortable homes, and thought that the principles of parish life held round their tea-tables were applicable to those of a great growing State. There were also certain unthinking persons who fancied the Colossus was chief of a gambling and robbing gang. It was to the interest of a certain enemy to put these reports about. They were with little real foundation, yet many believe them still. But Roads had plenty of money. A foolish prank had only done him harm; his aim was solely to back up a legitimate protest of John's youngest brother. Yet these stories gave a fine handle to his enemies.

It is the history of an episode in Young John's life that I propose to tell. This Young John is a very Benjamin; and remember—on what is done in his case depends the future of the whole Family of Bulls!

**OF JOHN
BULL'S
YOUNGEST
BROTHER.**

John Bull's Youngest Brother had started in business a long way off, near to an uncouth fellow who believed himself another Moses, but who, by those who knew him, was called Artful Oom. Oom managed his business on the exclusive lines of an old Jewish Kingdom; he looked upon all other nations as Gentiles. He had wit enough to see that, if he let any clever outsiders into his business, he would lose his own power. So antiquated Oom wanted to stop Progress. Young John, like all other civilized young people, wanted to help her on. Artful Oom's people were what is called an Anachronism. At first this Anachronism "trekked" to a place apart from Young John, but in the natural course of events Young John's people advanced nearly all round them; it was impossible that it could be otherwise.

But, all the time, Artful Oom was trying to see if he could ever be strong enough to conquer Young John. So he kept an eye on Old John (who did not understand him at all)—for it was Old John only of whom Oom was afraid. And Old John behaved either, as if he did not care what happened to Young John, or as if he was afraid of the prejudiced old Oom. John ought to have looked after his managers better; but it was Young John who suffered.

Then there came two gorgeous bits of luck to Artful Oom. First, gold was discovered on a field of his, which he made Young John work at, while he took all the profit and spent it in getting ready to fight old John. Secondly, when some of Young John's people rebelled against him to demand their rights—nothing more was possible—he had a splendid excuse for going

on arming his people with pistols and cannon. Now Young John's people had only tried to get the ordinary rights of white men in any civilised place. Of course Oom's place was not civilised, but Old John's managers were childish enough to be taken in by the excuse that Oom was giving his people weapons to protect (!) themselves. Yet the rights demanded by Young John were only pretty much the same (or less) than Old John had himself demanded (and got) from the Stuart Family in his own firm, long ago. Moreover, Oom had once made a much worse raid on Young John's land than ever Young John had made on his. But Old John's managers at home apparently forgot all this, and were actually taken in by the puerile idea that Young John was trying to rob Artful Oom of his shop and land. They were so blind that they did not see that Oom's arming could only have one meaning. They even thanked Oom for not punishing Young John too much! This set off Artful Oom—who governed entirely by corruption—laughing in his ample sleeve; he now became quite sure he could beat such a pack of fools if he tried.

So the scholastic minds of the "cultured" managers of Old John at home, the one a chemist and the other a philosopher, were hardly a success in dealing with a cunning, dirty old farmer. But tho' Young John's manager, Colossus Roads, told them the truth about Oom all the time, hardly any official would believe him—although Roads knew all the local conditions and what Oom was really like. But then, you see, Roads was not an official appointed by these managers; they of course could not believe any one who was not a regular official; it would have

been too undignified. You see Colossus Roads was only a man on the spot.

Afterwards, these high-minded managers were surprised when they found that what had been dinned into them for years by the Colossus was true, and what a certain Frere—an official—had said was true. And that Oom was awfully artful after all!

And so thousands of poor fellows poured out their blood like water to satisfy Oom's ambition. Widows were made simply because scholastic minds could not grasp the cunning of a scheming farmer. Orphans were left because the advice of men of business was not taken. And after all that awful thing (to the managers) happened—they had to spend money! Actually money!! Worse still, where suddenly was their popularity? They had, above all things, desired to be both safe and popular by a new dodge of taking the public into their confidence. Alas, it was they who had been taken in. Worst of all—they had allowed Old Bull to be humbugged!

Now Old Bull does not like being humbugged.

**JOHN
BULL'S
VISITOR.**

One day, just after a heavy lunch of Omdurman pie, washed down by Fashoda claret of excellent relish, John Bull was snoring in his arm-chair by the fire, his Union Jack handkerchief thrown over his face. Suddenly there was the sound of a stamped foot in the room, and John Bull awoke with a start.

There—in the very dining-room—was a fat unwashed man in a bad silk hat, standing slouching,—like a sack of potatoes dumped upon the carpet. How this creature had got in John could not

tell; there was always orders that none but his friends should come on to his grounds, except by invitation; evidently somebody whose duty it was had not given orders about the park gate. John began to rack his brains to think who the trespasser could be. And as the intruder stood leering at him it came home to John—all in a flash. It was Artful Oom!

John, in a moment, remembered long-forgotten things. How he had saved Oom from being killed by a black man long ago, and, also, how he had, when Oom was bankrupt and had only 12 shillings in the world, he (John) had set him up in business again. But he also remembered how the Artful One had promised certain things to his Youngest Brother, and had not kept his word. The bitter wrath of Young John at being deserted, after a beating from Oom, when he had implored John's help, smote Bull's conscience. He remembered the continual warnings of Colossus. And now he saw how Colossus had been wiser than all.

Meanwhile, there was that gross man standing there, loose, flabby, heavy, puffing huge volumes of smoke out of his mouth and from a china-bowled pipe, while he contemplated John with cunning pig's eyes through the cloud he blew. He had wisps of atrocious beard, a greasy frock-coat, and short trousers, frayed at the bottom. He looked rather like a chimpanzee masquerading as an old-clothes-man.

"What do you want here?" said John severely.

"Are your people ever going to let me alone?" vehemently demanded Oom, gesticulating with awkward fingers.

John Bull sat up and smiled.

"My good fellow," said he, "you'd better go away."

Oom spat on the carpet. Then he burst out into huge quotations from Scripture. "You're Ahab," he said at last, "but I'm not a bit of a Naboth. Naboth's going to take Ahab's kingdom this time, and that's what I've come to tell you—that is," and his half-shut eyes twinkled, "if Young John does not at once mind his own business."

John laughed; he got up and toasted his coat-tails at the fire.

"Ah! You always despise your enemy, don't you?" bellowed the old man furiously, "but you'll play that game once too often; you're only a blusterer, you're no real good now; you're too fat."

"You'll have to improve your manners and your management," said John. "But why do you intrude here to tell me this?"

"Because—because—well, it doesn't matter now. Whether your people mind their own business or not, I'm going to oust Young John. You'd better look pleasant, for you can't help it—without going to awful trouble and expense to prevent me. But I'll be reasonable—very reasonable—I'm strong now. What terms will you give?"

John reached for his horse-whip.

"Mr. Bull!" yelled Oom, flapping unwieldily like a live scarecrow, "the Lord will punish you if you touch me." But he stood his ground for all his uneasiness.

"It seems you can twist the Scripture to suit any of your rascalities," said John.

Artful Oom guffawed. "Oh, you're sharp enough to see that—at last," said he. "It goes down with my people, and with some of yours, too. But now I'm strong enough to fight you, I can tell you so. I can beat anything you can send against me; will you treat or not?"

"My managers will settle with you—you can go," said John very quietly.

"I shall go when I please."

John reached out his left hand and took the dirty old fellow by the collar. Then suddenly John found Oom to be heavier than you might think. And Oom began. He stamped on John's corns, he butted his unkempt head into John's corporation.

John was a heavy feeder, and the blow completely took his wind away for a moment. He gasped with surprise; then he got his wind and rushed at Oom with both hands, when Oom, always artful, shouted out that some one was looking in at the window, and that they ought to interfere.

Sure enough, there was Miss Red-cap and one or two others at the window laughing at John, although they knew very well they would not have liked to have tackled the dirty fellow themselves. Oom yelled to them to stop John, but the blood of all the Bulls was up now—for the whole thing was so undignified.

John seized Oom, who kicked his shins and hit him in the back; but this time John had him by his collar and the slack of his unshapely coat. He dragged him slowly to the window and hoisted him through the plate-glass among the spectators outside. Oom crawled away, a pitiable object, cursing and vowing vengeance

in Scripture words. Gold coins trickled out of his pocket unheeded; while John stood ruefully contemplating his shattered glass and trampled flower-beds.

Then John Bull reached for his hat, to go out. In the hall a telegram was handed to him. It said that Oom's people had set upon Young Bull's people and many of his own best boys were killed.

"*Some one* shall give an account of this!" said John, as he strode angrily down the path. "I'll see what they have to say in the Office."

The same telegraphic news which had come to John Bull had fallen like a thunderbolt upon the Chief Manager of the Firm; so he had hastily summoned a Managers' Meeting. They were all suddenly in face of a new situation and in a horrible flutter. All were alarmed and suddenly conscience-stricken; they seemed to see primroses, and were mighty uncomfortable. At last they grasped the fact that they were far worse off now than they would have been twenty years ago. They felt that they had been hoodwinked by ghostly hauntings of the ideal of one Sadstone—a former manager—who had been a pursuer of shadows and not far-seeing or statesman-like. They had to reap what he had sown, but they hadn't had the sense to see it *had* to come—notwithstanding numberless warnings. They had not believed that Oom could possibly be so dirty in dealing as he was; they saw now that Artful Oom, with his old Israelitish ideas, had already made some of Young Bull's people into Gibeonites—"hewers of wood and drawers of water"—only to try and get

**JOHN BULL
& CO.'S
MANAGERS'
MEETING.**

more Britons as his slaves, too, if he could. These managers were book-students, not like the Colossus, who had seen hard, real life too. Theories were exploded now; the managers had to deal with sudden fact.

Imagine, my dear boys, a farmer who tries to please all his labourers, or a cricket captain who tries to please all his eleven. You have, of course, heard that hoary old story of a man and his son who drove a donkey to market. It is an ancient tale, but its application is too exact not to be quoted here. Sound truths cannot be too often insisted on. Well, the man first drove the ass along the road, he and his son walking alongside of it. The first kind friend they met said: "What a fool not to ride!" So the man got up. The second passer-by said: "What a brute of a man to ride and let the poor little boy walk!" So the man got down and the boy got up. Then again some one said: "What fools they were not to ride!" So they both got up together this time. Then they were accused of cruelty for over-burdening the ass. Probably they finished up by both carrying the ass, and getting laughed at for that. That would have been the only other thing possible.

You see all the trouble which arises from minding what thoughtless, wit-less people say. Like this man, John Bull's managers were not strong enough to hold their own opinion, or to discriminate between good advice and bad. They did not realise that, in this wicked world, there are just as many opinions as men, and that a man has only just begun to live when he thinks and acts for himself.

But John Bull's managers had not thought for them-

selves, or if they had, it had not been for John Bull's business that they had thought. And now they talked openly as if they were not responsible, and that fate had been against them. But the real fact—they knew now—was that they had been trying to shift their burden of trust on to John Bull by a new dodge they called the "New Diplomacy." They said to each other that the man in the street knew as much as they, inferring thereby that he was equally responsible—and this was nothing more than an attempt to shirk their Trust.

And all the time the thought gnawed at their hearts that the Colossus had told them what was going to happen—long ago—only they would not believe him.

So there was trouble in John Bull's head office, as the managers sat round the polished oak table covered with legal documents and a huge mess of red tape.

John's people had been beaten; lives and money had been lost, all through want of a little foresight. Young John's people could have beaten Oom easily a few years ago; now it was a difficult matter. There is no disgrace in being beaten, but there is a great deal of disgrace in being too unwise to learn. The managers were all anxious to throw the blame on each other privately, although they knew they would have to stick together in public.

Lord Burleigh—Head Manager—sat at the head of the table in the Managers' Room; he was not very well, but he did his best to keep awake. All he said was, as his eye wandered hopelessly round the pigeon-holes completely covering the walls: "We must all try and meet the people nowadays, and take them into our

confidence—if you are going to keep in power for any length of time. The ‘man in the street’ must think he’s governing the whole firm.” And then Lord Burleigh nodded his head several times and dozed off amid a faint smell of chemicals.

Only Joey—whom some call the clown of the managing body, because he made a fool of everybody and got himself disliked therefore—said eagerly before he was quite asleep: “Won’t you give us a lead?”

Lord Burleigh shook his head very violently, until it looked as if it was coming off altogether, and then mumbling “*Sero sed serio*—that’s my motto,” went fast asleep.

“What does that mean?” said Joey.

“Oh,” said the Philosophic Golfer with a light irony peculiarly his own, “it is not to be expected that commercial men should understand that; that’s Latin, and it means, ‘Late, but in earnest.’”

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Joey, “and you call that good sense; its just like you scholar-men, who read all books but the book of life. Why my errand-boy would know better than that. What your motto means is that ‘I may do a thing next year, but when I do it I’ll mean it’; that’s as sure a way of spelling blue ruin as I can think of. And you actually want to manage John Bull and Co.’s business on those principles, do you, eh?” and he poked the Philosophic One in the ribs.

“I’ll thank you not to touch me,” said the other huffily. “I never go behind the counter. I am in the office. I thank goodness that I am generally better occupied than in dealing with anything vulgar.

As for business, any man of real education can do that as well as anybody else when he condescends to it, but I doubt if any real profit can accrue from it. I never struggle to get on like you. I do not read newspapers. It's only self-advertisement you want."

"You really ought to be put in a glass case," said Joey. "It's all you're fit for; but as to self-advertisement, no one can do any good in this world without laying himself open to that charge. I suppose you think that this quarrel with Artful Oom is just an advertisement for the firm of John Bull?"

"No, Sir," said the Philosophic Golfer, very stiffly, "that is a matter of high politics."

"Up in the clouds, eh?" said Joey.

At that instant there came a sharp knock at the door of the room. The door opened about a foot, and a silk-hatted head was poked in.

"Who are you?" said the Philosophic Golfer sharply. "How dare you come in here?"

"I beg your pardon," said the stranger, "but I am the Man in the Street; you've said that I know as much about this business as you do; I've just dropped in to say, that's 'like your cheek'; I know a good deal more, for, if I'd been in your place, knowing as much as I did, in the Street, I should have done a great deal better than you have done, in the Cabinet. Any fool could see you were being 'bluffed'; only I always thought you must have had some better card than Oom's up your sleeve all the time; that was the only excuse for your conduct then. And you had no card in reserve after all, so there is no excuse now. It's a man of the world we want if we're going to govern

the world. Why can't you trust Roads? He's been right all the time. Bah! You're just as green as grass. You've bunkered the Empire. Go back to your golf. Yah!" And the silk-hatted head vanished behind the banging door.

Everyone had been at cross-purposes before, but now they were speechless. At last a quiet, insistent voice came, at first rather timidly, from the corner.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," it said,
**THE PRO-
 FESSIONAL'S
 PRAYER.** "don't you think we might *do* something now, instead of talk; here I've been saying things to you for years and years and you won't pay any attention. Even now you can't make up your minds to drastic reform. You think you know my business better than I. Yet I've worked and organised for you all my life—I and my fellows. We work for you and we give our lives for you. What is the good of paying me if you don't trust me and give me some *real* power?"

"We do trust you, Mr. Pocket-booker," said the Philosophic Golfer, haughtily, "but I'll have you to know that *we* take the responsibility."

"Then Heaven help you! But we don't want you to take the responsibility. The fact is, you're jealous of giving us any power."

"You'll pardon me," said the Official Amateur with some heat, "I am responsible, and I work hard enough."

"Yes, you work hard putting things in pigeon-holes, but why do you grudge credit to patriotic men and newspapers, and don't even look into their suggestions?"

"Don't you talk," retorted the Amateur, "you're jealous enough of volunteers, or at least your people are. You won't give them a chance if you can help it."

"No, I'm not jealous really," cried the Pocket-booker, "only do train them properly. You, who think you can do anything from ruling 300 millions of people to managing the biggest fight we've had for a century. And that fellow, too," said the Pocket-booker, gesticulating in a kind of helpless agony, "that fellow Muckcheque, and the purse department he manages, think more of £ s. d. than the honour of the whole concern. Why! The money-managers think it is of more importance that John Bull should get a good dividend than that my fellows'—your sons'—lives should be protected; men who fight for you *all*. And he knows all the time he has only got to ask John Bull for the money to see that we are all right—and he'll get it at once."

"Oh, you only want something for yourself," said Muckcheque fiercely. "I've got to see that too much is not spent on you, and I mean to do it."

"And a penny wise and pound foolish policy, too," said the Duke's Son. "Nathaniel and I manage better than that. How can you expect to keep property safe without spending money on making it secure?"

"And it would have been safe—if you had only listened to me and Roads," said Joey sharply. "Why should the Pocket-booker not be allowed to have complete charge of his department without paralysing interference?"

"It's not at all proper or constitutional for an army

to have power," chimed in a little fat man sitting on the table with his legs a foot off the ground. "Soldiers musn't have too much power. I'm the Law—I am—and I know."

"That's you all over, Giffie," cried the Financial Waterman. I do believe you think the Law is Justice. I want something better than Law. I'm a business man, the same as Joey, and I'm not ashamed of it, and I am always wanting more money—as I know John Bull wants me to have it—and Muckcheque's lot are stingy—even to me. Thank goodness Joey does tickle you all up with a red-hot poker sometimes, or you'd all go to sleep. If it wasn't for Joey, the Colossus, the Pocket-booker, me, Wind'em, and Charlie Condor, where should we all be now?"

"Don't you talk so much," said the Official Amateur, "you who call your 'Admiral' class of ships first-class, and have muzzle-loaders still. I govern this thing."

"Don't you talk nonsense," said the Pocket-booker. "You are run by your permanent staff, who lead you by the nose. And all of you shift about from one office to another, and you—half of you—never really know the needs of one. You are morally afraid—all of you—of the people who elect you. The Golfer, there, talks as if you ought to get credit for your mistakes. You drug yourselves so with routine that you dream self-complacently, while your underlings strangle real men with red tape."

"You must remember that we are nearly a Republic now," said the Duke of Eastbourne without taking his hands out of his pockets or putting back his hat, which was tilted over his eyes.

“Yes! And a Republic which has begun to rely on its children over-seas, not on itself. Do you want a better proof of weakness of government? Not of our countrymen, thank God, but you Government fellows will allow any amount of real patriots to get killed rather than do something which you think may injure yourselves with your own party. You won't trust us with money. Look at John Bull's Cousin-German; he's made all his people patriots by making them soldiers. When are we going to be ruled by a single partriotic mind? Give me Primrose. Why can't we have a soldier-system like our cousin has—a perfect system, of nicely adjusted decentralised centralisation? Why even the Official Amateur tried to get more men the other day, but you others wouldn't have it, just because you were afraid of hurting yourselves with your party.”

“He's right,” said the Amateur, “I really believe after all that our responsibility is too much cut up; a group of people is no use to govern in a case like ours. Everyone can always save his own skin by blaming some one else. A committee will never see things until each member of it is, so to speak, struck in the eye, and then they only see stars. But what I want to know is—who is going to be the Dictator?”

“I don't care who it is,” cried the Pocket-booker. “Our fellows are sacrificing their lives to keep you all in clover. *We* don't complain. But the men—and their families who run risks—should not be unnecessarily sacrificed by fools on office stools, who look at things simply from the ledger and cash-book point of view. We ought to be able to get exactly what we want—for *the asking*—without any cutting down of expense.

We ought to be able to experiment with every new invention at once, and then at once get the latest things. This antiquated policy is suicidal. And all the time John Bull thinks he is getting value for his money—which he isn't."

**THE HEAD
OF THE
FIRM.**

"What's that you say?" came in a great voice from the door. It was John Bull himself!

He held his riding whip in his hand; he was purple in the face.

Lord Burleigh woke up with a start. Said John Bull: "I've trusted to you fellows to keep everything right, and yet I've been grossly insulted this afternoon. Now what have you all been up to? I'll see you in my sanctum, Burleigh. Come with me!" And John Bull strode out.

"Whew! See what you've done," said Joey to the Philosophic Golfer, "you've taken the responsibility for all of us when you talked, and this is the result."

The Amateur said nothing. He looked very grim and rather green. Muckcheque, squirming in his chair, began to tot up figures. The Financial Waterman and the Pocket-booker beamed. Said the latter, "I'll get my chance at last, I do believe."

"Don't be too sanguine," remarked the Waterman, "John Bull's got the shortest memory in the world. He never does anything unless he's constantly reminded. Look at Charlie Condor, how he has to be always teasing him to get the simplest things for our department. Besides, there's too much mouth-shutting in the services, by a rotten system of etiquette."

"You're right, the men who know the most would get broke, if they said all they knew. You can't speak against your superior officer. Some one's bound to take it out of you, if you do. But I don't see why half-pay men should not have a voice in affairs, and I say that—although I've had to fight the oldsters in my time to get my system through."

"Well, your system's worked out all right," said the Waterman. "It's the money that's the trouble—the cheese-paring." And he frowned at Muckcheque, who turned angrily away.

"Ah," said Joey, who had been thinking, "I believe you're right. It is a man we want, in these matters, not a committee."

"I suppose you think you're the man?" sneered the Philosophic One.

"And suppose I am?" answered Joey briskly.

"Ha, ha!" said the Philosopher confidentially to the ceiling.

"Yes, yes; we want a man; but none of us will do," said the Duke's Son, modestly.

"Oh, I don't know about that," said the Philosopher, Joey, and the Duke of Eastbourne—all together.

Just then the footman came in to call the Duke out to see John Bull. And all the managers went on talking, talking talk which came to nothing—much as usual.

Then at last John Bull himself came back into the room.

There was an awe-struck silence as he turned his coat-tails up to the fire. As he stood upon the hearth-

rug he looked very grave and stern. He spoke, frowning:—

**JOHN BULL
SPEAKS HIS
MIND.**

“When this business is finished with, I shall take the pick of you,” he said. “The greatest opportunity which any of my managers have had, of late years, has been given to you. You had the power to do almost anything you liked, but you have hardly improved my property at all. In this terrible affair, through not attending to the warnings of business men—who knew the local conditions, which your conduct has proved you do not—you have allowed me to be caught unprepared. More, you have made me look like a fool before other people.

“Now listen—a business on such a scale as mine cannot stand still. There is a conservatism which means steady, wise progress—a forward, but not too fast policy—and there is a conservatism which means preserving things as they are for the sake of vested interests and keeping in office those who are working the business. Hitherto money or family interest has done more to ‘qualify’ some of my employes for their posts than years of deserving work.

“Now the whole future career of the firm of John Bull depends upon the next few years’ management; it is not going to be a period of ease, as heretofore.

“People who cannot get beyond their routine business must be cut out, and the way in which they work together for themselves be put a stop to. There is a conspiracy to stifle all original thought, because it is unofficial, and because the official won’t get the credit if it succeeds. If a clever man is down, some of your

men will keep him down, that is, if they cannot suck his brains.

"I will not have inventors looked on as dangerous innovators any longer; they, on the contrary, shall be assisted, for to them we may owe our safety as well as our business. To-day inventors are regarded as the 'natural enemies' of bureaucrats—the latter have said so themselves. Naturally the bureaucrats hate them, for to accede to a new invention or thing means getting out of a comfortable rut of easy procedure. I will have no more of this fear of new things; on the contrary, I will take a leaf out of my cousin William's book and encourage brains; it will be for the first time in my history.

"This is, in main, the fault of a system by which only groups of men can be hanged—which is never done—because there is no proper fixing of responsibility. I must be able to have men—definitely responsible men—whom I can hang or reward.

"My governing machine wants new improvements, like everything else. Things are moving much faster than they used to do, and my men must be up to date. They must *anticipate* the heart-beats of the Empire. In this modern life, I have to literally race with the times.

"The fine spirit of my younger brothers does not make up for your bad management, Gentlemen—and it is *they* who have pulled you out of the hole. So I intend to treat them properly, as they have treated me splendidly. It is common gratitude."

"I think," interposed the Philosophic Golfer, "that mistakes are inevitable with the best of us."

"You evidently think that *you* are the best. We shall see. Mistakes like yours, though, have no excuse for them. Common foresight and discernment was all that was required of you. When you had years of former trouble with Oom to guide you aright, any fool might have seen what he was really aiming at. You contemplative people believe in tissues of words too much. I am sick of scholars. I don't want theories now. I want men of the world, and of action—with moral courage to 'face the music,' and not be afraid. For such well-educated people as you to be taken in by an old-time 'bluffer' like Oom appals me. Moreover—do you understand—you have made a fool of ME?"

Then Burleigh chimed in; he had kept awake all this time. "You see, Sir," he said, "it's not us, it's the newspapers which govern the place now. We dare not do anything for fear of their blaming us."

"More shame to you," cried John Bull, turning fiercely upon him. "Are there no rules by which you can restrain them, as they do in war?"

"No, Sir," pleaded little Giffie. "Please, Sir, the Liberty of the Press is the heritage of all of us."

"And suppose the complete Liberty of the Press is contrary to Public Policy, what then?"

"Well, you see, Sir," interjected Joey, "they say such nasty things. And then, there's Society has too much influence now-a-days."

"You mean clever ladies who pull strings?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Well, it's the business of all to see that they don't."

"Yes, Sir," said the Official Amateur, "but then

there's the permanent officials, who are banded together and won't let us do anything."

"Well, you are their master, aren't you? I put you there to rule them."

"Yes, but it's very difficult."

"But it's what I pay you for!" roared John.

"But, Sir," said Joey boldly, "they are all clever at the technical things which it isn't our place to know. But the greatest trouble of all is the trade-unions. They are not ashamed to spoil trade all round if they can get a little bit the better of it for themselves."

"You are all to see to the greatest good of the greatest number, and I will hear no more excuses. And what's more, I won't have any more laws made to benefit one class."

"Then there was a chorus of lamentation. "*We* can't help it, Sir; the business is a Republic now."

"Silence!" thundered John. "You'll *have* to help it—if you're not going to degrade politics to the level which we see in other Republics—where every one is only trying to get money for themselves. If politicians are going to remain respectable people in this country—and not become a class to which no gentleman can belong—you must reform yourselves now! I see one party come in and be chiefly occupied in passing laws to benefit its own side, and then another party comes in and does exactly the same thing. How about the family of John Bull and its defences? True patriotism has come to be shelved as a nuisance, since it adds to expenditure in the Budget. A good Budget is everything, apparently. The next thing will be bribery all round. Nowadays all politicians 'are for a

party' and none 'are for the State.' Where is my Politician Patriot—who is a MAN—first and last?"

John Bull paused to take breath. All gasped. Then he went on:—

"It appears that there is a man in my young brother's business to whom none of you would listen: he has all the qualities which made our house great long ago. And you will have—sooner or later—to combine with Primrose—who is a man both of parts and business too—and manage my home affairs. But it is to Colossus Roads that I shall look to for a *man*—a MAN—do you hear? Not one who wants to shift his responsibility on to somebody else. He is a man true to his friends and steadfast against his foes—a *man* from whom you over-civilized citizens can take a lesson. I will have no more screening of each other in that Debating Society—a babble-shop of parrot-talk. Pah! Good as your Society may be, and proud of it as I am, now and then, give me A MAN TO DO MY WORK—a MAN—who is not afraid of what any may say of him!

"See what you have done for me with it all. You would save my pocket at the expense of my honour, would you? You thought you could make bricks, and grugged the straw, did you? You thought you could please everybody, *did* you? You are a nice amiable lot of estimable gentlemen!

"You're better than most; you're high-minded and straight. You're nearly all the best I've got, but you have not risen to the idea of a World-wide Empire. And that is the name of the new Company which I am going to float. And the Chairman of that Imperial Board of Directors shall be Colossus Roads.

“ If necessary my Constitution must be improved.

“ But that Imperial Council shall govern all the Family of Bull throughout the globe; it shall look after its commercial interests; it shall entirely govern its defences; it shall have power for that defence, independent of a Parliament, to call *pro rata*, from all the Bulls, for what supplies it needs; it shall (subject only to a plebiscite veto) *have them for the asking*. This Council must be independent of Cabinets. And then when nearly all citizens of youth and strength are soldiers, they will be the surest guarantee of peace. When the army speaks then shall the nation speak. To-day the centre of my government is too weak. Moreover, we must be able to take the sense of all the EMPIRE on *Imperial* matters; now you are being led by the many-headed. Continuation of being led by those you should lead—and whom I have trusted you to lead—means—in the end—certain RUIN—and that a swift ruin.

“ Yet, all said, you have not broken my plighted word as my former manager Sadstone did—a plighted word on which my own flesh and blood acted—and lost their all in consequence. Nor have I use for those idealists who think that the millennium has already come. The lion cannot lie down with the lamb in my time.

“ Life is strife, whether we like it or no. And soon there is coming—sure as to-morrow’s sun—a Greater Fight—a fight nearer home.

“ I mean to be secure. I will not be put to shame again!

“I want more patriotism and less party motive, less jobbing, and more manliness. Cheap is any price that I may pay for security of mind now, while none will be too dear for real readiness when that great Battle of the Nations comes. For across our silver streak looms ever a Red Menace to the Peace of the World.

“I and my three brethren must be ready, shoulder to shoulder; faithful stands my vassal brother behind us. Side by side will be Columbia, my Sister, and my Cousin-German, the Peace-loving. Those physically and morally the strongest shall prevail—in the end.

“Then—won by the Sword—the Peace of Nations shall be upheld by the Sword—the Sword of Justice.

“Friends all! as long as Envy lives there will be need for the Sword. Men do not change their natures. Alas! Civilization is—as yet—but vaneer. Men are still FORCES, *fighting always*, with others—with themselves. And Competition is always with us. The Great Law—*that the Fittest shall survive*—will still run when we shall have been clay ten thousand years.

“Let us then so bear ourselves, and rear our children,—that both may conquer others and ourselves, and—in that Conquest—rule with Justice.

“No more is possible to man.”



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