

# THE LITTLE SUPER

FRANK L. PACKARD

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# THE LITTLE SUPER

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

MacLeod backed the big compound mogul down past the string of dark-green coaches that he had pulled for a hundred and fifty miles, took the table with a slight jolt, and came to a stop in the roundhouse. As he swung himself from the cab, Healy, the turner, came up to him.

"He's a great lad, that av yours," Healy began, with a shake of his head—"a great lad; but mind ye this, Jimmy MacLeod, there'll be trouble for me an' you an' him an' the whole av us, if you don't watch him."

"What's the matter this time, John?"

"Matter," said Healy, ruefully; "there's matter enough. The little cuss come blame near running 429 into the pit a while back, so he did."

"Where is he now?" MacLeod asked, with a grin.

"Devil a bit I know. I chased him out, an' he started for over by the shops. An' about an hour ago your missus come down an' said the bhoys was nowheres to be found, an' that you was to look for him."

MacLeod pulled out his watch. "Six-thirty. Well," he said, "I'll go over and see if Grumpy knows anything about him. Next time the kid shows up around here, John, you give him the soft side of a tommy-bar, and send him home."

Healy scratched his head. "I will," he said; "I'll do ut. He's a foine lad."

MacLeod crossed the yard to the gates of the big shops. They were still unlocked, and he went through into the storekeeper's office. Grumpy was sorting the brass time-checks. He glanced up as MacLeod came in.

"I suppose you're lookin' fer yer kid again," he said sourly.

"That's what I am, Steve," MacLeod returned, diplomatically dispensing with the other's nickname.

"Well, he ain't here," Grumpy announced, returning to his checks. "I've just been through the shops, an' I'd seen him if he was."

The engineer's face clouded. "He must be somewhere about, Steve. John said he saw him come over here, and the wife was down to the roundhouse looking for him, so he didn't go home. Let's go through the shops and see if we can't find him."

"I don't get no overtime fer chasin' lost kids," growled Grumpy.

Nevertheless, he got up and walked through the door leading into the forge-shop, which MacLeod held open for him. The place was gloomy and deserted. Here and there a forge-fire, dying, still glowed dully. At the end of the room the men stopped, and Grumpy, noting MacLeod's growing anxiety, gave surly comfort.

"Wouldn't likely be here, anyhow," he said. "Fitting-shop fer him; but we'll try the machine-shop first on the way through."

The two men went forward, prying behind planers, drills, shapers, and lathes. The machines took grotesque shapes in the deepening twilight, and in the silence, so incongruous with the usual noisy clang and clash of his surroundings, MacLeod's nervousness increased.

He hurried forward to the fitting-shop. Engines on every hand were standing over their respective pits in all stages of demolition, some on wheels, some blocked high toward the rafters, some stripped to the bare boiler-shell. MacLeod climbed in and out of the cabs, while Grumpy peered into the pits.

"Aw! he ain't here," said Grumpy in disgust, wiping his hands on a piece of waste. "I told you he wasn't. He's home, mabbe, by now."

MacLeod shook his head. "Bunty! Ho, Bunt-*ee*!" he called. And again: "Bun-*tee*!"

There was no answer, and he turned to retrace his steps when Grumpy caught him by the shoulder. The big iron door of the engine before them swung slowly back on its hinges, and from the front end there emerged a diminutive pair of shoes, topped by little short socks that had once been white, but now hung in grimy folds over the tops of the boots. A pair of sturdy, but very dirty, bare legs came gradually into view as their owner propelled himself forward on his stomach. They dangled for a moment, seeking footing on the plate beneath; then a very small boy, aged four, in an erstwhile immaculate linen sailor suit stood upright on the foot-plate. The yellow curls were tangled with engine grease and cemented with cinders and soot. Here and there in spots upon his face the skin still retained its natural color.

Bunty paused for a moment after his exertions to regain his breath, then, still gripping a hammer in his small fist, he straddled the draw-bar, and slid down the pilot to the floor.

Grumpy burst into a guffaw.

Bunty blinked at him reprovingly, and turned to his father.

"I's been fixin' the 'iger-'ed," he announced gravely.

MacLeod surveyed his son grimly. "Fixing what?" he demanded.

"The 'iger-'ed," Bunty repeated. Then reproachfully: "Don't *oo* know w'at a 'iger-'ed is?"

"Oh," said MacLeod, "the nigger-head, eh? Well, I guess there's another nigger-head will get some fixing when your mother sees you, son."

He picked the lad up in his arms, and Bunty nestled confidently, with one arm around his father's neck. His tired little head sank down on the paternal shoulder, and before they had reached the gates Bunty was sound asleep.

In the days that followed, Bunty found it no easy matter to elude his mother's vigilance; but that was only the beginning of his troubles. The shop gates were always shut, and the latch was beyond his reach. Once he had found them open, and had marched boldly through, to find his way barred by the only man of whom he stood in awe. Grumpy had curtly ordered him away, and Bunty had taken to his heels and run until his small body was breathless.

The roundhouse was no better. Old John would have none of him, and Bunty marveled at the change. He was a railroad man, and the shops were his heritage. His soul protested vigorously at the outrage that was being heaped upon him.

It took him some time to solve the problem, but at last he found the way. Each afternoon Bunty would trudge sturdily along the track for a quarter of a mile to the upper end of the shops, where the big, wide engine doors were always open. Here four spur-tracks ran into the erecting-shop, and Bunty found no difficulty in gaining admittance. Once safe among the fitting-gang, the little Super, as the men called him, would strut around with important air, inspecting the work with critical eyes.



One lesson Bunty learned. Remembering his last interview with his mother, he took good care not to be locked in the shops again. So each night when the whistle blew he fell into line with the men, and, secure in their protection, would file with them past Grumpy as they handed in their time-checks. And Grumpy, unmindful of the spur-tracks, wondered how he got there, and scowled savagely.

When Bunty was six, his father was holding down the swivel-chair in the Master Mechanic's office of the Hill Division, and Bunty's allegiance to the shops wavered. Not from any sense of disloyalty: but with his father's promotion a new world opened to Bunty, and fascinated him. It was now the yard-shunter and headquarters that engaged his attention. The years, too, brought other changes to Bunty. The curls had disappeared, and his hair was cut now like his father's. Long stockings had replaced the socks, and he wore real trousers; short ones, it is true, but real trousers none the less, with pockets in them.

When school was over, he would fly up and down the yard on the stubby little engine, and Healy, doing the shunting then and forgetting past grievances, would let Bunty sit on the driver's seat. In time Bunty learned to pull the throttle, but the reversing-lever was too much for his small stature, and the intricacies of the "air" were still a little beyond him. But Healy swore he'd make a driver of him—and he did.

The evenings at the office Bunty loved fully as well. Headquarters were not much to boast about in those days. That was before competition forced a double-track system, and the train-despatcher, with his tissue sheets, still held

undisputed sway. They called them "offices" at the Junction out of courtesy—just the attic floor over the station, with one room to it. The floor space each man's desk occupied was his office.

Here Bunty would sit curled up in his father's chair and listen to the men as they talked. If it was anything about a locomotive, he understood; if it was traffic or bridges or road-bed or despatching, he would pucker his brows perplexedly and ask innumerable questions. But most of all he held MacDonald, the chief despatcher, in deep reverence.

Once, to his huge delight, MacDonald, holding his hand, had let him tap out an order. It is true that with the O.K. came back an inquiry as to the brand the Junction despatcher had been indulging in; but the sarcasm was lost on Bunty, for when MacDonald with a chuckle read off the reply, Bunty gravely asked if there was any answer. MacDonald shook his head and laughed. "No, son; I guess not," he said. "We've got to maintain our dignity, you know."

That winter, on top of the regular traffic, and that was not light, they began to push supplies from the East over the Hill Division, preparing to double track the road from the western side of the foot-hills as soon as spring opened up. And while the thermometer crept steadily to zero, the Hill Division sweltered.

Everybody and everything got it, the shops and the road-beds, the train crews and the rolling-stock. What little sleep Stanton, the Super, got, he spent in formulating dream plans to handle the business. Those that seemed good to him when

he awoke were promptly vetoed by the barons of the General Office in the far-off East.

MacLeod got no sleep. He raced from one end of the division to the other, and he did his best. Engine crews had to tinker anything less than a major injury for themselves: there was no room in the shops for them.

But the men on the keys got it most of all. As the days wore into months, MacDonald's face grew careworn and haggard; and the irritability from overwork of the men about him added to his discomfort. Human nature needs a safety-valve, and one night near the end of January when MacLeod and Stanton and MacDonald were gathered at the office, with Bunty in his accustomed place in his father's chair, the Master Mechanic cut loose.

"It's up to you, MacDonald," he cried savagely, bringing his fist down with a crash on the desk. "There ain't a pair of wheels on the division fit to pull a hand-car. Every engine's a cripple, and getting lamer every day. The engine ain't built, nor never will be, that'll stand the schedule you're putting them on through the hills, especially through the Gap. That's a four per cent. on each side, with the bed like an S. You can't make time there; you've got to crawl. You're pulling the stay-bolts out of my engines, that's what you're doing."

Stanton, being in no angelic mood, and glad to vent his feelings, growled assent.

MacDonald raised his head from the keys, a red tinge of resentment on his cheeks. He picked up his pipe, packing it

slowly as he looked at MacLeod and the Super. "I'm taking all they're sending," he said quietly. He reached over for the train-sheet and handed it to the Super. "You and MacLeod here are growling about the schedule. It's your division, Stanton; but I'm not sure you know just what we're handling every twenty-four hours. It's push them through on top of each other somehow, or tell them down-East we can't handle them. Do you want to do that?"

"No," said Stanton, "I don't; and what's more, I won't."

MacDonald nodded. "I rather figured that was your idea. Well, we've about all we can do without nagging one another. I'm near in now, and so are you and MacLeod here, both of you. I've got to make time, Gap or no Gap. There's so much moving there isn't siding enough to cross them."

"You're right," said Stanton; "we can't afford to jump each other. We're all doing our best, and each of us knows it. How's Number One and Two to-night?"

MacDonald studied for a moment before he answered: "Number One is forty minutes off, and Number Two's an hour to the bad."

Stanton groaned. The Imperial Limited East and West, officially known on the train-sheets as One and Two, carried both the transcontinental mail and the de-luxe passengers. Of late the East had been making pertinent suggestions to the Division Superintendent that it would be as well if those trains ran off the Hill Division with a little more regard for their established schedule. So Stanton groaned. He got up

and put on his hat and coat preparatory to going home. "Look here," he said from the doorway, "they'll stand for 'most anything if we don't misuse One and Two. They're getting mighty savage about that, and they'll drop hard before long. You fellows have got to take care of those trains, if nothing else on the division moves. That's orders. I'll shoulder all kicks coming on the rest of the traffic. Good night."

When Bunty left the office that night and walked home with his father, he had learned that there was another side to railroading besides the building and repairing of engines, and the delivery of magic tissue sheets to train crews that told them when and where to stop and how to thread their way through hills and plains on a single-track road, with heaps of other trains, some going one way, some another. He understood vaguely and in a hazy kind of way that somewhere, many, many miles away, were men who sat in judgment on the doings of his father and MacDonald and Stanton; that these men were to be obeyed, that their word was law, and that their names were President and Directors.

So Bunty, trotting beside his father, pondered these things. Being too weighty for him, he appealed: "Daddy, what's President and Directors?"

MacLeod's temper being still ruffled, he answered shortly: "Fools, mostly."

Bunty nodded gravely, and his education as a railroad man was almost complete. The rest came quickly, and the Gap did it.

The Gap! There was not a man on the division, from track-walker to Superintendent, who would not jump like a nervous colt if you said "Gap!" to them off-hand and short-like. A peaceful stretch of track it looked, a little crooked, as MacDonald said, hugging the side of the mountain at the highest point of the division. The surroundings were undeniably grand. A sheer drop of eighteen-hundred feet to the cañon below, with the surrounding mountains rearing their snow-capped peaks skyward, completed a picture of which the road had electrotypes and which it used in their magazine-advertising. What the picture did not show was the two-mile drop to the eastward, and the one, a mile longer, to westward, where the road-bed took a straight four per cent. to the lower levels. So when Stanton or MacDonald or MacLeod, reading their magazines, saw the picture, they shuddered, and, remembering past history and fearful of the future, turned the page hurriedly.

But to Bunty the Gap possessed the fascination of the unknown. He was wakened early the next morning by his father's voice talking excitedly over the special wire with headquarters about the Gap and a wreck. He sat bolt upright, and listened with all his might; then he crawled noiselessly out of bed, and began to dress hastily. He heard his father speaking to his mother, and presently the front door banged. Bunty was dressed by that time and he crept down-stairs and opened the door softly.

It was just turning daylight as he started on a run for the yard. It was not far to the office,—a hundred yards or so,—and Bunty reached there in record time. Across the tracks by the roundhouse they were coupling on to the wrecker; and

answering hasty summons, men, running from all directions, were quickly gathering.

Bunty hesitated a minute on the platform, then he entered the station and tip-toed softly up the stairs. The office door was open, and from the top stair Bunty could see into the room. The night lamp was still burning on the despatcher's desk, and MacDonald was sitting there, working with frantic haste to clear the line. In the center of the room, the Super, his father, and Williams, the wrecking boss, were standing.

"It's a freight smash," Stanton was saying to Williams—"west edge of the Gap. You'll have rights through, and no limit on your permit. Tell Emmons if he doesn't make it in better than ninety minutes he'll talk to me afterward. By the time you get there, Number One will be crawling up the grade. She's pulling the Old Man's car, and that means get her through somehow if you have to drop the wreck over the cliff. You can back down to Riley's to let her pass. We'll do the patching up afterward. Understand?"

Williams nodded, and glanced impatiently at MacDonald.

The Super opened and shut his watch. "Ready, Mac?" he asked shortly.

"Just a minute," MacDonald answered quietly.

Bunty waited to hear no more. He turned and ran down the stairs and across the tracks as fast as his legs would carry him. He scrambled breathlessly up the steps of the tool-car

and edged his way in among the men grouped near the door. He was fairly inside before they noticed him.

"Hello," cried Allan, Bunty's bosom friend of the fitting-gang days, "here's the little Super! What you doin' here, kid?"

"I'm going up to the wreck," Bunty announced sturdily.

The men laughed.

"Well, I guess not much, you're not," said Allan. "What do you think your father would say?"

"Nothing," said Bunty, airily. "I just comed from the office," he added artfully, "and I'll tell you about the wreck if you like."

The men grouped around him in a circle.

"It's at the Gap," Bunty began, sparring for time as through the window he saw Williams coming from the office at a run. "And it's a freight train, and—and it's all smashed up, and—"

The train started with a jerk that nearly took the men off their feet. At the same time Williams's face appeared at the car door.

"All here, boys?" he called. Then he announced cheerfully: "The devil's to pay up the line!"

Meanwhile, Bunty, taking advantage of the interruption, had squirmed his way through the men to the far end of the



car, and the train had bumped over the switches on to the main line before they remembered him. Then it was too late. They hauled him out from behind a rampart of tools, where he had intrenched himself, and Williams shook his fist, half-angrily, half-playfully, in Bunty's face.

"You little devil, what are you doing here, eh?" he demanded.

And Bunty answered as before: "I'm going up to the wreck."

"Humph!" said Williams, with a grin. "Well, I guess you are, and I guess you'll be sorry, too, when you get back and your dad gets hold of you."

But Bunty was safe now, and he only laughed.

Breakfastless, he shared the men's grub and listened wide-eyed as they talked of wrecks in times gone by; but most of all he listened to the story of how his father, when he was pulling Number One, had saved the Limited by sticking to his post almost in the face of certain death. Bunty's father was his hero, and his small soul glowed with happiness at the tale. He begged so hard for the story over again that Allan told it, and when he had finished, he slapped Bunty on the back. "And I guess you're a chip of the old block," he said.

And Bunty was very proud, squaring his shoulders, and planting his feet firmly to swing with the motion of the car.

The speed of the train slackened as they struck the grade leading up the eastern side of the Gap. Williams set the men

busily at work overhauling the kit. He paused an instant before Bunty. "Look here, kid," he said, shaking a warning finger, "you keep out of the way, and don't get into trouble."

It would have taken more than words from Williams to have curbed Bunty's eagerness; so when the train came to a stop and the men tumbled out of the car with a rush, he followed. What he saw caused him to purse his lips and cry excitedly, "Gee!"

Right in front of him a big mogul had turned turtle. Ditched by a spread rail, she had pulled three box-cars with her, and piled them up, mostly in splinters, on the tender. They had taken fire, and were burning furiously. Behind these were eight or ten cars still on the roadbed, but badly demolished from bumping over the ties when they had left the rails. Still farther down the track in the rear were the rest of the string, apparently uninjured. The snow was knee-deep at the side of the track, but Bunty plowed manfully through it, climbing up the embankment to a place of vantage.

His eyes blazed with excitement as he watched the scene before him and listened to the hoarse shouts of the men, the crash of pick and ax, and, above it all, the sharp crackle of the fire as the flames, growing in volume, bit deeper and deeper into the wreck. Fiercely as the men fought, the fire, with its long start, kept them from making any headway against it. Already it had reached some of the cars standing on the track.

From where Bunty stood he could see the track dipping away in a long grade to the valley below. They called that

grade the Devil's Slide, and the wreck was on the edge of it, with the caboose and some half-dozen cars still resting on the incline. As he looked, far below him he saw a trail of smoke. It was Number One climbing the grade. By this time the excitement of his surroundings had worn off a little, and the arrival of the Limited offered a new attraction.

He clambered down from his perch and began to pick his way past the wreck. Williams, begrimed and dirty, was talking to Emmons. "I don't like to do it," Bunty heard Williams say, "but we'll have to blow up that box-car if we can't stop the fire any other way, or we'll have a blaze down the whole line. The train crew says there's turpentine—two cars of it—next the flat there, and if that catches—Hi, there, kid," he broke off to yell, as he caught sight of Bunty, "you get back to the tool-car, and stay there!"

And Bunty ran—in the other direction. He knew Number One would stop a little the other side of the wreck, and that there would be a great big ten-wheeler pulling her, all as bright as a new dollar and glistening in paint and gold-leaf. When he pulled up breathless and happy by the side of Number One, Masters, the engineer, was giving Engine 901 an oil round, touching the journals critically with the back of his hand as he moved along.

At sight of Bunty, the engineer laid his oil-can on the slide-bars and grinned as he extended his hand. "How are you, Bunty?" he asked.

And Bunty, accepting the proffered hand, replied gravely: "I'm pretty well, Mr. Masters, thank you."

"Glad to hear it, Bunty. How did you get here?"

"I comed up with the wrecker-train. It's a' awful smash."

"Is it, now! Think they'll have the line cleared soon?"

"Oh, no," Bunty replied, eying the cab of the big engine wistfully. "Not for ever and ever so long."

Masters' eyes followed Bunty's glance. "Want to get up in the cab, Bunty?"

"Oh, please!" Bunty cried breathlessly.

"All right," said Masters, boosting the lad through the gangway. Then warningly: "Don't touch anything."

And Bunty promised.

It was only four hundred yards up to the wreck; but that was enough. Masters and his firemen left their train and went to get a view at close quarters. When it was all over, it was up to the wrecking boss and the engine crew of Number One. Williams swore he blocked the trucks of the cars on the incline; but Williams lied, and he got clear. Masters and his mate had no chance to lie, for they broke rules, and they got their time.

Be that as it may, Bunty sat on the driver's seat of the Imperial Limited and watched the engineer and fireman start up the track. He lost sight of the men long before they reached the wreck. They were still in plain view, but he was very busy: he was playing "pretend."

Bunty's imagination was vivid enough to make the game a fascinating one whenever he indulged in it, and that was often. But now it was almost reality, and his fancy was little taxed to supply what was lacking. He was engineer of the Limited, and they had just stopped at a station. He leaned out of the cab window to get the "go-ahead" signal. Then his hand went through the motion of throwing over the reversing-lever and opening the throttle. And now he was off; faster and faster. He rocked his body to and fro to supply the motion of the cab. He sat very grim and determined, peering straight ahead. He was booming along now at full speed. They were coming to a crossing. "*Too-oo-o, toot, toot!*" cried Bunty at the top of his shrill treble, for the rules said you must whistle at every crossing, and Bunty knew the rules. Now they were coming to the next station, and he began to slow up. "*Ding-dong, ding—*"

*Bang!*

Bunty nearly fell from his seat with fright. Ahead of him, up the track, there was a column of smoke as a mass of wreckage rose in the air, and then a crash. Williams had blown up a car. Bunty stared, fascinated, not at the explosion, but at the rear end of the wreck on the grade. He rubbed his eyes in bewilderment, then he scrambled over the side of the seat. He paused half-way off, looking again through the front window to make sure. There was no doubt of it: the cars were beginning to roll down the track toward him. He waited for no more, but rushed to the gangway to jump off. Then he stopped as the story Allan had told about his father came back to him. Bunty's heart thumped wildly as he turned

white-faced and determined. No truly engineer would leave his train; his father had not, and Bunty did not.

The reversing-lever was in the back notch where Masters had left it when he stopped the train. It was Bunty's task to reach and open the throttle. He climbed up on the seat and stood on tiptoe. Leaning over, he grasped the lever with both hands and pulled it open. What little science of engine-driving Bunty possessed, was lost in the terror that gripped him. The runaway cars were only a couple of hundred yards away now, and, gaining speed with every rail they traveled, spelt death and destruction to the Imperial Limited, if they ever reached her. The men at the top of the grade were yelling their lungs out and waving their arms in frantic warning.

The train started with a jolt that threw Bunty back on the seat. For an instant the big drivers raced like pin-wheels, then they bit into the rails, and aided by the grade, Number One began to back slowly down the hill.

Bunty picked himself up, his little frame shaking with dry sobs. The freight-cars had gained on him in the last minute, and had nearly reached him. Again he leaned over for the throttle, and hanging grimly to it, pulled it open another notch, and then another, and then wide open. 901 took it like a frightened thoroughbred. Rearing herself from the track under her two hundred and ten pounds of steam, she jumped into the cars behind her for a starter with a shock that played havoc with the passengers' nerves. Then she settled down to travel. The Devil's Slide is three miles long, and some pretty fair running has been made on it in times of stress; but Bunty

holds the record,—it's good yet,—and Bunty was only an amateur.

It was neck and neck for a while, and there was almost a pile-up on the nose of 901's pilot before she began to hold her own. Gradually she began to pull away, and by the time they were half-way down the hill the distance between her and the truant freight-cars was widening. The speed was terrific.

Pale and terror-stricken, Bunty now crouched on the driver's seat. Time and again the engineer's whistle in the cab over his head signaled, now entreatingly, now with frantic insistence. But Bunty gave it no heed; his only thought was for those cars in front of him that were always there. He cried to himself with little moans.

There was a sickening slur as they flew round a curve. 901 heeled to the tangent, one set of drivers fairly lifted from the track. When she found her wheel base again, Bunty, shaken from his hold, was clinging to the reversing-lever. He shut his eyes as he pulled himself back to his seat. When he looked again, he saw the freight-cars hit the curve above him, then slew as they jumped the track and, with a crash that reached him above the roar and rattle of the train, the booming whir of the great drivers beneath him, go pitching headlong down the embankment.

Bunty rose to his knees, and for the first time looked out of the side window, to find a new terror there as the rocks and trees and poles flashed dizzily by him. He turned and looked behind. A man was clinging to the hand-rail of the mail-car,

and another, lying flat, was crawling over the coal heaped high on the tender. Bunty dashed the tears from his eyes; he was no "fraidy" kid. He stood up, and holding on to the frame of the window, staggered toward the throttle. As he reached for it, 901 lurched madly, and Bunty lost his balance and fell headlong upon the iron floor plate of the cab. Then it was all dark.

Number One pulled into the Junction that night ten hours late, and it brought Bunty. His father and Stanton and MacDonald and the shop-hands were on the platform. From the private car, which carried the tail-lights, an elderly gentleman got off with Bunty in his arms. The men cheered, and while the Master Mechanic rushed forward to take his son, the Super and MacDonald drew back respectfully.

"Mr. MacLeod," said the old gentleman, with tears in his eyes, "you ought to be pretty proud of this little lad."

MacLeod tried to speak, but the words choked somehow.

The old gentleman swung himself back upon the car. "Good-by, Bunty!" he called.

And Bunty, from the depths of the blanket they had wrapped around him, called back, "Good-by, sir!"

When Bunty was propped up in bed, his father told him how the express messenger had stopped the train and carried him back into the Pullmans.



Bunty listened gravely. "Yes," he said, nodding his head; "they was awful good to me, and the man that tooked me off the train told me stories, and then I told him some, too."

"What did you tell him?" MacLeod asked.

"Oh, 'bout trains and shops and presidents and directors and—and lots of things."

"Presidents and directors!" said MacLeod, in surprise. "What did you tell him about them?"

"I told him what you said—that they was fools, and you knew, 'cause you'd seen them."

MacLeod whistled softly.

"And," continued Bunty, "he laughed, and when I asked him what he was laughing at, he gived me a piece of paper and told me to give it to you, and you'd tell me."

MacLeod groaned. "Guess it's my time all right," he muttered. "Where's the paper, Bunty?"

"He putted it in my pocket."

MacLeod drew the chair with Bunty's clothing on it toward him, and began a hurried search. He fished out a narrow slip of paper and unfolded it on his knee. It was a check for one thousand dollars payable to Master Bunty MacLeod, and signed by the President of the road.

[The end of *The Little Super* by Frank L. Packard]