

FOOLING FISH



It's not like Fisher T. Fish, the Shylock of the Remove, to get the worst of a bargain. But for once the chums of the Remove hit on a wheeze for fooling him!

By MARK LINLEY

THE FIRST CHAPTER

THE SHYLOCK

HALLO, hallo, hallo! Where did you get that?"

Harry Wharton laughed. The Famous Five were tea-ing in Study No. 1. There were peaches for tea, but the tin obstinately refused to let itself be opened. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull had tried in vain, and now Wharton produced an ancient pocket-knife for a fresh assault—

Bob having buckled up the tin-opener for good.

"Where did you get that knife?" demanded Bob.

"Bought it!" grinned Wharton. "I lost my other knife, so I bought this one from Fishy. He charged me two bob for it."

"Two bob!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Why, that was my old knife! I sold it to Fishy for two-pence!"

" Wha-at ? "

" Ha, ha, ha ! " roared Nugent, Bull and Hurree Singh.

Fisher T. Fish is a great business man. Coming from America, he naturally regards money as the beginning and end of all things. He carries on an extensive trade in the Lower School. He will buy and sell anything, as long as he can buy it cheaply and sell it dearly.

Fishy's one ambition is to possess all the money at Greyfriars—or, failing that, as much of it as possible. We must admit that he does his best !

Having persuaded Bob Cherry, in an idle moment, to sell that knife for twopence, Fishy put it by with his other junk until a victim came along. Evidently Wharton was the victim !

" Twopence ! " he gasped. " The awful Shylock ! Why, he asked me three-and-six for it, but I only had two bob."

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

" You silly ass ! " snorted Bob. " Fishy has rooked you ! Why, I would have given you the knife if I had known you wanted one."

Wharton felt annoyed—pardonably so.

" It's too thick ! " he said, and the others agreed. " I suppose that worm Fishy has to make a profit, but two bob for twopence is daylight robbery ! "

" The robberyfulness is terrific ! " agreed Inky. " The esteemed and disgusting Fishy should be made to disgorge."

" He'd rather die ! " grinned Johnny Bull.

Wharton kept an eye open for Fisher T. Fish when the juniors went down to the Rag after tea. He meant to have a word with that enterprising youth.

There was a crowd of us in the Rag, and Wharton's story met with a

mixture of laughter and sympathy. Most of us felt that it was beyond a joke, but Lord Mauleverer, our born-tired aristocrat, shook a solemn head.

" D'you know anythin' about metaphysics, old bean ? " he asked.

" Eh ? What ? No ! "

" Metaphysics, " said Mauly languidly, " is a very remarkable study. I've been readin' about it. The science of pure thought, and so on. Well, accordin' to metaphysics, you haven't been swindled at all."

" How do you make that out ? " demanded Wharton.

" Well, relatively speakin', nothing that happens after an action affects it psychologically."

" Great Scott ! "

" I mean, you were satisfied with the bargain when you first made it, so the fact that you've found out what profit Fishy made doesn't turn it into a swindle. Theoretically, you see—"

" Theoretically, I see a silly ass, old chap ! Two bob for twopence is rank swindling, and you can't get away from it."

" Hear, hear ! "

Lord Mauleverer smiled amiably. High-brow sciences sound all right in books, but some of them are apt to break down in ordinary human beings.

When Fisher T. Fish came in, Wharton went over to him.

" Look here, Fishy, " he said restively. " About that knife you sold me yesterday. It seems that you bought it for twopence ! "

" Correct ! " said Fishy tersely.

" And you charged me two bob for it, and took my last coin into the bargain ! " exclaimed Wharton indignantly.

" Sure, " agreed Fishy. " Why not ? "

" Oh, gad ! " gasped Mauly.

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

" You rotten worm ! " growled Bob. " I should think even Shylock would have been satisfied with a tanner."

Fishy sniffed derisively.

" Come off it ! Buying and selling are two different things, I guess. Business is business, you geck ! "

" I call it swindling ! " snapped Wharton. " I don't want the money, if it comes to that, but you've got to chuck this kind of thing ! "

" Aw, hire a hall ! " yawned Fishy. " You wanted the knife, and you got it ! "

" Well, you don't want it, but you're going to get it," replied Wharton, taking out the disputed knife. He opened the blade and began to prod Fishy with the business end.

" Hyer, I guess—— Ow ! Yooop ! You back down ! " howled Fisher T.

Fish, skipping wildly. " Lerrup, you jay ! You hear me talk ? I guess—— Yaroooooh ! "

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

Fishy dodged wildly, for he couldn't argue with the pointed end of a knife. With a fiendish howl he made a jump for the door and disappeared.

A roar of laughter followed him out.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

A BAD BARGAIN !

" I wish I knew how to make that rotter sit up," growled Harry.

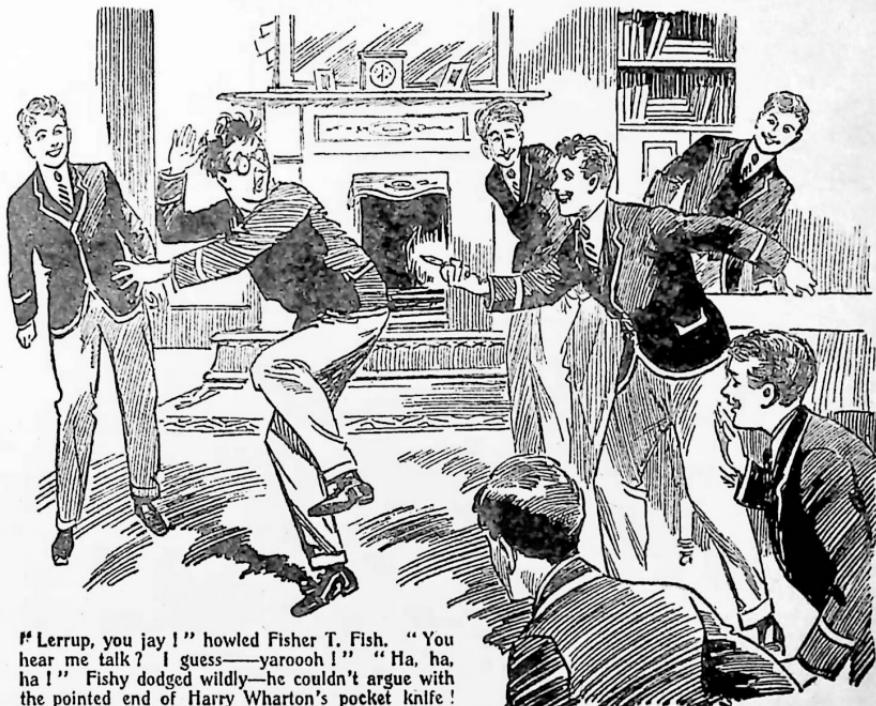
" Well, anyway, you've stopped him sitting down," put in Peter Todd.

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

" Accordin' to metaphysics——"

" Oh, give us a rest, old chap ! "

But Mauly declined to give us a rest. He had exerted himself enough



" Lerrup, you jay ! " howled Fisher T. Fish. " You hear me talk ? I guess——yaroooooh ! " " Ha, ha, ha ! " Fishy dodged wildly—he couldn't argue with the pointed end of Harry Wharton's pocket knife !

to glance at a book on metaphysics, and he was full of the subject.

"Accordin' to metaphysics, you could get that two bob back from Fishy, and make him sit up into the bargain."

"Could I?" Wharton was interested. "Good! I'm stony!"

"Only theoretically, old chap. You see, we're arguin' theoretically."

"Oh! Well, that's not much good. Mrs. Mimble doesn't sell tuck on the theoretical system."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Theoretically—"

"There he goes again," grinned Toddy. "He has just learnt that word and he likes it."

"Theoretically," pursued Mauly, "it would be the easiest thing in the world to rook Fishy of two bob, though, in reality, Dick Turpin himself couldn't do it—"

"Hardly!"

"But the point is this—as Wharton is feelin' sore over losin' a theoretical two bob, why shouldn't Fishy feel the same thing? I'm goin' to try it on. I'll dish him of two bob in theory, although in reality I shall give him a shillin'. It will be interestin' to see what happens."

We began to be interested. Mauly is no end of an ass, but his brains are absolutely moth-proof.

"Toddy can help me," he went on. "If you fellows went, Fishy might smell a rat. I happen to know that Fishy has a dictionary for sale. He gave sixpence for it, and it's the only one he has. Come on, Toddy, let's go and buy it! Here's a shillin'—I want a new dic., anyway."

None of us knew what he was driving at, but we followed on to Study No. 14. Peter Todd went in, leaving the door slightly open. Fisher T. Fish was rubbing his wounds and scowling.

"Git!" he said. "Absquatulate, you geck!"

"I've come on business," said Toddy.

The words acted on Fishy like a magic balm. His pains were gone in a moment.

"Sure!" he beamed. "What can I sell you, big boy?"

"Prep starts in a minute," Toddy told him, "and I want a dictionary. Have you one to sell?"

"I guess you've come to the right shop!" said Fishy heartily, taking a volume out of his cupboard. "Hyer you are! Good as noo and not a mark on it! It's yourn for four bob!"

"It's not!" retorted Toddy. "It's mine for less than that, or it's no sale!"

"Don't go off on your ear, buddy! Call it three bob!"

For answer, Peter laid one shilling on the table.

"A bob?" Fishy shook his head. "I guess not! No, sir! Not so's you'd notice it! I ain't in business for my health! Make it half-a-dollar. I'll surely say I ain't sellin' at a bob."

"You'd better," advised Peter. "You might have the book on your hands for months. Quick sales and small profits is good business!"

Fishy haggled desperately, but Toddy was firm. And at last the price went down, penny by penny, to a bob.

"Take it!" sniffed Fishy, pocketing the shilling.

Hardly had he spoken than there was a tap on the door and Lord Mauleverer looked in.

"Sorry to butt in," said Mauly, "but I want a dic. in a hurry, and I thought you might have one for sale."

"Wha-at?" Fisher T. Fish jumped.

"I don't mind goin' to three bob for one, y'know!"

Fishy eyed the volume wolfishly, but Toddy's grasp was on it.

"Say, listen, Todd, I guess—Look hyer," said Fishy thickly ; "I reckon that's no sale. Hyer's your money back—"

Peter shook his head.

"Too late!" he answered. "I've bought the book."

"You ain't!" howled Fishy. "That sale's off! You hear me yawp! You gimme that book! Out with it, you piecan!"

"Nothing doing," answered Peter curtly. "If you really want a dictionary, Mauly—"

"Say, you let up!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "That book's mine—you hear me? Hyer, Mauly, you wait a tick! Say, Todd, you hand over that book—"

"Rats!"

"I—I guess I'll take it, then!"

And Fisher T. Fish, frantic at the thought of losing a maximum profit, jumped at Peter Todd. Toddy raised the dictionary and brought it down on Fishy's head.

Crash!

"Yoooop! Wake snakes! Ow! You pesky piecan!"

Fishy rolled under the table and roared.

"Now, Mauly," said Toddy, with a cheerful grin, "you can have the dic. if you like. I gave Fishy a bob for it—"

"Well, I was going to give three, so I'll take it at that price, or not at all!"

"Please yourself!"

Fishy's eyes started out of his head as Mauly calmly handed Peter three shillings and walked off with the book. It was more than flesh and blood could stand.

"I guess this gets my goat!" yelled Fishy. "Hyer, Todd, you gimme that two bob, you geck—"

"I guess I'm not in business for my health!" chortled Peter, and he walked away to return Mauly's three bob.

All that evening deep and dreadful groans came from Study No. 14. The sounds were so heart-rending that we couldn't do our prep. Had Fishy been cleft to the chine with a battle-axe he might have borne it; but to see a profit of two bob slip clean out of his hands was far past any human endurance.

Grinning faces surrounded Fishy in the Rag after prep. We were forced to admit that Mauly had made him "sit up" in no uncertain manner. But so wretched and woebegone was Fishy's face that some of us began to wonder whether Mauly had not, after all, been rather too cruel.

But we all agreed that metaphysics must be a very remarkable science.

Theoretically, at any rate!

The DETERMINIST

By HARRY MANNERS
(of the *Shell* at St. Jim's).

SAID Skimpole, on the cricket ground,
" Pray listen, my good youths,
While I endeavour to expound
Some practical home-truths ! "

" Clear off, you fathead ! " came a yell.
" Go east, west, south or north,
But do not interrupt the Shell
Until we've whopped the Fourth ! "

The Fourth replied, with grim intent,
" Oh, let the fathead bawl,
For if he waits for that event,
He'll never speak at all ! "



We did not heed the silly chump,
But let him wag his chin;
And groaned when Blake removed a stump
When bowling Bernard Glyn.

When Merry smote an off ball, which
Made all the fieldsmen hop,
Old Skimmy strode upon the pitch
And boldly shouted " Stop ! "

" I can't allow you to persist
In such a futile game;
To any good Determinist,
The thought is simply shame !



Said Skimpole, " Cease this idle chat
When everything's at stake !
Waste not your time with ball and bat—
St. Jim's," he cried, " awake ! "
But we preferred to watch the match,
And Skimpole howled in vain;
When Gussy made a ripping catch,
We cheered with might and main.
" These games," said Skimpole, " are to me
But little short of crime !
How pitiful it is to see
This brainless waste of time ! "



" That you play cricket here is due
To thoughtlessness, no doubt !
But, fellows, I appeal to you,
Arise and cast it out ! "

" We won't cast out our cricket team,"
Tom Merry grimly said;
" We've got a rather better scheme—
We'll cast you out instead ! "

And so we did—upon his neck !
Poor Skimmy gave a roar,
And crawled away, an utter wreck,
To trouble us no more !