



AND THE STRING WILL NEVER BREAK.

MR. BIGGLESWADE TAKES THE STUMP.

SO at last I've got the opportunity I've been looking for ever since I joined the Young Liberals a couple of years ago and found out that I really could make a decent speech, without stammering and hesitating and looking over my notes every few seconds, as I used to do at the old Snooks' Corners Debating Club. Well, there's nothing like practice, and when a fellow has been pounding away at it as long as I have, taking lessons in elocution and going to meetings two or three times a week, it's about time for some practical result. They'll have to bring us young fellows with brains to the front, and retire some of these moss-backed old chumps that have run the party into the ground, if they ever mean to do anything. I told Preston as much when he asked me if I wanted to take the platform for Leslie.

I wonder if my speech will catch on. I suppose the *Globe* will give me half a column or so. My! won't it everlastingly paralyze the boys at home when they read of Fred Biggleswade figuring among the big guns in a Toronto election campaign! I'm loaded for bear this time, you bet. I've been doing nothing but look through blue books for the last couple of days to get my facts and figures all right, exposing the corruption of the infamous gang of boodlers at Ottawa, and I've got a peroration that ought to raise the roof off. Jagson and Peters and McGuffy promised they'll come along and applaud for all they were worth at the right places. If it goes I guess they'll take me on as a regular campaign speaker, and then it won't be long before they find me a constituency somewhere. That's better than settling down at the Corners as a country lawyer all my life, which was the height of my ambition three or four years ago. How city life does broaden a man's ideas!

But what's the matter with the people? The audience is very slow in gathering. It's a quarter past eight and the hall isn't a quarter full. They say it's always the way at election meetings. Wish they'd hurry up and commence. There'll be about half a dozen speakers, I suppose, and it'll be late before we conclude. I shall want half an hour at least—perhaps more. Why don't the crowd come in? It's shameful to keep us waiting in this fashion.

Ah! here come three more men and a couple of boys,

which encourages somebody to move that Mr. Chumpley do take the chair. He looks like a thick-headed old duffer, but of course he's an extensive property owner, man of local influence and all that sort of thing, so they tickle his vanity by giving him prominence. Of course he won't want to speak.

Don't he though? He began to make a "few preliminary remarks," and has been talking away for the last ten minutes, reviewing the doings of the Family Compact, the Pacific Railway Scandal, the gerrymander and I don't know what else. Will the man never stop? What's the cheering for? Surely nobody is fool enough to applaud that twaddle. Oh no—it's the candidate, Joe Tait, and half a dozen others who have just come in. Thank goodness, the blathering old fool is down at last!

"Gentlemen, the candidate, Mr. Ald. Leslie."

Well, if I couldn't make a better speech than he can, I'd be ashamed to run for parliament. Of all the lame, hesitating, schoolboy efforts—but the idiots are yelling and pounding like all possessed as though he was really saying something brilliant. Of course that's all arranged by our heelers. Nobody in his senses would cheer such nonsense. Just wait till they hear my speech! I'm next on the program. Ha! he's taking his seat amid a final outburst of applause. Now for it!

Hello! How's this? Cries of "Tait!" "Tait!" from the audience. Upon my soul, if that blooming old idiot of a chairman hasn't called on Joe Tait instead of me! Why it's shameful! It's a quarter past nine already and Tait will speak for half an hour sure—so that by the time I come on most of the people will want to go home. I declare it makes me tired. Did you ever listen to such a conceited, empty-headed wind-bag? Oh, yes, he's got a loud, tearing voice and can roar like a bull of Bashan, but what infernal rot it is! And the idiots in the audience appear to like it. Why, there's one confounded lunatic actually shouting "Go on!" when he hints at the advisability of his leaving off. I wish I had the moral courage to call out "Cut it short!" I'm sure that would be more in accord with the feelings of the intelligent portion of the audience—that is if there are any intelligent people present, which I'm inclined to doubt. Through at last, thank goodness, and I sincerely



WHY THIS IS THUS.

"So long as America clings to the Protective policy, you need not tremble for your commercial supremacy."—Gladstone, to the Merchants of Liverpool.