

BREECHES OF CONFIDENCE Bryan of Nebraska To Be
Next American President

The Serious Consequences of Depending For Your Safety Upon a Single Pair of Braces—The Tragic Adventure of a Young Man on a Downtown Street

By G. W. J.

I DON'T know how it is, but I never seem able to get braces that are long enough. It isn't that I'm so tall or so fat. The manufacturers of braces must use models that have their trousers cut half way up their chests, or else have their shoulder blades farther below their ears than mine are. This day I had on a pair of new braces, and they seemed tighter than ever. They seemed to be lifting me off the ground by my trouser buttons. Well, of course, even a bulldog can't hold on for ever, and the two buttons on the back called it a day on Countess street. There was a pop, and the back part of my braces flipped me on the collar like a catapult. My trousers went just the other way, and as I wouldn't let the tailor cut them snug, as he called it, they went pretty fast. I caught them just in time.

It's very awkward walking with the right hand pressed firmly into the small of one's back, and every moment I was afraid there'd be a further slip, so I saw with relief a little cleaning and pressing place just before me. I opened the door with my left hand and stepped in.

There were five or six men in the back, talking away in a lively fashion over a paper. They looked up as I came in, and silence fell on them like a blanket. They stared at me with drooping jaws. One stuck his hands up in the air.

"I want the proprietor," I said.

"You just want the proprietor?" answered one.

"That's what I came in for," I said.

At this they began sidling through a door in the rear, and as the men got out I could hear the sound of running footsteps down the passage.

There was one man left. He was quite pale. "Mister," said he, "you don't need no gun."

"Gun!" I exclaimed. "What would I need a gun for?"

"Ain't you got your hand back on no gun?"

"I've got my hand back trying to hold up my trousers, from which I have lost two buttons."

"You mean you busted your pants buttons?"

"Of course," said I. That's why I came in here."

"Oy, mister," said the man, sinking into a chair, "such a fright what you give me."

"I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about," I said, rather testily. "What I want is to have a couple of buttons sewn on right away."

"You get them done better down the street, mister. I don't keep no buttons."

"What," I said, "you're a tailor, and don't keep any buttons?"

"I mean I used them all up. You get better done down the street."

"I can't walk down the street holding up my trousers, and what's more I won't try to. You have a sign that you're a tailor, and I want these buttons put on."

It's not often I speak so sharply, but if there's anything to irritate a man it's standing around arguing with a tailor while his arm is cramped from holding up his buttonless trousers.

"Well, mister, I don't want no fuss," said the man, after giving me a look. "You was maybe no detectiff, and I take your pants down to Lipsky's myself. Come behind here and take them off."

There was a low counter running half way across the back of the shop. When I sat down behind it, my legs were concealed from passers-by, so I pulled off my trousers.

"Hurry," I said. "I don't like waiting half undressed."

"You bet I hurry," said the proprietor. "Customers like you interfere with my business. Five minutes I be back with your pants."

Never before had I been able to sympathize fully with an oyster on the half shell. I felt more timid than a hermit crab ejected from its shell, more helpless than a turtle robbed of its carapace. A man may steel himself to appear in public without his coat, but the Iron Duke himself wouldn't venture forth minus his trousers. I took what comfort I could from the frail bulwark of the counter, and picked up the paper dropped by one of the men who had been in such a hurry to avoid my company. I thought it would be some trade or fashion publication, a guess which seemed justified by the title, "Last Minute Form," but I found it a sheet closely resembling a railway timetable, all figures and mysterious symbols. I couldn't make head or tail of it, and laid it on the counter.

On looking up I was horrified to see a girl opening the door. Compared with how I felt then, the oyster on the half shell must feel prudishly attired.

"Say," said the girl, "put a few stitches in this for me? Step down to the light, and I'll show you."

"I am sorry—er—madam," I stammered, "but—er—you know, I'm not—"

"Ain't you the boss?"

"No," I said. "No. The—er—proprietor is out. I am—er—waiting for him now."

"Well, that'll do," said the girl. "C'm here and I'll show you what's wanted. I gotta get back to the store, and you can give it to the boss when he comes in."

"No—er—impossible," I stammered. "I—er—I can't. Positively can't, you know."

"Oh, say, I didn't know you were a cripple," said the girl. "I'll bring it over to the counter. You can see just as well if I turn on that light."

She took a step in my direction. My legs, deprived of their natural protectors, seemed to



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shriek for help. Never again will I think of a shorn lamb without a shudder.

"Stop!" The cry seemed to come from my shins. "Stop! Don't bring that here. Don't come here. Stay away."

"Well, say!" The kindly note was gone from the girl's voice. "What's the matter with you anyway? 'Don't come near me,' she mimicked. 'You'd think I had the smallpox or somefin.'"

My mind clutched at the word, "Smallpox!" I repeated. "Smallpox!" I groaned, and let my head sink upon the counter. There was a shriek and the slam of a door. I was alone again. Blessed solitude!

But it was only for a moment. Marched in a burly person with a very peaked cap pulled over his eyes.

"Slip this to the boss," he said. "Tell him Peter O'Hara, on the snout."

There was a ten-dollar bill on the counter. "Hit Peter O'Hara on the snout?" I called after the man, who was already half-way to the door.

"You got it, kid; right on the nose. It's on the slip, anyway," he said over his shoulder, and walked out.

I had often read and scoffed at newspaper accounts of bullies being hired in big cities, and yet here I was apparently acting as trustee to a sartorial thug. It was a puzzling situation, but I didn't have long to puzzle over it.

I looked up suddenly. A policeman was in the act of seizing my wrist. Two hospital attendants were pressing through the door. The girl was pointing at me through the window. A crowd was collecting around the ambulance from which the orderlies had just alighted.

The policeman's hand closed on my wrist. "This the smallpox patient?" snapped one of the orderlies.

"Smallpox is it!" grated from the lips of the law, the eyes of the law falling upon the paper and the bill by my hand. "Tis to a cell this bucka will be goin', and not to a hospital."

"That is," he added with a meaning look, "if he comes along quiet."

Arrested! And for being without my trousers. I could see the headlines. I could hear McTavish's remarks. Why hadn't I called a taxi and gone home? And why, oh why, didn't the tailor come back with my trousers?

"But, officer," I protested, "I've been keeping covered up."

"Don't I know it," said the policeman. "The chief has been trying to get this place for a month or more. But you're not covered up now; I got you with the goods this time. Tailor shop, indeed. A fine tailor you are."

"I'm not a tailor," I said.

"I know it," said the policeman. "If I'm without my trousers—"

"Begob," said the policeman, looking over the counter, "and he's sitting here without his pants, he is."

"Let me explain—"

"You can explain it in court, you can."

"I insist—" In my eagerness I stood up. Then I remembered, and sat down again. It's difficult to be impressive when one's trousers are missing. I don't believe Laurier could have made much of a speech with nothing between his shins and his audience but his woolies.

"Look here, officer," I continued. "I just happened to stray in here to-day."

"Sure, my boy, sure. I suppose every place you stray into you sit around with no pants on. What would you be doing when you're at home, I wonder."

"Let me—"

interject a little story. A year ago last Christmas I took my Yuletide dinner at the famous Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, Virginia. Non-festive and alone, I regaled myself on a little cold tongue, a roll and two coffee. On my return, talking to a Scottish-Canadian merchant here, I incidentally mentioned, a little proud of my Spartan frugality, that my Christmas dinner, though in a splendid hostelry, had "cost me fifty-five cents." Whereupon, looking intently and perplexedly upon me, my friend returned: "Well, I don't think that was out of the way, considering how the price of everything has gone up!"

But, resuming my theme, I do seriously affirm that one can live here in Canada for just about half what it would cost to live on the same scale in England. More, if one were to live as people of the same station live in New York, it would cost distinctly more in London than in the American metropolis. To begin with, one is almost impoverished by the process of getting to London at all. A few years before the war I crossed on the Lusitania, two in a room in the best part of the first cabin. In 1921 I crossed on a "two-class" boat, the first being really called second; and although I was one of four in a stateroom, it cost me almost fifty dollars more than that moving palace of the seas. Just before the war I recall that four of us had a suite, including private bath, in the resplendent Whitehall Court, abloom with knights and peers, for less than three dollars a day for the party. In 1921, myself and a youth repaired to the Rubens, a modest hotel on Buckingham Palace road, and one night's oblivion there, without food

or fire or flood (no bath) left less than enough out of a ten dollar bill to tip a couple of haughty attendants who had grown "too proud" to thank you, or to be civil to you, for the gratuity that would have started their hosannas a few short years before.

It is, everybody affirms, the excessive taxation that lies behind all this, the whole scale of living affected thereby. When one reflects that, for all above four or five hundred dollars of income, the appalling proportion of a dollar and twenty cents out of every five dollars goes back to the government, that about eight dollars out of a weekly wage of thirty vanishes in income tax, it is not difficult to realize that this must have a drastic bearing on the whole range of the expenses of life. For instance, the license for an ordinary motor-car, in London, is about a hundred and twenty-five dollars a year. A house telephone, after an initial payment greater than here, is permitted only one free call a day, all additional calls costing between three and four cents. I was for some months intimately associated with a Presbyterian church in a suburb of London. It had a roll of about 300, and paid a stipend, I think, of about \$2,500. Yet, superior as a class though the people were, only one family of that congregation boasted a motor-car; the number of house telephones, moreover, was exactly the same. This is but one of many evidences to the fact that these old country people simply do not indulge in the same luxuries as are commonplace in our western world. Further, one cannot help wondering how, with wages distinctly lower than here, the average family can have even the ordinary things of life. After an experience of some months' housekeeping, I can testify that such articles as meat, milk,

eggs, bread, vegetables, butter, tobacco and other necessities of life are, taken as a whole, just about double what they would cost in Montreal, Toronto, or Galt, to name only three of the great centres.

Only one thing remains at the old figure. That one thing is the illumination of your shoes—if you can escape the besetting "boots" when you come to fly the coop. That is still free, at hotel, lodging place, or private house. On returning here, the first night or two I instinctively and grandiosely heaved my shoes (small matters at the worst) outside my chamber door. The dull dawn found them still dull and undone. Which reminds me of a good story, irrelevant though it be to this present economic article.

Several years ago there came on a visit to my manse Mr. Ferrier of Edinburgh, member of the publishing house of Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier. En route, and at New York, he had visited Mr. Fleming H. Revell, the well-known publisher of that city. Seeing him to his room the first night of his Canadian visit, he said to me: "It certainly is good to be under the British flag once more. Do you know, no servant in the States will black your boots. When I was at Mr. Revell's house, I put my boots, the first night of my stay, outside my door. A half hour later I had occasion to go to the bathroom—and, would you believe it, I came on my millionaire friend brushing away at my boots with the perspiration running down his face!" I laughed with incredulous glee and bade him forget the incident, now beneath the Union Jack once more, my merriment a little diluted by the thermometer, then standing at 87 in the shade. And before I began operations I carefully locked the bathroom door.

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"And this ten-dollar bill now? It would just be straying into your hand, too?"

"It was left there by some man that wants Peter O'Hara beaten."

"Beaten? It says Peter O'Hara to win, on the slip."

"He said distinctly he wanted to take him right on the nose."

"It's full of jokes you are, but you can tell 'em to Magistrate Jones. Come on now, my boy."

It was then the latch of the rear door clicked, and I saw the face of the tailor to whom I had given my trousers.

"Here he is," I cried. "Here's the proprietor. Here's the man with my trousers."

"Are you crazy yet?" said the man. "I just come in to get my coat mended. If the boss ain't here I try down the street."

"Here," I shouted, "give me my trousers!"

"I should have your pants!" answered the man. "Crazy, going around like a Scotch musician," he added, closing the door behind him.

"That's plenty," said the policeman. "Come on now, let's be on our way."

"I can't go out on the street like this," I protested, but he had me by the shoulder, and before I knew it I was propelled to the sidewalk.

"Hey, Bill, a murderer getting arrested," shouted a small boy.

"Don't go near him," cried the girl; "he's got the smallpox."

"Smallpox nothing," said the policeman. "He told you that to get you out. He runs a hand-book."

"And did somebody win his pants off him?" asked a voice.

"Pipe the comic Highlander," said a boy.

"Run away now," said the policeman to the crowd, taking me by the arm.

It was at this moment I saw a car passing. McTavish was driving it. I waved my free arm, and the car came to a stop. McTavish got out.

"What have you there?" he asked the policeman.

"Tis a felly what's been running a hand-book, Mr. McTavish, with that cleaning and pressing sign for a blind," answered the blue-coat.

"McTavish!" I cried. "Tell him it's all an awful mistake."

"Do you know the felly?" asked the policeman.

"His voice sounds familiar," answered McTavish, pretending to look me over, "although I don't recognize the legs. But—why, surely it can't be my old friend Slip."

"Slip, Slip," he continued, with a shake of his head, "here your friends thought you were an honest, or at least a respectable, insurance agent, and all the time you've been running a hand-book. It hurts me, Slip; it weakens my faith in human nature. And running around the streets without your trousers. What would the vestry say?"

"Tell him it's a terrible mistake," I urged.

"Tell him. Look here, McTavish, I was thinking of letting you have that first edition of David Copperfield after all."

"Slip, my old chum," said McTavish. "I am proud to acknowledge our friendship. Appearances may be against you, but the heart of a McTavish beats true in shadow as in sunshine. Officer, I can vouch for Mr. Slip."

"What! He ain't running that place?"

"Certainly not. I don't believe he'd have sense enough."

"That was the proprietor who looked in at the rear door while you were talking," I said.

"Why didn't you say so—were you dumb?" asked the policeman most unjustly, hot-footing it into the store.

"And so, McTavish," I concluded, pulling the motor rug closer around my legs as we neared my house, "that's the way the whole thing happened. You can see yourself it might have happened to anybody, but there's no need—er—to say—er—anything about it."

"It's a funny thing," said McTavish, "but I've never known a man who owned a first edition of David Copperfield that didn't have a bad memory. Couldn't remember a thing for ten minutes. But after this, Slip, if I were you I'd wear a belt. I would indeed."

One Vote to Each State

THE constitutional provision requires in such a case the votes in the House shall be "taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote," and that "a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice." In other words, there would be forty-eight votes in the House and twenty-five votes would be necessary to choose a president.

If the House of Representatives shall choose a president in 1925, each state as a state must either cast one vote for one of the three candidates before the House or it must cast a blank or no vote at all; and whether every state casts a vote or not, there must still be twenty-five votes for some candidate for a choice.

The state delegations of the present House do not show a majority for either party. Unless some delegations chose to vote against their party's candidate, neither Coolidge, Davis nor Bryan would receive from the House the majority vote required by the twelfth amendment.

Assuming that with the help of LaFollette senators Governor Bryan should be the choice of the Senate, the House Republicans would be

confronted with a curious dilemma. They could not muster strength enough to re-elect Coolidge, but it would rest in their power to choose between electing Davis, the Democratic nominee, and permitting the Senate to elect Bryan, a man not nominated for the presidency and the brother of a man who thrice failed in running for that office.

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BUT the Republicans have only a paper majority in the Senate, included among their number are Senators LaFollette, Frazier and Ladd. Mention might be made of Senators Brookhart and Norris, although these two have not yet indicated whether they will support the LaFollette candidacy. Holding three, and possibly five, votes, it rests within the power of the LaFollette group in the Senate to decide the presidency should both electoral college and House of Representatives be deadlocked. In view of the Republican campaign plans, which appear to involve a strong effort to capture territory in which there is strong LaFollette sentiment, and in view of General Dawes' acceptance speech, in which he stressed "LaFolletteism" as one of the dominant issues of the campaign, there seems to be little prospect that members of the LaFollette group in the Senate could bring themselves to vote for Dawes.

It would not be necessary for any of the LaFollette senators to vote for Governor Bryan. If members of this group should absent themselves from the Senate they would achieve the same result. Under the constitution a majority of those present elects a vice-president when his election devolves upon the Senate. If five LaFollette senators should remain away from the balloting, the forty-four Democratic and two Farmer-Labor senators would have a majority over forty-five Republicans left.

The situation in the Senate as it affects the vice-presidency and Bryan's chances is therefore of as much concern to Republican campaign strategists as the capture of doubtful states. In effect, they are confronted by two Democratic presidential possibilities. If President Coolidge should be defeated decisively, John W. Davis undoubtedly would be elected. If the president and Mr. Davis should fail of a majority in the electoral college, Mr. Bryan, another Democrat, probably would be chosen.