

*THE TAILOR MAK'S THE MAN.*

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BAILIE STOUT, a Glasgow magistrate of a past generation, had made himself particularly obnoxious to the starving unemployed of the city during the distress which led to the riot of 1848, by refusing to vote them adequate help at the Town Council Board, and a trick was played on him, in that

connection, which eventuated in a highly humorous adventure, and forcibly conferred on the self-conscious Bailie, a brief experience as an amateur convict.

The Bailie had been having his usual social sederunt in a small chop-house in the Trongate, and was returning, late o' night, to his house in the Candleriggs, when he felt himself seized without warning, and forced up a dark entry, at the top of which he was hurriedly disrobed of his sober tweeds and re-clothed in a suit of dirty white moleskin, the identical suit worn by the ring-leader of the rioters on the preceding day.

Thus attired, the outraged Bailie was left to shift for himself, as best he could.

"My goodness!" he muttered to himself, as he hurried off; "to think o' a Gleska magistrate jinkin' about the streets o' auld St. Mungo attired in an Irish labourer's cast-aff claes!"

He was making to get across Trongate, a little west of King William's equestrian statue, when a strong voice halloed him, and called on him to stop. Looking about, the Bailie saw two men hurrying across the Trongate after him, and concluding that a further development of the infernal plot already worked out against him was about to be inaugurated, he thought discretion the better part of valour, and—precipitately fled. The Bailie's run, however, thanks to his moleskins and his bodily beef, was more of a "juck's waddle" than ought else, and in a few moments a pair of rough hands were laid on his shoulders.

"The very man we want," said one of the two detectives for it was none other than two local detectives. "A lucky find!"

"What want ye wi' me? what's the matter wi' the auld hat noo?" gasped out the astounded Bailie.

"All right, the thing's moleskin in more ways than one. A certain man in a dirty white moleskin suit, led the rioters:

this forenoon. This resembles the suit, and—you are undoubtedly the man! Come along.”

“Great Scott! here’s a funny fix,” exclaimed the horrified magistrate, “tooken up for a criminal—a rioter! it’s no’ possible! it’s no’ possible! Look at me. I’m a toun’s magistrate, Bailie Stout o’ the auld Can’leriggs.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed the officer. “Tell that to the Horse Marines. As for us, we’re not quite so jolly green. Come along, you rascally old fraud!”

“The Lord luck to me, but this is most desperate wark!” exclaimed the Bailie, as he was being led off, “but stop a wee! jist ye stop a wee! there’s six or eight ’ll swing for this job yet, if there’s an ounce o’ law left in Scotland!”

And thus fuming out his just wrath, the unfortunate Bailie Stout was hurried off, without further explanation or apology, to the Central Police Office as a suspect of the most notorious dye. It looked an unfortunate affair for Bailie Stout. He was now practically in the hands of the police, and, what was even worse, was likely to be thrust into a common cell, with the charge of being a rioter written against his name. The bare thought of such an eventuality was torturing in the extreme. But why bother himself? The charge was glaringly false all through, and was he not Bailie Stout, a most respectable citizen, and—a magistrate!

And yet, had not men been convicted and hanged on purely circumstantial evidence. They had, in numerous instances, he well knew, and this unfortunate victim of a police mistake shivered with horror at the bare possibility of such a dire catastrophe as a criminal conviction. It was no use the victim’s threats and expostulations. The two officers were obdurate, and the prisoner’s repeated assertions that he was not the man suspected, but the veritable, tangible, and irrefutable Bailie Stout, of the auld Gleska Can’leriggs, so perseveringly made, were received with shouts of laughter as the stupid fabrications of a culprit neatly

trapped. Within five minutes the officers and their prisoner were standing before the charge bar, in presence of the lieutenant on duty.

"The charge?" inquired the lieutenant.

"A 'suspect,' believed to be the man in the white mole-skin suit, who led the mob in the East End this forenoon," answered the officer.

"It's a mistake!" gasped out the prisoner, "a most desperate, stupid, fearful mistake!"

"Silence, prisoner!" said the lieutenant, in a tone of voice loaded with the weight of authority.

"What! wad ye daur to order me to silence?—a toon's magistrate!"

The astonished lieutenant, thus taken by the proboscis, so to speak, deliberately put on and adjusted his spectacles, so as to have a proper survey of the prisoner.

"Oh, ye may spectacle me as much as ye like, my fine man, but haud yer haun' a bit ere ye commit me, or by my sang ye'll rue't the langest day o' yer life."

"A fit subject for Gartnavel," remarked the lieutenant.

"Tak' back that insultin' statement, sir, or stan' the consequences. I'm Bailie Stout o' the auld Can'leriggs," slapping the counter with his hand.

"Now, look here, prisoner," said the lieutenant, "if I have to suffer another interruption from you, I'll at once lock you up in one of the cells as a drunk and disorderly incorrigible."

"Try that trick on me, an' its any amount o' nails in yer coffin, my fine chiel," said the prisoner, with rising spirit.

"Silence, will you?" thundered forth the lieutenant.

"Go you to Cockenzie!" retorted the prisoner.

"What is your name, sir?" asked the lieutenant, changing his tack.

"Bailie Stout," replied the prisoner, "as I've already tell't thir twa fellows fifty times within the last fowr minutes." The

lieutenant burst into a fit of laughter, in which he was heartily seconded by his two official subordinates.

"Oh, ye may lauch," said the prisoner, "but I'll haud ye a saxpence ye'll lauch on the wrang side o' yer mooth before ye're dune wi' this job, my fine fellows."

"Are you going to give me your real name?" once more questioned the lieutenant, "or must I add impersonation to the charge already preferred against you?"

"Bailie Stout o' the auld Can'leriggs, that's my name," once more insisted the prisoner, shooting out his rotund "corporation" with assured self-consciousness.

"Let the turnkey search him," said the lieutenant, abruptly turning away.

"What! anither indignity? Wad ye ripe my vera pooches?" gasped out the prisoner, as the officiating turnkey seized him rather roughly by the arm, and wheeling him right about face began turning out the contents of the rather large and flabby pockets of his ill-fitting moleskin suit. The contents were common enough—a broken clay pipe, a bit of thick tobacco, a red-spotted pocket handkerchief, and—ah!—what is this?—a copy of the four inflammatory resolutions read and passed by the rioters at the mass meeting held on the Green before proceeding to their work of destruction. The keen eye of the lieutenant fixed on the document the moment it was brought to light.

"A most important 'find,'" remarked the lieutenant glancing over the paper, and taking in the sense of the compromising matter with true official instinct and zest. "Looks bad for you, old man."

"What's this noo?" gravely asked the prisoner, "hae ye fand anither mare's nest, or what?"

"We've found out what will send you across the seas, old man, I fear," answered the lieutenant. "Remove the prisoner; cell 21."

"What! pit me in a polis cell?" sang out the indignant

Bailie. "Mind what ye're aboot, lieutenant; if there's necks to be stretched in connection wi' this affair, my man, yours 'll rin a bad chance o' escape; it's as fack as my name's Bailie Stout, an' that's gie'n ye a last warnin' word."

The prisoner's last warning word, however, was of no effect whatever. The lieutenant seemed to care no more for it than he did for the spittle he exuded from his mouth at the moment, as if in contempt. And, fuming like a scolding washer-wife, the excited prisoner was led off to the confinement of the cell, protesting with great vigour of lungs that he was the real and tangible Bailie Stout, o' the auld Can'leriggs, and vowing loudly that six or eight of the police officials would swing for the outrage done him, "if there was an ounce o' law left in Scotland." Right law or wrong law, however, poor Bailie Stout was run into cell 21, and the door heavily locked on him.

"My goodness, but this is a fine farce!" thought the Bailie when left to himself; "a Gleska magistrate in a polis cell! It—it—it bates cock-fechtin'! What wad the Provost say if he saw me here, I wonder?"

"He would most likely say, my good friend," said a deep sepulchral voice from an opposite corner of the cell—"he would most likely say and conclude that, like me, you were here to note, observe, and study both sides of the question."

The astonished Bailie jumped about three feet from the ground when the deep bass voice of the speaker broke on his ear, which suggested, in spite of its friendly words, an underground relationship and resurrectional possibilities. The voice that had just spoken, however, indubitably belonged to a man, as Bailie Stout presently discovered, and a man, too, displaying a personality six feet high, and turning the scales, obviously, at fifteen stone. He was, in fact, more than a mere man—he was, presumably, a minister, if a seedy black clerically-cut suit, a round-about stand-up white collar, and a broad, soft, shovel hat are worth founding an inference on.

Advancing towards the astonished Bailie, the clerical-looking stranger frankly extended his hand as a token of good feeling and friendship in a common distress. The Bailie, however, overruled by his native Scotch caution, proffered him only the extreme tip of his forefinger, which the indulgent stranger very warmly caught and as warmly shook, hoping that he saw his "valued friend quite well."

The Bailie withdrew his imprisoned forefinger as soon as he was able, assured his interlocutor that he was full of his usual "weelness," and continued moving cautiously backward as often as the tall, clerical-looking stranger advanced in his direction. He was uncomfortably afraid of the tall stranger, who, in spite of his clerical attire, had an uncanny look.

"Perhaps," thought the Bailie, "he's the resident prison parson let loose on me through some invisible sliding door-panel."

Then he decided on questioning the tall cleric, point-blank, as to his business in the cell.

"Pray, sir, are ye what's ca'd the prison parson?" he bluntly asked.

"No," responded the tall stranger, "only wish I were. Salary good, billet easy, no vestry meetings, no Dorcas societies, no insipid tea-drinkings with idle young ladies of relaxed sentiment, nor twiddle-twaddle talk with amiable old ones. No, friend, I'm not the prison parson—oh, dear, no! Just now, however, I happen to run the job pretty closely—without the salary though, which is equivalent to playing Hamlet without the character of Hamlet—understand?"

"No, I'll be whuppit if I dae," frankly answered the confounded Bailie.

"Ah, let me explain. Well, you see, although not exactly the prison parson, I'm presently an imprisoned parson, and

passably happy at that. You also possess that invaluable mental panacea of contentment, my good friend, let me fondly hope?"

"Na, na!" gruffly answered the Bailie, "I possess nae invaluable mental pancake o' the kind."

"No! Is it possible, and your head so full of strong character, too? Kindly let me read your head, please." And the tall stranger made a step towards the Bailie, who fell back two steps with great promptitude.

"Keep back!" he said with a deprecating wave of the hand, "I dinna want my cocker-nut graipit by you. Are ye a travellin' phrenologist, or what?"

"I'm a minister of the gospel, friend," said the tall stranger in an appropriately grave and solemn tone of voice.

"An' what the crickey are ye daein' here—in a polis office?"

"Getting illustrations of the other side of the question, and gathering graphic matter for original pulpit ministrations."

"Go you to Dumbarton! I ken a thing or twa better than that, I'm thinkin'."

"Oh, it's really so, my good friend," resumed the crazy cleric; "and therefore have you a special care, old man, lest I chuck you into my next Sunday's sermon as a striking pulpit text. I only wish I had your name entered in my note-book (tapping a side pocket), but I'll get it, I daresay, from my Christian friend, the lieutenant at the bar as I pass out. You look in need of a word in season. I can fix you up there slick, I can. I usually carry a small bottle of spiritual consolation in my pocket as a mental pick-me-up in moments of distress, but the officious turnkey unfortunately relieved me of it at the bar only half an hour ago. Never mind, old boy, I'm square for you in another way. You seem a strong case for Scriptural quotation. You are,



I opine, nothing short of a five-mile-an-hour tramper on the broad road to perdition, eh?"

The confounded Bailie "gapit wide, but naething spak'," to use a handy bit of phraseology. He was sort of half amused and wholly flabbergasted.

"Kindly allow me to decipher your head, friend. Do! rare chance—gratis!"

"Keep back! keep back!" replied the Bailie with a shivery feeling. "If ye offer to lay han's on my heid I'll knock hymn-books an' family Bibles oot o' ye, big as ye are!"

"Just as I thought. Pugilistic propensities strong, reverential feelings weak," and this said, the disordered parson once more stepped close up to the retreating Bailie.

"Sit down, man! for ony sake, sit down an' be at rest! I canna bear to see ye stottin' about the place like an unlaid ghost."

"Sit down where, friend?" asked the crazy parson, looking pathetically around the empty cell.

"On yer shovel-hat, if ye like. It's a saft enough lookin' handfu'."

"Further confirmation of my first guess. Reverential feelings notably weak. Want to be preached at a bit. I'll take a memorial note of the sad fact, friend. Interesting case to me, I do assure you. You'll go slap into my next week's sermon, as sure as fate—dirty moleskins and all!" And, pop, out came a small metallic note-book, into which the miraculous parson proceeded to make an apparently copious entry, descriptive of the imprisoned Bailie. This effected, he next asked, by way of a climax, obviously—

"By the bye, friend, what's your crime? I'm particular about that, to a degree. You're an Irish labourer, I see from your attire. Probably stolen the hod, eh?"

"I'm Bailie Stout o' the auld Can'leriggs, an' I want nae mair o' yer looney jargon, keep mind o' that!"

“Rev. Josiah Balderdash,” said the turnkey at this moment, putting his head inside the door of the cell.

“That’s me!” promptly answered the demented cleric.

“Your fine’s paid. Come along, and see to it that you cultivate milder spiritual tastes next time you go on the merry ‘squeal.’”

“Farewell, my good friend. Look out for yourself in my next sermon.”

“Ma feth! if ever ye come up afore me at the Polis Coort, my fine man, it’ll be sixty days in Duke Street for you, an’ naething less, minister or no minister!” the wroth Bailie hotly cried after the departing parson.

Bailie Stout was liberated from custody that night only on the sworn testimony of two brother magistrates, and any amount of personal friends. Such is the confusing power of a wrong suit of clothes; and so true is it that the tailor makes the man.

And so ended Bailie Stout’s prison adventure as an amateur, convict.