

FUN UPON FUN;

OR,

No 67

THE COMICAL AND MERRY

TRICKS

OF

LEPER the TAILOR.

IN TWO PARTS.



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THE MERRY TRICKS
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LEPER THE TAILOR.

LEPER's father lived in a village about six miles from Glasgow, and died when he was but very young; he left a widow and three children, two daughters and a son; Leper being the youngest, was greatly idolized by his mother, who was a good soft-natured woman, very industrious, and followed the business of bleaching cloth.

As Leper grew up he turned a very mischievous boy, playing many tricks on the neighbourhood, such as tying cats to dog's tails, breaking hen's legs, stopping people's lums or chimney-tops; so that his poor mother was sadly vexed with complaints against him.

To get him kept from mischief, she prevailed with a tailor to take him as an apprentice; he settled, and was very peaceable for some time, until he got so much of his trade on his finger ends as might make him pass for a journeyman, and then he was indifferent whether he staid with his master or not. His mistress gave him but very little meat when he wrought at home, so he liked best to be in other houses, where he got both meat and diversion.

Leper was resolved on revenge against his mistress for her thin kail no kitchen, and little bread; for though flesh was boiled in the pot, there was none for poor Leper and his master, but a little bit on Sunday's, and then all the bones were kept and put in the pot, to make the broth through the week. Leper perceived that when she took off the pot, she always turned her back to them and took out the flesh, and set it on a shelf in her own bed-room. One night, after work, he steals out a pan, cuts a piece of flesh out of a dead horse, and then

goes to a lime kiln and boils it: next day, his master being from home, his landlady and him being in the house, after she had set off the pot as usual, and taken out her bit of good beef, he went out for some time, and then came back saying, the minister's lass is wishing you to go directly and speak to her mistress. Off she goes in all haste; Leper runs and takes away her bits of good meat, and lays down his horse flesh; and knowing she would return in a passion, and sit down with a soss in her cushioned chair, as she used, he takes a large pin, and stabs it straight through the cushion, with its head on the chair, and the point to her back-side. So in she comes in a rage, and down she sits with all her weight on the pin point and then roars out, 'Murder, murder,' for she was sticket in the z—e; the neighbours came running in, and Leper went out with his bit of good beef, leaving the wives to doctor his landlady's doup as they pleased. He still denied the doing of it, and his

master believed it might happen accidentally; but the howdie was very oft to be had before it was got hale again; and his landlady, by eating of that horse beef, took such a loathing at flesh, that Leper and his master got all the beef ever af er, and his landlady turned one of the kindest mistresses an apprentice could wish for.

There was a neighbour wife on whom Leper used to play tricks sometimes, for which she came and complained to his master, and got him severely beaten several times. Leper resolved to be revenged on her; so one day he came to the backside of the house (no one being in but herself,) and took up a big stone, and runs along the rough wall with all his strength, which roared like thunder in the inside of the house; and frightened the wife so, that she thought the house was tumbling down about her ears, upon which she ran out and sat down at a distance, looking every minute when the house would fall down, till her husband came home and

persuaded her to go in, to whom she told the above story. 'Hout tout, daft tapie,' said he, 'the house will stand these hundred years.' Leper knowing they were both in, comes and plays the same trick over again which also frightened the goodman so much, that he cried out—'Run, Maggy, run, for my heart plays pitty-patty.' And they would not lodge in the house any more, till the masons convinced them of its sufficiency.

There was another neighbour who had a snarling cur dog, which bit Leper's leg; Leper resolved to be revenged on the dog; and so one night he catches the dog, and carries him to the kirk, where the rope of the bell hung on the outside; so with his garter he tied the dog's fore foot to the rope, and left him hanging; the dog struggling to get free, set the bell a-ringing, which alarmed the whole village. Every one cried out, 'Wonderful sir! wonderful sirs! the devil is ringing the bell.' When they saw the black col-

ley hanging at the rope, I true it set
the minister, and all the peop'e to their
prayer: but Leper, fearing he would
be detected by his garter, came to the
minister's side, and asked the reverend
gentleman what was the matter? 'In-
deed, my bairn,' said he, 'tis the deil
ringing the kirk bell.' Says Leper, 'I'll
go and see him, for I never saw the
deil;' the minister cried, 'Stop that mad
laddie;' but Leper ran and loosed the
dog, crying, 'It's such a man's dog,
which had the rope in its teeth.' They
all cried out, 'The deil's i' the dog, the
deil's i' the dog;' then took up stones
and felled poor colley, and the devil got
the blame of making the dog ring the
bell. This spread Leper's fame for be-
ing one of the wisest and most coura-
geous tailors that was in all the king-
dom; and many, shaking their heads,
said, 'It was a pity he was a tailor, but
a captain or general of an army, as the
devil could not fear him.'

After this, a farmer in the neigh-
bourhood hearing the fame of Leper,

how he had frightened the deil frae being a bellman, sent for him to an ale-house, and drank with him very heartily, and told him he was sadly borne down by a spirit of jealousy against his wife, and a suspicion of her being too free with a servant lad he had before; and if he would keep it secret, and learn him to find it out, he would give his mother a load of meal, to which Leper agreed, and gave the poor supposed cuckold instructions how to behave. So home he goes, and finds himself very sick, and every day worse and worse; taking death to him, he blesses his three small children, and charges his wife not to marry, until his children could do something for themselves. This hypocritical woman takes a roaring, 'Aha! marry, she should never marry! no, no, there should never a man lie by my side, or kiss my lips after thee, my ain dear lau b, Johnny.'—Then he acted the dead man as well as he possibly could; the neighbours were called in, and he's fairly o'erseen, as the old say-

ing is, before good neighbours. The sorrowful widow made sad lament, wrung her hands and tore her hair— The reverend women about began to dress the corpse, and asked her for a shirt. ‘Ay, ay, said she, he has twa new linen sarks, and there in an auld ane in the the botton o’ the kist, that naeboddy can wear; ony thing’s gale enough for the grave. Well, said they, we must have some linen for a winding-sheet. Aweel, quo’ she, I hae twa cut o’ linen i’ the kist neuk; but there’s a pair o’ auld linen sheets, ho’d i’ the middle, may do weel enough; I hae need to be carefu’; I am a poor widow the day wi’ three sma’ bairns.’

Aweel, the corpse is dressed, and laid on the top of the big chest, while the neighbours sat by her condoling her misfortune, and how the funeral things were to be provided: said one, ‘The coffin must needs be seen about first.’

Ay, ay, he has some new deals in the barn, he brought them to make a bed o’, but we’ll no break them, there’s the

auld barn door, and the calf kist will
 do well enough; ony thing's gude e-
 nough to gang to the grave wi'; but O,
 quo' she, 'send for Sandy, my honest
 auld servant, and he'll see every thing
 right done; I'll tell him where he
 will get siller to do any thing wi'; he's
 the lad that will not see me wrang d.
 Then Sandy comes wrying his face, and
 rubbing his eyes. 'O Sandy, there's a
 sad alteration here, and ha-a-a, she
 cries like a bitted calf, 'O sirs, will ye
 gang a' but the house till I tell him
 what to do; but they went, and there
 she fell a kissing of Sandy, and said,
 Now, my dear, the auld chattering guest
 is a wa', and we'll get our will o' itner;
 be as haining of every thing, as ye can,
 for thou kens it's a' thy ain; but the
 corpse's sister, and some other people
 came in; ben they went to see the
 corpse, lifts up the cloth off his face,
 and seeing him all in a pear of sweat,
 said, Hech he's a bonny corpse, and a
 lively like colour; when he could no
 longer contain himself to carry on the

joke, but up he got among them, a deal of people ran for it, and his wife cried out, 'O, my dear, do you ken me?' Ay, you base jade and chore, better than ever I did.' Jumps on the floor, gets his staff and runs after Sandy, and catches him in the fields, a little from the house;—ate and drank with his sister and neighbours who had come to see his corpse: and poor Sandy went home with a skin full of terror, and a sorting of sore bones, took a sore fever, and died a few days after, so he got quit of his duck-older, and Leper's mother got her load of meal.

Leper's mother was a careful industrious wife, but, as the by-word is, 'a working mother makes a dally daughter,' and so it happened here, for she had two idle glazer sluts of daughters, that would do nothing but lie in their bed in the morning till, as the saying is, 'the sun was like to burn a hole in their backsides.' The old woman, who was bleaching some cloth, was very early at work in the mornings,

and Leper's patience being worn out with the laziness of his two sisters, he resolved to play a trick on them, for their reformation; so he goes and gets a mortcloth, and spreads it on the bed above them, and sends the dead bell through the town, inviting the people next day, at four o'clock, afternoon, to the burial of his two sisters, for they had died suddenly: this brought all the neighbouring wives in, who one after another lifted up the mortcloth, and said with a sigh, 'They've gone to their rest, a sudden call indeed!' Their aunt, hearing of this sudden news, came running in all haste, and coming where the jades' mither was at work, and was ignorant of the story, she cries out, 'Fye upon ye, woman, fye upon ye!' 'What's the matter, sister,' says she? 'What's the matter!' 'I think you might let your work stand for aeday, when your daughters are baith lying corpse.' 'My bairns corpse! I am certain they went to bed hale and fair last night.' 'But I tell you,' says the other, 'the dead bell has

been through warning the folks to the burial; then the mother cries out, 'O the villain! O the villain! that he did not send me word.' So they both ran, and the mother, as soon as she entered the house, flies to the bed, crying, 'O my bairns my dear bairns!' on which the sluts rose up in a consternation, to the great surprise of the beholders, and the great mortification of the girls, who thought shame to let their noses out of doors, and the diversion of the whole town.

Leper and his master went to a gentleman's house to work, where there was a saucy housekeeper, who had more ignorance and pride than good sense and manners; she domineered over her fellow servants in a tyrannical manner: Leper resolved to mortify her pride; so he finds an ant's nest, and takes their white eggs, grinds them to a powder, and puts them into the dish her supper souns was to be put in. After she had taken her supper, as she was covering the table, the innock powder

began to operate, and she let a great fart. Well done Margaret, says the Laird, your arse would take a cautioner; before she got out of the chamber door she let fly another crack; then she goes to order her fellow servant to give the Laird his supper, but before she could give the necessary directions, she gave fire again, which set them all a laughing. She runs into a room herself, and there she played away her own gun-battery so fast, that you would have thought she had been besieging the Havannah. The Laird and Lady came to hear the fun: they were like to split their sides at proud Maggy. So next morning she left her place, to the great satisfaction of all her fellow servants.

PART II.

LEPER's landlady became very harsh to his master, and very often abused him exceedingly sore with her tongue and hands, and always called upon him for more money, and to have all the money

in her keeping, which Leper was sorry for. It so happened on a day that the tailor had got a drubbing both with tongue and tongs, and he pouched his thumbse, and was going to make a queen of her; when she saw that, she cried out, O! will you leave a poor tender dying woman. But Leper, knowing the cause of her ill nature better than his master did, advised him to take her, on a fine day, about a mile out of the town, and give her a walk, and he would stay at home and study a remedy for her disorder—Away they both went, but as she was complaining for want of health, and that she was very weak, she cried frequently out, O! 'tis a crying a sin to take a woman in my condition out o'er the door. During their absence, Leper goes and searches her bed, and below the bolts er he gets a bottle of rare whisky, of which he takes a hearty pull, and then pusses in it to make it up, gets a halipenny worth of snuff, and puts it in also, shakes altogether, and so sets it in its place again—Home they came,

and she was exceedingly distressed as a woman could be, and cried out, it was a horrid thing to take her out of the house. The tailor, seeing her so bad, thought she would have died; ran as fast as he could for a draught, but she, in her hypocrisy, pretended she could not take it, and called on him to help her to bed, into which he lays her. He was not well gone when she fell to her bottle, taking two or three hearty gluts. then she roars out, 'Murder, I am poisoned I'm poisoned.'—Bocking and purging began, and the neighbours were called in; she leaves her blood upon poor Leper, and tells how such an honest woman brought her ae bottle as another was done, and the murdering loon had stolen it, and put in a bottle of poison instead of it. Leper took to his heels, but was pursued and carried before a justice of the peace, where he told all he had done, which made the justice laugh heartily at the joke, and the tailor's wife was well purged from her feigned sickness, laziness, and cursed ill nature; for al-

ways when she began to curl her nose for the future, the tailor had no more to say, but, 'Maggy, mind the bottle.'

Leper was working with a master tailor in Glasgow, who hungered his men, and one morning, just when breakfast was set on the table, in comes a gentleman to try on a suit of clothes; the master being obliged to rise, desired the lads to say the grace themselves; every one refused it, and put it to his neighbour, till Leper undertook it, and said, with an audible voice, that the stranger gentleman might overhear him, as follows: Och, hoch! we are a parcel of poor beastly bodies, and we are as beastly guided, if we do not work we get nothing to eat, yet we are always eating and fretting; fidgeting and half starving is like to be our fortune; scartings and scrapings are the most of our mouths; we would fain thank thee for our fullness, if it were so, but the rest of our benefactors are not worthy the acknowledging;—hech hey, Amen.' The gentleman laughed till his sides were

like to burst, and gave Leper half-a-crown to drink.

Leper was not long done with his apprenticeship till he set up for himself, and got a journeyman and an apprentice; was coming into very good business, and, had he restrained his roguish tricks, he might have done very well. He and his lads being employed to work in a farmer's house where the housewife was a great miser, and not very cleanly in making meat, and sneeved through her nose greatly when she spoke. In the morning, when she went to make their pottage, she made a fashion of washing the pot, which to appearance seemed to him to have been amongst the first that had been made; then she set it before the fire till she went to the well, in which time Leper, looking into it, sees two great holes in the bottom, stopped with clouts, he takes up his goose, and holds it as high as his head, then lets it drop into the pot, which knocked out the bottom of it; presently in comes the wife with the water, and

pours it into the pot, which set the fire-
 side all in a dam, for still as she poured
 in it ran out; the wife being short-
 sighted, or what they call sand blind,
 looks into the pot, holds up both her
 hands, and cries, 'Losh preserve me,
 sirs; for the grip between the twa holes
 is broken;'—says Leper, the pot was old
 enough, but do you not ken that tailor's
 pottage is heavier than other men's.
 Indeed, lad, I believe it, but they say
 ye're a warlock; it's Wednesday all the
 world over, and a waeful Wednesday
 to me indeed; my pot might hae served
 me this fifty year, a sae wad it e'en.

This spirit diverted Leper and his lads
 through the day; and after supper, know-
 ing he was to get some dirty bed, as
 the cows and the people lived all in one
 apartment, he chose rather to go home;
 and knowing the moon was to rise a
 little after midnight he sat along by the
 fire, to'd them many a fine story to
 drive the time, and bade the wife make
 the bed, to see how it might be: to save
 trouble, she made it in the dark, directly

on the floor, behind where they sat shaking down two bottles of straw; a calf, which chanced to be lying on that place, and which the wife did not notice, was covered with the straw, and the bed clothes spread over it. The most of the family being in bed, the wife told them to go to bed also; but Leper, knowing of the calf, said, I'll make my bed come to me on which the wife began to pray for herself and all that was in the house; so up he gets his elwand, and gives a stroke on the bed, which caused the brute to rise, and not seeing where to go, it fell a crying, and turned round, which set the whole house a roaring out murder in their own tongue. The goodwife ran to the bed above the goodman, and the whole family cried out, not knowing what it was; but Leper and his two lads whipt off the blankets, and the brute ran in among the rest unperceived; then Leper lighted a candle, and all of them got out of bed, paid Leper for his work, and more if he pleased, and begged him to go away, and

take the devil with him. So home he went, but never was employed by that wife any more.

Leper had a deal of the best customers, both in town and country; so one time he had occasion to go to the parish of Inchinan to make a wedding-suit for a gentleman. After they were finished, he asked drink-money to his lads, which the gentleman refused. Leper resolved to be even with him; so he goes up to the hay-loft, where the groom slept, and takes his stockings, breeches, and jacket, sews them a'together, and stuffs them full of hay, makes a head, puts a rope about the neck, and hangs it on a tree opposite to the laird's window; then goes to the laird, and tells him that his groom had hanged himself, and that if he would open his window, he would see him hanging; the laird, struck with astonishment, knew not what to do. Leper advised him to bury him privately. The laird said he had not a servant he could trust, so begged of Leper to do it. Leper refuses, till the laird promised him a load of meal; then Leper pulls the hay out of the groom's clothes, goes and gets his load of meal, and sends it to Glasgow, then goes to the groom, and says hastily, 'Lad, thy master is wanting thee,' so the lad runs in a haste to see what his master wanted: the laird no sooner saw him opening the door, than he cry'd out, 'Avoid thee, Satan, avoid thee, Satan;' the lad says, 'What's the matter, sir? What's the matter?' 'Did not you hang yourself this morning?' 'Lord forbid,' said the lad. The laird

says, if thou be an earthly creature, take that tankard and drink, which he did. Then says he to his master, 'Leper called me up, and said you wanted me in all haste.' 'Ho, ho, says the laird, I find out the story now; if I had Leper I would run my sword through him.' But Leper before that was away for Glasgow with his meal.

Leper was in use to give his lads their Sunday supper, which obliged him to stay from the kirk in the afternoon, he having neither wife nor servant maid: so one Sunday afternoon, as he was cooking his pot, John Muckle Cheek and James Puff and Blaw, two civilisers, having more zeal than knowledge, came upon him, and said, what the matter, sir, you go not to the kirk? Leper replied, I am reading my book, and cooking my pot which I think is a work of necessity. Then say the one to the other, 'Don't answer that graceful fellow, we'll make him appear before his better;' so they took the kail pot, and puts a staff through the hoole, and bears it to the clerk's chamber. Leper, who was never at a loss for invention, goes to the Principal of the college's house, nobody being at home but a lass roasting a leg of mutton. Leper says, My dear, will you go and bring me a pint of ale, and I'll turn the spit till you come back. The lass was no sooner gone, than he runs away with the leg of mutton, which served his lads and him for their supper. When the Principal came home, he was neither to haud nor to bind it was so angry; so on Monday he goes and makes complaint to the Lord Provost, who sends two officers for Leper, who came immediately.—The Lord asked him how he dared to take away the

Principal's mutton? Leper replied, 'How came your civileers to take away my kail pot? I'm sure there's a less sia in making a pot full of kail, than roasting a leg of mutton, law makers should not be law breakers, so I demand justice on the civileers!' The provost asked him what justice he would have? He says he, Make them carry the pot back again; and to the Principal, a leg of mutton won't make him and me fall out; so they were forced to carry the pot back, and Leper caused the boys to huzza after them to their disgrace.

There was a barber who always plagued Leper, and called him prick-the-louse. Leper resolved to be even with him so he goes and buys three sheep heads, and sends for the barber, and told him that there were three fine Southland gentlemen just come to his house, who much wanted to be shaved, and he assured him he would receive sixpence for each one of them;—this good news made the barber send for a dram. Leper was still praising them for quiet good natured gentlemen so Leper takes him to the bed where the sheep-heads lay covered, and desired him to awaken them, for they would not be angry, or say an ill word to him; the barber lifts the covering, and sees the sheep-heads, runs out cursing and swearing, and Leper crying after him, sheep-head barber.

The barber resolved to be revenged on Leper, so when he was shaving Mess John, he tells him that Leper was the drunkenest fellow in his parish: so Mess John warns him to the session. Leper comes, and says, What do you want with me, Mr? Come away, Leper, says Mess John, I hear a bad report of you; Me sir, I am sure they were

not my friends that told you that.—‘Indeed, I am informed you are a drunkard.’—‘I a drunkard,—You have not a soberer man in your parish. Stop sir, I will tell you how I lead my life,—in the morning I take a choppin of ale and a bit of bread; that I call my morning; for breakfast I generally take a herring and a choppin of ale, for I cannot sup brose like my lads; the herring makes me dry, so at eleven hours, I take a pint, and sometimes three choppins; at supper I take a bit of bread and cheese, and a pint, and so go to bed.’ Mess John says, ‘It’s extravagant, sir, it’s excessive drinking, I allow you the one half of it for a quarter of a year.’ Says Leper, ‘I’ll try it, sir and come back and tell you. At the end of the quarter he draws out his account, and goes to Mess John, who was setting with the elders in the session house, and says, ‘Sir, I have a demand on you;’ ‘On me sir?’ ‘Yes, on you, sir; Don’t you remember you allowed me so much drink for a quarter of a year, and I want the money.’ ‘Am I to pay your reckoning, Sir.’ ‘You allowed it, and if you won’t pay it, I’ll take you before the Provost.’ The elders advised him to pay it, or he would be affronted; so Leper got the money. When he was at the door, he says, ‘Sir, will you stand another quarter?’ Get away, says Mess John, and don’t trouble me. Leper says, I am sure you may, for I am always twopence to your penny.

FINIS.