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NEW PATENT

THIEF CATCHER.

A COMIC STORY.

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ALBERT GARDNER

PETER PICKUP AND TAMMIE TREDDLES.

PETER PICKEN, or as he might wi' mair propriety be ca'd, Peter Pick-up, leev't in a bit kintra clachan, on the borders o' Dumbartonshire and Renfrewshire. He was a chap about the middle hicht, an sho'd ha'e been light complexioned, had it no been that, as a rule, he only wash't his face ainst a week. His hair, which play'd wi' the wun, was a carrity red, an' to the credit o' nature, hung in curls. He wore a cap wi' a great big peak, and a moleskin coat wi' four great big pouches, twa inside and twa ootside; his waisecoat was made o' printed velveteen, and his breeks o' woollen cord, gayen ticht in the legs, so as tae keep the calves in, for fear they shou'd tak a notion tae gang out tae grass; they, alang wi' his boots, regular skin drivers wi' fifty lace holes in them, a white calico sark, and a Turkey red napkin about his neck, made up the toggery o' ane o' the cutest chaps o' the day.

He hawkit a' sorts o' pats and pans for a leevin, an he wasna verra particular about getting siller for his gudes, if he could dooble or treple their value in auld claes or even rags or banes, bits o' brass, or auld airn,

physic bottles, or in fact onything that cam' in his way. He was gayen lucky tae in finin things afore they were lost, that is to say, just when they were gaun to be lost, an, indeed, onything that he, in the warmness o' his heart, picket up in this way as he was gaun his roun's, he put safe by, so that them that lost it nicht get it again if they could fin't,—aye, if they could fin't! bit I never yet heard tell o' ony body that was sae fortunate, for Peter could get quat o' his spulzie vera quick to folk that was just as fond o' fin'in' things afore they were lost as he was. He carried a lucky bag too, whilk contained a wheen written tickets, three pairts o' them blanks and the ither pairt o' them prizes. Peter could neither read nor write, so he had to get a frien' to make the tickets for him. Weel, ye see, a'e day when he was gaun his roons, a wife brocht him a lot o' rags an' bargant for a draw in the lucky pock. Divin' in her haun, she drew out a ticket an haun'd it to Peter to tell her what she had drawn, for she coudna read. Peter took it frae her, sayin, at the same time, "weel, what hae ye gotten?" "O I dinna ken," quo' the wife, "what dae ye ca't?" "O I ken fine what it is, its a egg cup," and he rummaged for ane among the dishes in the cart. "A egg cup," says the wife, "I'll no hae that." "O vera weel," says Peter, "back yer chance wi' a penny an try't again"; and while the wife an him were taukin, wee Tammie Tutup cam forret, and he says ta Peter, "let me see the ticket," and efter

a bit o' shuffling he lets him see't. Tammie lucks at it, an', burstin' into a lauch, he says, "that ticket says partin's taes." "Partin's taes be hang't!" says Peter, "the fule canna read. I ken fine what it's, its a chappin' bowl," an' he haun'd the wife ane, wha gaed awa miscawin' Peter for everything that was bad—and telling him tae gang awa hame, an' gang ta the schule an' learn ta read. Well it was true enouch the ticket said partin's taes; the frien, ye see, that wrote the tickets had dune't ta get a rise out o' Peter.

Weel, there was a'e day Peter gaed into Glasgow to buy a stock o' guids, when he, unfortunately, fell on the fuddle, and spent a' his bawbees. Next day he took a dauner thro' the toon, an when gaun up the Gallowgate he slippit into a public hoose, keepit by a chap that consider't himsel to be aboot as sharp as twa folk, tae hae a licht ta his pipe; weel, he wauket up the lobby an intil the news-room, an he saw that there wasna a creature in't but himsel, so when he had lichtet his pipe, he turnt his back ta the fire, and luckin' roon the room he saw a nice weather glass hingin' up again the wa. His een glisten't as he lucket at it, an his heart lifted up, as folks usually dae when they fin onything worth while. Takin the weather glass doon, an pittin it under his oxter, he wauket awa doon the lobby quit composed, and just when he was passing the bar window the landlord got his e'e on him, and cries out in a rage, "I'm sure I telt you curst hawkers mony a time that I'll no hae ye coming about

this hoose, an' if yere no out verra quick, auld Muffin Head, i'll kick ye out." Peter nae way discomposed turnt to him and says, "O, verra weel man, ye needna be sac crusty, I'll come nae mair, I assure ye"; and he gangs richt out wi' the weather glass aneath his oxter, an gets clean awa wi't. Weel, the next mornin' a neibör woman gangs into the public house, an' she says to the landlord, "do ye think its gaun to be fair the day? I cam in to take luck at yer weather glass, but I see ye hae shiftet it." "Wh—ew," he whislt, as he wauket awa to look for the glass, for he had min' o' ordering Peter out wane under his arm, an' he was guyen vext when he fan it was awa.

Peter use't to ca' at Paisley, ance't a week, while he gaun his rooms; noo, there leev't in Paisley a bit of a scientific chap, they cawed Tammie Treddle, or as he was mair commonly ca'd, Tammie-a'-things. He keepit a shop an' selt a' sorts o' things,—thumbelaries, bools, smothering airns, besoms, and mouse-traps. He was a, queer sort o' body, Tammie. He made air guns and magnetized razors, and did heaps o' ither o' the way sort o' things, that langsynewou'd hae gottet 'im the name o' haein dealins wi' the de'il. He ha' aye some o' his wares ootside o' the door, an often he had things tain awa, by somebody or another, but he could never catch the thief. Weel, ae day he thocht he wud try a new plan to catch the marauder. He had a very poorfu galvanic battery in the shop, an

he fixt the wires throo a sma' hole in the wa', an' connected them to a brass pan, an' placed it ootside o' the door, an' keepet the battery working at full poor. In the coorse o' the day, Peter happent to come doon the street, an' when he got fornent Tammie's shop he made a full stop, an' his een fairly glisten't as he got a glint o' the pan. Watching his opportunity, he slips doon the pavement, and just as he was passin' the pan, he loots doon to pick it up, when, gude keep us a the day! the pan stuck to his han. Noo, Peter being in a hurry to get awa, plays clutch wi the ither han, when, losh keep us! that ane stuek fast tae. Here was a pretty pickle ta be into. He wriggled and twisted aboot, like a leevin eel in a frying pan, an' screwed his face into a sort o' shapes, bit he durstna cry oot for fear o' being catcht. "Cha, cha, cha," he keepet gaun on, till at last it brocht him to his knees, an' cha'in' awa wi' horrible girn, he at last spoke out, no being able ta stan the twisting o' his nerves ony langer. "Oh! Ah! Oh!" he roart oot. This brocht Tammie to the door, an' as he lucket at Peter, he cried, "O ho! I see wha's the thief noo; what are ye makin' sic a din about? Is't owre warm for ye." "Lowse me, lowse me, for gudeness sake," cries Peter, "I was jist pitten a preen in a wee hole in the pan; oh, lowse me, luck sharp." "A preen!" says Tammie, as he stood lauchin at Peter's twists and capers, "a preen! oh! then, you mun hae gotten a haud o' the sharp end, and the neb has run into your fingers, for ver makin' di-

Tammie stoppet the battery, bit no before he had sent for the police, wha took Peter to the office, an the next day he was handed ower to o'or frien the gaoler, with instructions to be ta'en particular care o' for three months, till he got owre the shock that he received frae the electric pan.

Tammie Treddles has been thinkin' to try and get a patent for his new method o' thief catchin'. Do ye think he could get ane? The name he intends to ca' it, is "the Electro-magno-misdemeno-catchum-alivo."