

THE SLOVENLY BOY



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★
Aunt
RHODA'S
SERIES.
★ ★ ★

apt of Herbert A. Horner 21 February 1985

THE SLOVENLY BOY.

THE CHILD AND THE PICTURE BOOK.

CHILD.

Picture book, pray tell me true,
Is thy story old or new?

PICTURE BOOK.

There is told an ancient story,
Not of dwarfs or giants hoary,
But of children so unruly,
Stubborn, sulky, that they truly
Tried their mother's patience sore.
Now the naughty little sinner
Would not eat his soup at dinner;
Then he, sitting at the table,
Rocked his chair and dragged (no fable)
Cloth and dishes to the floor.
Then the precious little vandal



Played mad pranks with fire and candle
Which he knew he must not handle;
Then he sucked both thumbs, oh, scandal!

Till at last the tailor came
Running with his shears to snip him.
One could neither dress nor strip him,
If one did not whip or scold him;
Nor could mamma comb or hold him

While his nails were cut—oh shame!
So his hair stood up like bristles,
Tangled like so many thistles;
So his nails grew long, he found,
Till they reached the very ground.
This, my child's, a story true,
Though it is not very new.

CHILD.

Picture book, it would be fairer,
And a pleasure so much rarer,
If you would not always scold us,
But sometimes in story told us

What good children like to hear—
Told of children sweet, respectful,
Never saucy nor neglectful,
Quick, obedient, and ready,
Always bright, and clean, and steady —
This would please us, never fear.

PICTURE BOOK.

Hear, then, child, for your diversion,
Of a boy's complete conversion
From his bad and shameful ways.
Thus a girl may be a slattern,
Then become the very pattern
Of a lady all must praise.

I.

"Oh, look at Peter, there he stands,
With dirty face and dirty hands,
With nails uncut, and tangled hair,—
An object fit the crows to scare."

The children thus around him cried,
And Peter sought his face to hide,
And, weeping, to his mother said:
"Oh, wash me well and comb my head!
Dear mother mine, would'st pity me,
No more I'd sloven Peter be."

II.

Then did his mother much rejoice
That Peter had made such a choice.
She brought the heavy shears and strong,
To cut with them the nails so long;



But see! the scissors would not do
To cut such monstrous nails in two;
She had to fetch the sharpest — saw,
So tough and thick was every claw;
And though she worked with all her might,
When she had done 'twas late at night.

III.

Next morning early she began
To comb and brush the little man;
But, mercy! how that head did look,
Each hair had its own special crook;
Like bristles on a pig were they,
Matted and tumbled every way.
All day the mother worked with will,
And Peter like a lamb held still;
But when at eve the sun did set,
The half was only done as yet.

IV.

At daybreak, when the cock did crow,
Began once more poor Peter's woe;
The mother took the other side;
To do her level best she tried.
The work went on hour after hour,
And still she tugged with all her power;

She tugged, and pulled, and jerked his head,
Till her poor boy was nearly dead,
At last did she successful prove;
As darkness fell—both sides were smooth.

V.

Next morn, when darkness did withdraw,
Neglected lay both comb and saw;
The mother brought a sponge, you see,
Her Peter's face from dirt to free;
But when this wouldn't work at all,
She took some straw from Dobbin's stall.
With wisp and sand she scrubbed him well,
And stopped for neither groan nor yell:
With patience he must bear the pain,
If he would e'er be clean again.

VI.

Next morning Peter left his bed
Without the slightest fear or dread;
His hair was smooth, his face was clean,
His mother proud as any queen.
She bought him now a brand new suit—
Coat, vest, and pants, and hat to boot,
White shirt, fine stockings and bright shoes;
The nicest ribbon she could choose.



When she had dressed her Peter dear,
He looked a little cavalier.

VII.

When thus in handsome dress he stood
Before his mother sweet and good,
In crowds the Sloven Peters came,
And gazed and hung their heads in shame;
They saw he'd lost his ugly claws,
His frightful hair and dirty paws;
How clean he looked, how spruce and neat,
From shining face to polished feet.
Then each one to his mother said:
"Saw off my nails, rake down my head,
Scrub well with sand, I'll bear the pain,
No longer Sloven I'll remain!"

POSTSCRIPT.

The shears and saw were busy then,
And combed and scrubbed were little men;
And soon in all the country round
No Sloven Peter could be found.
If still there be one any where,
He quietly should himself compare,
In every part and every look,
With this one in the picture book,
I think, he'll then at once exclaim:
"To be a sloven is a shame!"

"When wit and genius meet their doom, in all devouring flame,
They tell us of the fate of Rome, and bid us fear the same."

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