

**SILLY PETER: A QUEER  
STORY OF A DAFT  
BOY, A PRINCE, AND  
A MILLER'S DAUGHTER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649704828

Silly Peter: A Queer Story of a Daft Boy, a Prince, and a Miller's Daughter by Wm. Norris

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WM. NORRIS**

**SILLY PETER: A QUEER  
STORY OF A DAFT  
BOY, A PRINCE, AND  
A MILLER'S DAUGHTER**





'You would so much oblige me, for I am so weary.'

[See p. 7.]

# SILLY PETER:

## A Queer Story

*OF A DAFT BOY, A PRINCE, AND A MILLER'S DAUGHTER.*

BY  
W. M. NORRIS.



GRIFFITH AND FARRAN,  
CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON.  
1879.

2553. e. 17  
1

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

*(The Rights of Translation and of Reproduction are reserved.)*

# SILLY PETER:

*A QUEER STORY.*

---

## CHAPTER I.

IN LONELAND—AN UNWELCOME LITTLE STRANGER BECOMES A  
CLEVER LITTLE BOY AND A WELCOME GUEST—A WOMAN'S  
NOTIONS ABOUT FAIRIES, SPIRITS, AND DREAMS.



THE events recorded in this history occurred a long time ago, and in a far-distant country.

In that country there was a valley called Loneland, with a village of the same name in the centre of it.

The valley was properly named; for it consisted of a few square miles of cultivated country, surrounded by

a wide waste of mountain and moorland. The village has since become a thriving town, a great portion of the moorland has been cultivated, and the town and the valley are now known by other names.

In the olden times, some of the inhabitants used to say



that, instead of Loneland, the valley ought to be called 'Loanland,' because many of the statesmen, as the farmers who cultivated their own land were called, were so given to hunting, and gambling, and carousing, that they were continually running into debt, and borrowing money from David Deedbox, the lawyer; and sometimes, when one of them died, it was found that all his property was mortgaged for as much as it was worth to Baron Steinland, the lord of the manor, who lived in an old castle on the top of a hill about a mile from the village.

Lawyer Deedbox was the baron's steward, and it was generally the baron's money which he lent.

The baron himself was but a new man in the valley, the manor having fallen into his hands about twenty years before through his being heir-at-law to a very distant relative.

Amongst the farmers in Loneland was one Michael Gouda, considered by all his acquaintances to be a jolly good fellow. Michael, rather late in life, married a very pretty young woman, who, by her industry, honesty, and good conduct, had risen from being a little dairymaid in his service to be his housekeeper.

Her good management, and her influence over him, might, in time, have enabled Michael to get clear of his difficulties, for he had borrowed money, like too many others; but, unfortunately, three months after the wedding day, he was brought home dead, his neck having been broken through his horse failing to clear a tall fence in the hunting-field.

Michael Gouda had told his wife that his estate was a little encumbered, but he had made light of it, saying that by reforming and economizing he would be able to clear himself in a few years. The widow was, therefore, taken by surprise when, a few days after the funeral, Lawyer Deedbox called, and informed her that all the farming stock, as well as the land, was mortgaged to the baron; and that although, when everything was sold off, there might be a little money coming to her, it could only be a very little; so he advised her to look out for another home for herself as soon as possible.

Dame Gouda did not, as some women would have done,

fly into a storm of passionate lamentation, or fall into hysterics. She felt lonely and sorrowful, and to some extent disappointed; but she said to herself, "I have worked for my living ever since I was a child, and I am as well able to work as ever: why, then, should I despair?"

It happened just then, that an old woman who kept a shop in the village was taken very ill, and Dame Gouda hired herself to nurse her and assist her in the shop.

When Michael's affairs were finally settled, Lawyer Deedbox brought the widow a sum of money which, he said, was larger than he had expected to save out of the wreck for her; but the baron, having taken the land into his own hands, had dealt very honourably by her.

The old woman wishing to retire, Dame Gouda bought the shop, and so took to making her living by selling sweetmeats, cheap toys, needles and thread, and various other small wares.

One evening, when Dame Gouda was shutting up her shop, a strange woman came to the door, and being, or pretending to be, very tired, asked permission to rest a few minutes.

The dame invited her in, and placed a chair for her to sit down upon.

The stranger was enveloped in a large cloak, and her face was so muffled up that little of it could be seen except her large dark eyes, which were bright and piercing. She slowly opened her cloak, and the dame saw that she had a baby on her arm, and that she also carried a small bundle.

"I have travelled a great distance, and am very much fatigued; in fact, quite done up," said she. "I have an important message to deliver to a person a little way out of the village, and I really have not strength left to carry the baby any further: would you kindly allow me to leave it with you half an hour? It has just gone to sleep, and will be sure to sleep long enough to give me ample time to return before it wakes up. You would so *much* oblige me, for I am *so* weary."

The stranger spoke so languidly, that Dame Gouda quite pitied her; and she felt for her all the more because her voice and manner seemed to indicate a higher position in life than

one in such distressing circumstances might be supposed to occupy. So, after a little more conversation, she led the way to her bedroom.

The stranger laid the baby down outside the bed-clothes, very carefully adjusting its little cloak around it, and turning the corner of the quilt over it to keep it warm. She then laid the bundle down on a chair, and departed with an alacrity which struck Dame Gouda as being rather inconsistent with the weariness of which she had complained.

This made Dame Gouda feel a little uneasy; and she became more and more uneasy as hour after hour passed away and there was no sign of any one coming for the baby. At length, when it was nearly midnight, the baby began to cry, and she had to busy herself in hushing it, and in warming some food for it.

When Dame Gouda took up the baby, she found a piece of paper pinned to its cloak with these words upon it:—

“As you value your own health and happiness, take care of this child until he is claimed by the person who left him. His name is George. BE PRUDENT, AND MAKE NO INQUIRIES.”

The last words were underscored with three lines.

Dame Gouda also found, carefully folded up and stitched in one corner of the baby's cloak, a small purse, containing five pieces of gold.

The bundle contained only a change of clothing for the infant, all of the plainest description, as was also the clothing which it wore, except its little shoes, which were quite superior, both in material and workmanship, to any the dame had ever seen.

Near the chair on which the stranger had sat, the dame picked up a white cambric pocket-handkerchief. It was trimmed with lace, and had a crest embroidered in one corner of it.

Dame Gouda carefully locked away the paper, the gold, the shoes, and the pocket-handkerchief. The gold was enough to recompense her for the keep of the child for twelve months, and she thought she would be sure to hear something more about it within that time.

Although Dame Gouda thought it prudent not to busy