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THE HEN AND HER CHICKENS.

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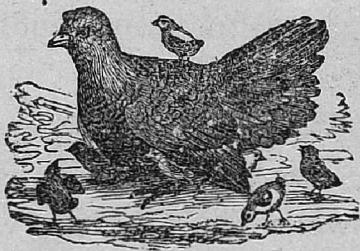
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One Pie.

THE HEN AND HER CHICKENS.



A mother said to her children,
Let us go and see the young brood
of chickens, that was hatched a
few days ago. Here they are.

So, Mrs. Hen, you are strutting
about, in the midst of your chick-
ens. See how the mother ruffles
her feathers, how loudly she threat-

ens you, while running with her beak stretched out to defend her darlings. Now she calls them, and they have taken shelter under her. Stand quiet a moment, and let us consider this sight.

Do you remember, Kamini, about a month since, complaining of this very hen, that she was so fearful and shy? You never could persuade her to feed near you as the other fowls did. She laid her feathers flat, from cowardice, till she seemed so small, and she would run away, as if you had been inclined to hurt her. Look now at her eye; how boldly she fixes it upon you, watching every

motion, and ready to fly in your face if you go near her. What a change!

No kind of danger would now drive this hen to flight, or induce her, for a moment, to forsake her chickens. Who taught her this? The eggs she sat on were, probably, very few of them her own. We put them down as they came to hand, and left her to hatch them. From that day nothing could tempt her to leave the nest. The sun might shine brightly, and the other fowls run cackling when called to be fed; she saw and heard it all, but never staid away from the eggs longer

than to take one hasty meal, every morning, and just to smooth her pretty ruffled feathers.

Day after day for three long weeks, she denied herself every enjoyment, sitting on these eggs, losing all care for her own comfort in the steady performance of her duty.

Kamini, you may now scatter some of the rice you have brought. See, how anxiously the fond mother directs her little brood to the grains that seem best for them! She picks at one, and calls over it, and observes while they snatch it up. She must be hungry I am

sure; but how little she cares for her own wants till theirs are satisfied. What a lesson of love is here!

There come the other fowls at full speed; they knew by your voice that you were calling the hen to feed. With what a jealous eye she watches them! That fine cock, with his grand feathers and proud strut, is very spiteful sometimes against the young chickens. It is not always that the prettiest creature is the most valuable. The cock looks angry: oh! he is running after the poor chickens! But see, all are sheltered, in a moment, beneath the wings of the hen, and,

bold as he is, he dares not touch them.

Hawks sometimes sweep down trying to snatch away a chicken. When the watchful eye of the hen sees one flying about, she utters a cry of danger, and the chickens immediately run, as fast as their little legs can carry them, to their mother for shelter. If a wilful, proud, little chicken would not come, thinking that it could care of itself, the hawk would seize it, carry it off, tear it in pieces, and pick its bones.

We may learn some useful lessons from the hen and her chickens.

Parents watch over their children with warm affection. It is chiefly for their sake that fathers toil day after day; mothers have many sleepless nights, attending to children when infants or when they are sick. One of the chief desires of parents is, that their children may do well; and when they are about to leave the world, one of their last prayers is for their children.

I wish boys and girls were as obedient to their parents as little chickens are to their mother. Parents are older and wiser than their children, and know what is best for them. If a vain little

chicken thought it knew better than its mother what to do, you would consider it very foolish. I think I have seen some children very like such a conceited chicken.

Chickens are weak, helpless creatures, with many enemies. Cats, hawks, kites, and many other animals, are always watching for them, and can easily carry them off. Children are just like chickens in these respects, and require the care of their parents.

A boy thinks himself safe when he has hold of his father's hand; a little girl fears no danger when in her mother's arms. They feel as safe as the chickens do under the

wings of their mother. But a hen cannot always protect her chickens. An eagle could take away to its nest the hen herself. There are dangers from which parents cannot guard their children. Death enters the palaces of kings as well as the cottages of the poor. There is One, however, who can defend us from every danger. Who is He? The Almighty God. The Bible, the true Veda, says, "He shall cover thee, with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust." This means that God will take care of us, if we seek His help, just as a hen guards her chickens with her wings.

Most people, alas! will not go to God for refuge. God made man holy and happy; but our first parents, Adam and Eve, soon sinned, and all sprung from them have the same corrupt nature. Death is the punishment of sin. Either men must die or some one must suffer in their room. God so loved us as to give His Son Jesus Christ to die for us, and we can be saved through Him. Jesus Christ lived in this world for 33 years, and went about preaching and doing many wonderful things. Once he said to the people of a large city, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as

a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

If a hawk were to attack the chickens; of a hen, the mother would suffer herself to be pierced by its beak, that the young might escape. To save us, Jesus Christ bore the punishment due to our sins. On His hands and feet and side are the wounds He received when suffering for us. Jesus wishes to save you. He calls you to come to Him. Under His care you will be safe, for all power is given to Him both in heaven and in earth. He will watch over you as long as you remain in this world, and when you come to die,

He will send His angels to carry you to Himself in heaven. Listen to His gracious call. Say, Blessed Saviour, do Thou always hide me under the shadow of thy wings!

Jesus, from danger
Guard us, we pray;
Suffer us never
From Thee to stray.
Great is our danger,
Close would we cling,
Nestling in safety
Under Thy wing.

