

hand, and in the other a red silk handkerchief, gathered up at the four corners, which I knew must contain the wonderful eggs. I ran out to meet him. A fearful cackling reached my ears from the depths of the covered basket—and what was my delight when he brought to view, one after another, four full-grown fowls; and upon letting loose the four corners of his handkerchief, displayed to my wondering sight eight beautiful fresh-laid eggs! I took each one separately in my hand, to assure myself they were really perfect eggs; and nothing could exceed my joy when my father told me if I would get a basket in which to put them, we would go to the woodshed and set the hen, who was henceforth to assume the duties of protector to the nest and eggs.

“There goes a dead loss!” shouted Willie, who had been watching our operations with a jealous eye. “How many eggs are there?” he continued, approaching us, and peeping into the basket. “Eight! I declare; then there will be eight chickens if they all hatch—that’ll be worth something; but the suffering the poor creatures will have to go through with, in starving and being caught by weasels! I’m glad I’m not in their shells.”

“How provoking,” I thought, “that I should