

be so tormented ;” but a secret feeling that I would soon be able to prove to my friends they were mistaken in me, greatly diminished my present indignation.

“How long will it be before they will be hatched ?” I anxiously inquired.

“In about three weeks,” replied my father, without appearing to observe my impatience ; but I think he noticed it, for he smiled aside to himself.

The weeks passed very slowly to me, and I often asked mother how long the hen had been sitting, and if she were *sure* it would take just three weeks, and no longer, to hatch the chickens. These inquiries, and many similar ones, I frequently put to her, taking good care always that my mischievous brother was out of sight and hearing. I feasted upon my imagination. I fancied the time had come when we should subsist almost entirely upon the eggs and chickens of our own raising. How happy would I be in going round from nest to nest, collecting the fresh new eggs ; and how surprised mother would be to see so many ; for I was certain, from her quiet manner, that *her* expectations were by no means as large as mine.

At length, just as the three weeks were about expiring, upon going out one fine morning I