

heard a faint chirp issue from beneath the old hen. Could it be possible? I looked—yes, it was indeed far beyond the bare idea of possibility, for, nestling beneath the hen, were four little chirping chickens. My delight knew no bounds; I would have seized them in my hand, but the rage of the hen at seeing her brood thus unceremoniously treated restrained me. I ran to acquaint my mother with my good fortune, and even stopped by the way to let William know that four of the eggs were really alive.

“Poor little things,” cried he, with mock sympathy, “they’ll find this a hard world to live in!”

I was too much elated to take any notice of his jesting, and hastening on, informed my mother of my good fortune. In due time all the eight eggs were hatched—yes, I had eight little sprightly chickens. Father built me a small coop, and the hen with her brood were housed therein. You who have had the care of chickens will imagine the pleasure I experienced in feeding them with meal made into a kind of paste, and watching them as they ran in and out of the latticed doorway. I also amused myself with the anxiety the old hen seemed to feel lest some harm should befall them. That warning cluck, cluck—I seem to hear it now.