

# LITTLE FOLKS

## Mattie's Missionary Hen.

(Mrs. Susan M. Griffith, in the 'English Presbyterian Messenger for the Children.')

'Father,' said little Mattie Stevens, one day in the early spring time, 'I want a missionary hen; will you give me one?'

'A missionary hen!' echoed Mr.

mistaken, that Croaker is far more inclined to contribute to home than foreign missions.'

'Oh, father! As if a hen knew a single thing about the heathen or missionaries. She doesn't know anything but how to lay eggs; but I'll watch her; you'll see!'

Then Mr. Stevens and Mattie went out to the barnyard hand in

proceeding which so alarmed the other fowls as to cause them to flee the field cackling with all their might and main. Mattie then began to make a nest. She got a perfectly new box from the wood-house, filled it half full of sweet-smelling hay, set it under the big chestnut tree, and carefully planted old Croaker exactly in the middle; but Croaker was not to be dictated to in the least. As soon as Mattie removed her presence from her immediate vicinity, she gravely arose, shook her feathers, stepped out of the 'beautiful nest,' and walked off in search of flies and worms, talking just like this: 'Ka! ka! ka! ka! ka!'

Contrary old hen!

For three whole days Mattie visited that nest under the chestnut tree, each time expecting an egg, but all was 'empty, swept and garnished.' At the end of that time she went pouting to her mother.

'She's no good at all!' she complained angrily. 'She doesn't mean to do one single thing for the heathen. She's a stingy, hateful old thing! She just goes round

Stevens mischievously, 'what kind of a hen is that? I was not aware that hens ever became missionaries.'

'Oh, father, you know what I mean, well enough. A money hen, of course.'

'A money hen! Worse and worse! I wish I had a lot of such hens. I have heard of a goose that laid golden eggs, but never of a hen made of money; that is a new thing under the sun. What does it look like, daughter? Gold, silver, or copper, which?'

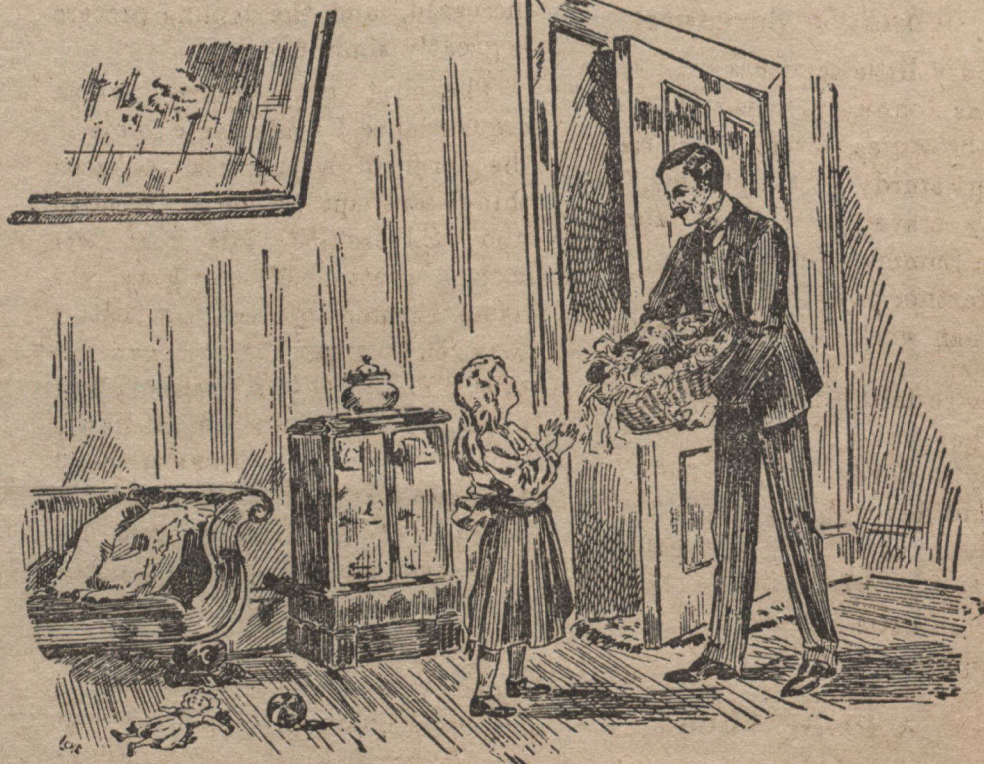
'Oh, mother just do listen to father! Isn't he awful? He's tangling my meanings all up. Why, of course, you know, father. I want a hen to lay eggs, so that I can sell them and have money for missions; that's what I mean. Now, do you understand?'

'Oh, yes, certainly; it is all straight now. All right, you may have old Croaker; she has been in the egg business a good while and understands it pretty thoroughly. I advise you to keep an eye upon her, however; she has very decided opinions of her own, and will outwit you if you are not very clever indeed. I believe, unless I am greatly

hand, and old Croaker, a great, white, fluffy Brahma, was duly set apart and dedicated to the cause of missions. Mattie gave her a good



OLD CROAKER IS DULY SET APART.



OLD CROAKER'S MISSIONARY GIFT.

talking to upon the subject of honesty and faithful discharge of duty, and tied a red ribbon around her neck as a sort of honorary badge, a

ka-kaing, and scratching as if she didn't care one bit about anything, and she won't lay even one egg.'

But one day old Croaker stole