

THE DISOBEDIENT CHICKEN.

Once there was a little fluffy, yellow chicky, who lived with his mother and little brothers and sisters in a little bit of a house, which stood not far from a very pretty pond.

This little chick was very bright and wide-awake, and, in spite of his mother's cluckings, would keep running away from his home. He was very fond, too, of walking on the very edge of the pond, though his mother had told him he would surely get drowned if he fell in.

One day he saw a number of little fluffy yellow things walking towards him.

"They look very much like me," thought little chicky. "But how queerly they walk! I can walk much better." And he straightened himself on his little, slender legs and walked gracefully along.

Soon these little, funny, yellow balls waddled to the very brink of the pond, and in a moment more glided away on the water.

"Dear me!" said the little chicky; "if I can walk on land so much better than they, of course I can go on the water too. I don't believe mother knows everything."

So into the water he sprang, and soon found that he was sinking. He flapped his poor little wings and shrieked with all his might.

"Dear me!" he thought, "if I had only minded mother!"

But, alas! the cruel water had almost covered his poor little head; and this would have been the last of chicky if a man had not just at that very moment passed the pond with a small fishing-net in his hand.

Seeing chicky struggling in the water, he quickly fished him out and threw him upon the grass, saying, "There, you foolish little thing, lie there till you get dry!"

Poor chicky was half dead with cold and fright; but soon the warm sun dried his wet feathers, and warmed his little, cold body, and gave him strength to stand on his feet. With one look at the dreadful pond, he flapped his wings, and with a shriek ran back to his home.

"Foolish child!" said his mother, when he had told his story; "those little fluffy things were ducks, and live half the time on the water."

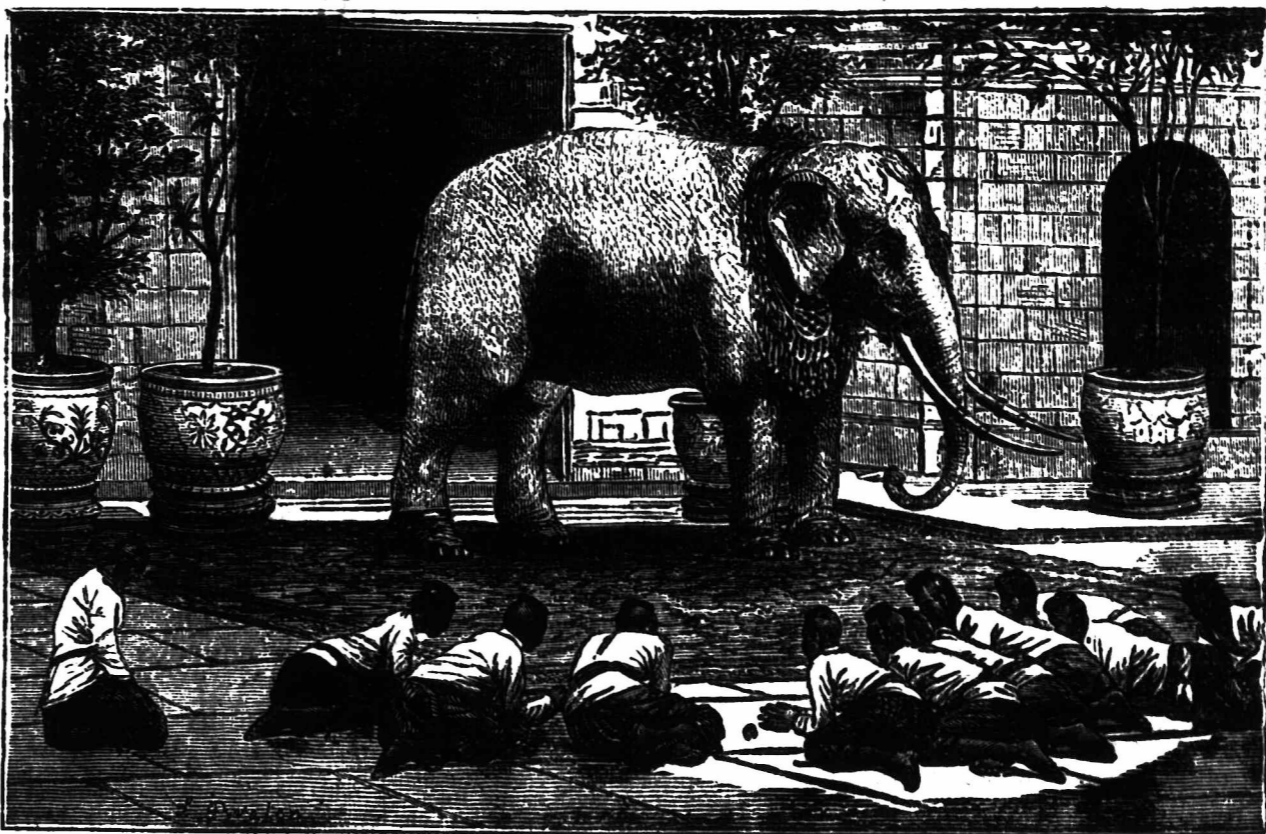
So little chicky found out that his mother knew best after all, and ever after, when he was tempted to disobey, he thought of the dreadful pond where he had been almost drowned, and he became a good little chicky, and was a comfort to his mother.

THE REVERENCE PAID TO A WHITE ELEPHANT.

Among the animals which in various countries have been the objects of superstitious veneration, few have ever received the attention accorded in the kingdoms of Siam and Burmah to a white elephant. Such an animal, when he makes his appearance in the forest, is regarded as sacred; no effort is spared to capture him, and when caught he is housed in regal state, a long train of attendants being allotted to his service. "King of the White Elephants" is considered one of the proudest titles of which the monarchs of these countries can boast; and fierce wars have been waged for the possession of one or more of the beasts. They are looked upon as the symbol of all kingly authority, and to be without one would be taken as an indication of the displeasure of heaven, and a certain omen of disaster.

In Ava, especially, the white elephant is held in the highest honor. He bears the title of "lord," and is ranked next to the king and before the queen in dignity. His house is sumptuously decorated, and he has a minister of high rank to superintend his household. When the Burmese enter his house, or when the elephant is led forth into the streets, they prostrate themselves and do him reverence.

The Chinese, the Singhalese and



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Asiatics generally, have a great regard for a white elephant, though they do not consider it so sacred an animal, nor do they pay it such almost divine honors as do the Siamese and the Burmese.

CHILD LIFE IN MADAGASCAR.

We often wonder what kind of life the boys and girls are living in other lands. Let us take a peep at the pretty brown faces of the little folks in Madagascar, where thousands are living to-day, and perhaps wondering about their white-faced brothers and sisters beyond the seas, far up the coal regions of Europe.

When a Malagasy baby is born there is great rejoicing, and all the friends of the happy mother come to congratulate her.

On the birth the first born, both father and mother frequently change their names. There are no family names in Madagascar, and while in England children are named after their parents, in Madagascar the opposite custom is observed, and parents are named Father of So-and-So, or Mother of So-and-So. Sometimes a man changes his name more than once. When a boy, his name perhaps was Mouse or Rat, and when his son was born, and named Fire-wood, he changed his name to Father of Fire-wood.

After a few years, should he have several children, he may change his name again, and be known as Mr. Many-children.

Both parents are exceedingly fond of their offspring and it is so rare an occurrence for the children to be beaten, that during nearly four years spent in the island I never saw either a man or a woman strike a child.

This kindness is always reciprocated, and very far before you can find a neglected or ill-treated parent.

It is considered very unhealthy to was babies, and many boys and girls may be seen running about the Malagasy villages who never had a bath in their life.

The baby is carried gipsy fashion on the mother's back, but higher up than is the custom amongst gipsies. The child's head is as high as the mother's shoulders, and it often amuses itself by playing with her hair. Mothers have a strange way of consoling their children, using homely proverbs, which are not always very comforting, though ALWAYS very true. If the child falls and hurts itself, it is hushed by the assurance, "It is good to fall, you'll learn to go; it is good to choke, you'll learn to chew," or "Never mind, there are plenty more (falls and bumps) to follow." A child is encouraged to ask questions by the proverb "Prefer to be laughed at for asking questions, rather than to

be laughed at for not knowing."

In some places the white man is held up a terror to troublesome little ones. Once when I was travelling, a mother caught up her child, and ran with it, screaming and kicking, and held it out to me, saying, "Here, eat him, white man; eat the naughty boy."

It is a custom for children to make presents to their mothers, which are thank offerings for the care with which they have been nursed when babies.

There is very little play known to the children of Madagascar, and like play in most countries, it is generally having a game at work. One of the favorite amusements is building mud villages, and surrounding them with a trench and palisade, then fill them with men and women, consisting of long and short pieces of wood or broken crockery. Herds of oxen made of clay are often seen, and as their proverb says, "It is the owner of them who bellows."

Boys are very fond of running about the villages playing at carrying luggage or even carrying one another seated on a pole borne on the shoulders of their comrades.

But playtime is very short, and as soon as possible they have to begin work. All day long the cattle have to be tended out on the hills. Should a storm come on, the boys either seek shelter under a rock or put on a long mat sewn together lengthways and at one end. This rests upon the head and falls down behind and on either side, and the boys turn their backs to the storm, and hope it will soon leave off.

Girls have to fetch water from the spring at the foot of the hill on which the town is built. Every morning and evening they troop down with the women of the town and return up the steep rough path with round pitchers full of water balanced very carefully on their heads. Weaving, spinning silk, and attending to the fowls, is also part of their work. Reaping rice, up to their waist in water, and carrying it home is shared alike by both men and women, boys and girls. There is not much house cleaning done, though there is plenty to do, as the fowls, sheep, pigs, and calves are often sharing the one roomed houses of their owners. As you would suppose, the houses are very dirty and uncomfortable.

Rats are in great abundance, so that until you get used to them, it is very difficult to get a night's rest in any of the villages. But the children are used to it, and in spite of everything they sleep soundly from soon after sunset till the cock "that crows in the morn" shouts out his welcome to the first gleam of day that finds its way into the house.

With only a mat spread out upon the

clay floor of the house; a thin sheet in which they wrap themselves and cover their heads, and no pillow of any kind, they pass the night. The embers of the evening fire smoulder all night in the square hole in the centre of the room, and as from twenty to forty people sometimes occupy a house of only twelve feet square, feather beds and warm counterpanes are a luxury they can easily dispense with. The children are generally strong, fat, and healthy, live almost exclusively upon rice, and pass most of their time in the open air. With a few wants and fewer cares, they pass through life, till some morning is heralded by the cry of mourners, and "Make haste, my mother; make haste, my friends," is wailed aloud by father, mother and children, and their friends join in an exceeding bitter cry for their *Sombin' aiko* (my darling). Then wrapped in its little white dress, it is laid down for its long, long sleep in the grave and with dishevelled hair, the mourners go about the streets.

A SERMON FOR LITTLE FOLKS.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." St. John xiii, 17.

I.—"These things;" that is your duties, wherever you are:

1. At home, obedience and respect to parents, and kindness to brothers, sisters, and servants.
2. At school, respect to teacher, faithfulness in study, and fairness in play.
3. At church, be quiet, listen, worship, and give your hearts to the Saviour.
4. On the street, good manners, modesty, kindness, minding your own business.

II.—How should you do your duty?

1. Not for pay. That is a low motive. Some always ask, "What will you give me?"

2. But from love. So did the Saviour did when a boy at Nazareth. So the angels do God's will—which is only another name for duty. This will make you do it cheerfully.

3. Better every day. By trying to do your duties, you will become more skillful; so you improve in reading, writing, and music. Peter says, "Grow in grace."

III.—Doing duty makes you happy. Sin cannot make you happy. Sin did not make Eve happy, nor Cain, nor Judas. Disobedience at home does not make you happy; idleness, unkindness, bad manners, no kind of sin can make you happy.

But happiness comes from doing your duty. That is God's reward. This is the promise in the text. Think of this every day for just one week, and see how true it is.