

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE PERT CHICK.

OLD Cluck was a Cochin China hen, and lived with her brood in a nice coop a little apart from the barn-yard. Cluck was a dear old hen, very kind to her chickens, and very pretty chickens she had. There was Tec-tec, and Wee-wee, and Tutu, and Twit-see, and Chec-heck, and Peep-weep, whom they called Peep for short—six in all—six well meaning chickens, although they had their faults. Peep's fault was pertness, he was always answering back to his mother and saying sharp things. He wasn't a bit afraid of his brothers and sisters, and thought it was a joke to tell Tec-tec she was a "fluffy little fool," or to call Tu-tu "a young goose." And when Tu-tu would ruffle his pin-feathers and show he was a game little chicken, and not a goose at all, old Cluck would say Peep was only witty, and liked to talk, but meant no harm; her chickens must not fight. Peep was always the last to come under Cluck's wing to bed at night. He would play about, and say "I went go to bed," and even cry out to his mother in a saucy way, "Go to bed yourself, Mrs. Cluck.

"Oh how naughty, Peep!" Cluck would say; but she never stopped his nimble little tongue. She couldn't bear to scold and punish him, for she loved the bright little fellow. His feathers were getting quite long and glossy now, and he was growing tall.

At meal-times Peep had a way of pecking at his brothers and sisters, and while he ate as much as any body else, he called them all "pigs" and laughed at them.

At last, when Cluck told him, quite gravely, that a good chick must mind his mother, Peep said, "Oh, go away! mothers don't pay," in a manner that was very naughty, but Cluck found it so bright and clever for such a fledgeling. Peep had his own will in his own family. He said and did whatever he liked, and grew quite big and handsome, and thought himself the finest fellow in the world.

Well, one day Peep kept running far away from the coop, and his mother was afraid some of the barn-yard fowl would hurt him, so she called him back.

"Don't you fuss," said Peep; "I'm going to take a walk;" and he looked so bright, and spoke up so sharp and funny, that Cluck was quite lost in admiring his ways, and his fine tail feathers proudly waving as he strutted off.

"Surely," she thought, "if they see him in the barn-yard, all the hens will envy me, such a clever chick."

To the barn-yard Peep went, and began scratching about for his lunch with the rest of the fowls. Pretty soon an old bird gave a crow that was really a very fine loud noise, and sounded far and wide over the fields.

"I can do as well as that, and better to, old chap," said Peep. Now Peep knew he couldn't, but he had a way of saying pert things.

To his wonder, nobody laughed; but a big hen—the crower's wife—said, "Can you, indeed, do as well? Let us hear you."

She looked quite fierce at him, not a bit like fond, good old Cluck, and the fowls gathered around Peep.

"Pooh!" said he, "I don't want to, but I

can." Still nobody seemed to admire him, but instead, said the old rooster:

"You can brag, young fellow, but you shall show what sort of a crow you have or I'll peck you to death."

Peep was very much scared and tried his first crow. It was such a feeble, foolish noise that all the hens and roosters, and even the turkey-gobblers and ducks and guinea-hens and pigeons, laughed at him and despised him.

Peep was not daunted yet, but he strutted off among the younger fowls. He struck right and left with his bill, as he did at home; he laughed and called names, and bragged, and at last a fine tall young rooster, as big as himself, and as handsome, said:

"Come, Mr Chicken, I don't like your airs."

"You don't amount to anything," said Peep, just as he spoke to his mother.

"Dont I!" said the young rooster; and before Peep knew what he was about the stranger had strewn the fine tail feathers, poor Cluck's pride, all over the ground. Peep was struggling in vain; the young rooster pecked till the blood came. One of Peep's eyes was gone, one leg was useless, and not until quite still and fairly beaten did the enemy hold off.

Over Peep's body the fowls all said, "It served him right for his impudence."

After a while Peep hopped home very feebly on one leg, and lay down quite humble under old Cluck's wing.

"Where has my poor pet been?" asked Cluck, with the tears running down her bill.

"Been out in the world, mother," said Peep.

"And didn't the world admire you?"

"Not a bit. Oh, my little brothers and sisters," said poor Peep, "chicks must not be pert and rude and unkind, at home among their friends; for when they carry the habit out into the world with them they meet their match and come to grief," and Peep kicked once with his one leg, rolled up his one eye, and—died.

All this happened in the land of Cochin China. Of course there are no pert chickens in our country.

LITTLE SINS.

CHARLIE was spending the winter with his married sister. Every one thought him a good boy. Indeed, he himself was quite sure he could do nothing wrong. One day, as he was passing the pantry, he saw a box of raisins; they were the largest raisins he had seen. He stepped in slyly and took bunch after bunch, and then slipped away, feeling like a thief, and yet thinking, "It is only a little thing." This he did day after day, till there was quite a hole in the box of raisins; still, no one seemed to notice it. One day a visitor told the following story at the dinner-table:

Walking through a fine park, two years before, he had seen a large sycamore tree. A wood-worm about three inches long was forcing its way under the bark of the trunk. "Ah!" said the gentleman who was with him, "in time that worm will kill the tree."

"A hard thing to believe," said his friend. "By and by you shall see." replied the other.

Soon the worm was found to have gotten

quite a distance under the bark. The next summer the leaves dropped off earlier than usual. Something serious seemed the matter. When the next summer came—just two years from the time the worm began its work—the tree was dead. The hole made by the worm could be seen in the very heart of the trunk. "You were right," said the gentleman. The tree was ruined by that worm only three inches long. If a worm could do such harm, what may not what persons call "little sins" do to a man or woman, a boy or girl?

Charlie felt the blood rush into his face. He was sure every one must know about the raisins, and that the story was told on purpose. He did not dare look up from his plate. After dinner they all went into the parlor; but as no one took special notice of him, Charlie concluded he must have been mistaken. Still he began to feel now, as never before, that God knew all about it. The next time he was tempted to take from a basket what was not his he remembered what the worm did to the tree. "That is just what sin is doing to my soul," he thought. He drew back in fear and ran away as fast as possible. Nor could he rest till he had told his sister the whole story. Then he went with a lowly, penitent heart to his heavenly Father, asking that all sin might be forgiven, and that for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ a new spirit might be put within him.

PRUDENCE AND COWARDICE.

BOYS and girls, as well as men and women, are apt sometimes to mistake prudence for cowardice, and yet no two qualifications can be more unlike.

"Pooh!" said a rough boy to his more gentle cousin: "I do believe, John, you're afraid to go near that horse, just because he isn't tied.

"There is no need of my going near him, Stephen," was the reply, "and there is danger of his kicking any one who teases him."

"Ha! ha!" shouted Stephen, "you're a bravey, now ain't you? The idea of being afraid of a horse!" and with a tantalizing look at John, the foolish boy walked up to the grazing animal and poked him with a stick. The horse gave an uneasy start, but continued pulling at the grass,

"See here!" exclaimed Stephen, growing bolder; "if you'll promise me not to faint, I'll present you with a lock of his tail in a minute."

John didn't faint, but Stephen did; for, as he stealthily approached the horse in the rear, the animal bounded away, performing a flourish with his hoof that sent his tormentor senseless in the dust. John tried to restore Stephen to consciousness. He loosened his clothing, rubbed his hands and feet, and bringing water in his cap from the pool near by, dashed it on the boy's white face, but all in vain—there was no sign of life.

The nearest house was their own home, a quarter of a mile distant. John felt that not a moment was to be lost. He approached the now quiet horse, and leaping upon his back, rode swiftly without saddle or bridle, to his uncle's house for help.

When, after a long illness, Stephen recovered, he was a wiser boy, and told his cousin that he really believed the horse had managed to kick a little common sense into him.