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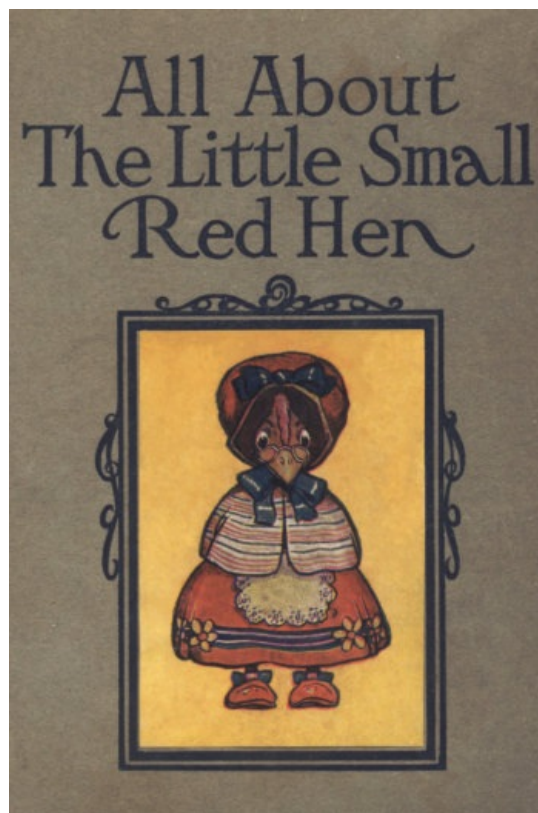
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ALL ABOUT THE LITTLE SMALL RED HEN



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:: ALL ABOUT :: THE LITTLE SMALL RED HEN

[2]

**:: DEDICATED TO ::
THE NICEST CHILD IN
THE WHOLE WORLD,**

[3]

[4]



[5]

All About the Little Small Red Hen.

Illustrated by John B. Gruelle.

NEW YORK
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY.



[6]

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All About the Little Small Red Hen

[7]



Once upon a time,
Though I can't say exactly when,
There lived, away in the country,
A Little Small Red Hen.



[8]

She wore a nice little apron,
And a little sunbonnet too,
And she walked picketty pecketty,
As little Hens always do.

[9]



[10]

[11]

She had lived the whole of her little life,
In the same little house; it stood
All by itself, in a lonely spot,
Just at the edge of a wood.



[12]

It was very snug and cosy and warm,
And the garden wasn't big,
But just what a Little Small Red Hen
Could nicely manage to dig.

And once upon a time—
Just the same time, of course,
There also lived a Wicked Old Fox
Among the heath and gorse.



[13]

Silently, slyly, he crept round the fields,

Stealing geese and ducks and cocks,
Dressed in a hat and long great coat,
This wicked, cunning old Fox.

His house was perched on top of the hill,
It was made of rock and stone;
He and his wife, old Mother Fox,
They lived there all alone.



[14]

It was large and damp and draughty,
Ugly and cold and bare;
A tidy Little Small Red Hen
Would never be happy there.

Now, the Wicked Old Fox had often tried
Over and over again,
To catch by some sly trick or other
The Little Small Red Hen.

[15]

[16]



[17]

But she was far too clever for him,
She never let him find her,
And whenever she left her little house
She would lock the door behind her.

[18]

One morning, very early indeed,
Before the sun was hot,
The Wicked Old Fox said to Mother Fox,
"Put on the big black pot.

"I'm going to have another try,
I shall soon be back, and then
I promise you'll see at last I've caught
The Little Small Red Hen."



[19]

So he put on his cap and shouldered a sack,
And walked very sly and slow;
And after a while he came in sight
Of the snug little house below.

And he laid the sack very softly down
On the ground behind a tree,
And then lay down to wait and watch,
As quiet as quiet could be.



[20]

He was getting tired of waiting there,
When the house-door opened wide,
And the Little Small Red Hen came forth
To gather sticks outside;



[21]



[22]

[23]

Walking picketty-pecketty,
Exceedingly neat and prim;
And the Wicked Old Fox lay watching;

She never once thought of him!

While she was picking up the sticks
He slipped behind the door,
And laughed "Ho! Ho!" to himself, very low,
As he put the sack on the floor.



[24]

He stood there, hiding and chuckling,
And peeping through the crack,
And he saw the Little Small Red Hen,
In a minute or two, come back.

She stepped inside with her bundle of sticks,
As cheerful as one could be,
When the Wicked Old Fox sprang full at her throat.
"I've got you now!" cried he.



[25]

"What good are bolts and bars?" he said,
"How silly you must be
To think that they could ever keep out
A cunning old Fox like me!"

Of course the poor Little Small Red Hen
Was now in a terrible fright.
She gave a scream and dropped her sticks,
They tumbled left and right.

[26]

But she just had time to fly on a beam
That went across over head,
Quite out of reach of the Wicked Old Fox.
"But I'll have you yet," he said.

Then he began to run round and round,
And round and round beneath,
Looking up every now and then,
Laughing and showing his teeth.



[27]

[28]



[29]

It made her dreadfully dizzy and faint,
She gave a cluck and a lurch,
She gave a flap and a flutter and flop,
And fell right off her perch.

[30]

Then the Wicked Old Fox threw open his sack,
And in less than half a minute,
He had picked her up with a cry of joy,
And hastily stuffed her in it.



He swung it over his shoulder, smiled,
And started off for his den;
"How nice you'll be for supper!" said he,
"My dear Little Small Red Hen!"

[31]

So there she was, poor thing, you see,
Shut up quite tight in the sack;
She found it most unpleasant there,
Close and stuffy and black.

But she thought of her little scissors,
In her apron pocket hid.
"I will cut a hole and see where I am,"
She said. And so she did.



[32]

Now the sun was hot, and all the time
It was getting hotter still;
And the Wicked Old Fox grew very tired
As he climbed the heathy hill.

[33]



[34]

[35]

He dropped on mossy bank, and said—
"It may be lazy—but
I think I'll just have forty winks,"
And his wicked eyes blinked and shut.

The Little Small Red Hen, indeed,
Was also very glad
To rest a bit from the jogs and jolts'
And the bangs and bumps she'd had.



[36]

And she thought, "If I cut a little hole,
Why not a big one too?"
And she cut a slit that was long enough
To let her whole self through!

Wasn't she pleased to be free again!
She said, "I must run double-quick;
But before I go I'll manage to play,
The Wicked Old Fox a trick."



[37]

And she took a great big knobby stone,

As large as a lump of coal,
And heaved and pushed, and pushed and heaved,
'Till she got it through the hole.

And then she scuttled panting home
As fast as her legs would go,
Not walking picketty-pecketty
This time,—oh dear no!



[38]

She scuttered and fluttered down the hill,
And scampered through her door.
"Thank goodness!" she said, all out of breath,
"I'm safe at home once more!"

But when the Wicked Old Fox woke up,
It was getting dark and late.
He shouldered the sack, and found it now
A most remarkable weight.

[39]

[40]



[41]

"Dear me!" he said, "she weighs like a goose!
I thought she'd be light as a wren;
What a splendid supper we'll have to-night
Off the Little Small Red Hen!"



[42]

So heavily, wearily trudged he home,
And kept shifting the sack about;
And when at last he came to his door,
There was old Mother Fox looking out.

She said to him, "You look tired, my dear,"
And he answered, "Ah, she's caught!"
And he puffed and licked his lips and said
"She's twice as fat as I thought!"

[43]

He asked, "My love, is the pot on the boil?"
"It's boiling fast," she replied.
He said, "Then take the lid off, my dear,
And we'll pop her plump inside!"

So Old Mother Fox took off the lid,
Hot and steaming and black,
While the Wicked Old Fox, with hurry and haste,
Untied the mouth of the sack.

[44]

And—SPLASH! went in the great big stone,
It *was* a splash! my word!
I don't suppose a splash so loud
Has ever before been heard.

The bees and birds and bunnies all,
Who had gone to bed for the night,
For miles around, woke up with a jump
In a most tremendous fright.

[45]



[46]

And the boiling water in the pot
 Splashed out on every side,
 And terribly scalded the Wicked Old Fox,
 And Old Mother Fox, and they died.

There they lay, all still and stark,
 Up in the house on the hill;
 There they lay, and, for all I know,
 There they are lying still.

But the Hen lived happily, just as before,
 In her dear little house by the wood,
 Walking picketty-pecketty,
 Working as hard as she could.

"I've had a great many troubles!
 I hope they won't happen again;
 Anything for a quiet life!"
 Said the Little Small Red Hen.

The End

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ALL ABOUT THE LITTLE SMALL RED HEN ***

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