

I had already fixed my price for eggs that were to be dropped by my "extraordinary and superb" Cochin-China fowls, which by this time had got to be "the admiration of the State" (so the newspapers said). I had the *best* fowls in this world, or in any other; this being conceded by every one who saw them; there was no necessity of "taking the subject up" to any body. I charged *twelve* dollars a dozen for my eggs—and never winked at it!

And why shouldn't I have the highest price? Were not my fowls the choicest specimens ever seen in America? Didn't every body so declare? Didn't the press and the poultry-books concede this, without an exception? Well they did! And so, for months, I obtained one dollar each for my Cochin-China fowls' eggs; and I received order after order, and remittance, after remittance, for eggs (at this figure), which I could not begin to supply.

And I didn't laugh, either! I had no leisure to laugh. I filled the orders as they came,—"*first come first served*,"—and for several months I found my list of promises six or eight weeks in advance of my ability to meet them with *genuine* eggs.

I was not so well informed, then, as I was afterwards. I think all the eggs that were then wanted *might* have been had. But, as the boy said, when asked where all the stolen peaches he had eaten were gone, "I donno!"

Will it be credited that, during the summer of 1850, I had dozens of full-grown men—gentlemen—but enthusiastic hen-fanciers (who had contracted the fever suddenly), who came to my residence for Cochin-China eggs, at one dollar each, and who, upon being informed that I hadn't one in the house, would quietly sit down in my parlor and wait two, three, or four hours at a time, *for the hens to lay them a few*, that they might take them away with them? Such is the fact, however it may be doubted.

I subsequently sold the eggs at ten dollars a dozen; then at six dollars; and finally, the third and fourth years, at five dollars. This paid me, because I sent off a great many.

But they didn't hatch well after being transported away and shaken over in the hand of careless and ignorant or reckless express agents. Thus the buyers came again. Many of the early fanciers tried this experiment, over and over again, but with similar ill success; and when they had expended ten, twenty, or thirty dollars, perhaps for eggs, they would begin at the *beginning* aright, and purchase a few chickens to rear, from which they could finally procure their own eggs, and go forward more successfully. But all this took time to bring it about.

And meanwhile *somebody* (I don't say who) was

"feathering a certain nest" as rapidly as a course of high-minded and honorable dealing with his fellow-men would permit.—*Burnham's History of the Hen Fever.*

The Fancy Thirty Years Ago.

(From T. B. Miner's Poultry Book.)

(Continued.)

COCHIN CHINA FOWLS.

Notwithstanding what has been written in reference to this breed, there remains little doubt in the minds of experienced breeders, that the "Cochin China" (so called,) and the red "Shanghae" fowl, are indetical, or very nearly so—that is, that both originate from the same parentage in China. Some of these—both the Cochin and the Shanghae—are smooth-legged, and others are feathered on the legs, while the other general characteristics are very similar in both. Be this as it may, either of these breeds when well-selected and properly cared for, is considered by many as good enough for all useful purposes.

The following general remarks by Mr. Burnham, describes his imported specimens—which samples are adjudged by some of our best breeders, to be among the choicest domestic fowls in America. He says:

"A variety of opinions has been given, and a great difference of opinion still exists, among fanciers in regard to what is, really, the true Cochin China fowl. The first bird of the noble variety, which the public were made acquainted with, however, were those sent to Queen Victoria, a few years ago, as a present from China, by one of her foreign ministers. This lot comprised two cocks and four hens, and upon their arrival in England, they were pronounced 'most extraordinary specimens of poultry.'

"An illustration, comprising portraits of a group of these birds soon afterwards appeared 'by permission of the Queen' in the 'London Illustrated News,' and these birds are set down, at once, by all who saw them, and who were at all acquainted with poultry, as decidedly the finest samples of domestic fowls ever brought into England."

A pair were presented to Lord Heytesbury at Dublin, by her Majesty, and afterwards were bred by Mr. Nolan. Mr. Burnham obtained his fowls direct from that gentleman, at a high cost. There were six chickens in that lot, brought over to America in the winter of '49 and '50.

These fowls were, generally, smooth-legged. One of these imported cocks exhibited a very slight germ of feathering upon the legs. Their general color is a rich, glossy brown; the comb is a medium size, serrated, but not deeply so, and the wattles are double. Besides their size, however, these fowls possess other distinctive characteristics. The flesh is white and delicate. The eggs laid by the hen of this breed, are of a salmon, and sometimes of a chocolate color, and possess a very delicate flavor.