

but little describing. It is as its name would imply, an imitation of the duck-wing Game, both for cocks and hens, but being of full and flowing plumage it is more profuse, and in my humble opinion constitutes them a much handsomer variety; and as a proof of their popularity and merits in the show pen, I may mention that the following are some of the prizes won by them when in competition with other varieties: Dairy Show, two 1sts and 3rd; Crystal Palace, 1st and 2nd; Leghorn Club Show, 2nd and 3rd; Windsor, 1st, 2nd and 3rd; Antwerp, 1st and 2nd; Southampton, 1st and Special; Derby, 2nd Bagshot, two 1st and Special, etc., etc. Also seeing that such sums as £20, £10 10s., £5 5s., etc., have been realized for individual birds, and two guineas a dozen for eggs of this breed, is a substantial proof of the firm hold they have taken on the fancy.

—In *Fowls*.

GEORGE PAYNE.

A FEW POULTRY YARD OBSERVATIONS.

Feathered World.

BEING a keen poultry fancier, and very fond of my poultry, I spend all my spare time among them, and the following are a few of my observations, which may interest some of your numerous readers.

Poisonous Plants.—In my poultry run there are a great number of plants of Foxglove (*Digitalis purpuria*) and Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*) and several times I have noticed some of my fowls picking the leaves. Now I know that these are both poisonous plants but I cannot say I have seen any bad effects afterwards: I should like to have Dr. Green's or some of your medical readers opinion of their effects on poultry, as I am afraid that this constantly picking,

even a little of them, may by and by do the fowls some constitutional injury.

Malformed Eggs.—One of my hens, which has been ailing for some time, laid a very curiously shaped egg. It was of ordinary size, weighing $2\frac{1}{2}$ ozs., with the small end elongated into a tube of about half an inch, where it gradually expanded into another small egg. The white continued through the tube into the smaller one, but it had no yoke. The shell was only slightly calcified.

Ten Days' Fast.—I missed one of my Bantam hens, and after diligent search I concluded that I had had a visit from "pussy," for Peggy was nowhere to be found. Exactly ten days after, thinking I heard the sound of life in one of my unused out-houses I pushed open the door, when who should appear but lost Peggy. Poor lass, she seemed very pleased to see me. Hunger seemed to give her little concern, but a little discretion had to be exercised in the quantity of water she got, else she would have taken too much. She had been in search of a nest, and pushed open the door which had swung back, thus making her a prisoner. Beside her I found five eggs, one of the usual size, then the others gradually became smaller, and the smallest one was not larger than a blackbird's.

Carnivorous Hen.—I was very much surprised, indeed, I might almost say disgusted, to find that one of my hens had quite an appetite for mice. One day a mouse was killed and thrown out, when it was at once picked up by Miss Cochon, given a good shake, and finally swallowed *holus bolus*. I was to be still more surprised, however, for soon afterwards, when I was shifting, the same hen along with some chickens, I upset a box, out of which jumped a mouse, one of your poor church ones, but a fine big fat one,

evidently having enjoyed a fair share of the good things intended for the brood. Mother hen, in regular terrier fashion, followed it up, seized it by the neck, and after treating it to several smart strokes on the ground, swallowed it head first, evidently thinking it quite a dainty bit. So large was the mouse that it was several minutes before its tail disappeared down her throat.

Sisterly Love.—It is not every day that you can see such a pair of friendly mothers as I have at present. I transferred two hens, along with their broods, from the nest boxes, to a large shed, and was very much astonished next morning to find them comfortably nestled together, quite friendly, and showing none of that jealous anger which is common under like circumstances. This was all the more unnatural as the hens had never seen each other before. It is noteworthy that on the cluck, cluck of the mothers each chicken would at once find its own mother, as if they knew their mother's voices, but after some time they began to get less particular.

Benefits of a Good Mother.—We hear a great deal nowadays about breeding for size? when to feed, how often, and what with; but I am convinced that a good mother has quite as much to do with size of chickens as feeding, cleanliness, parentage, &c. For example. On February 15th and 19th I had two hens hatch each five chickens from the same pen of Cochons. No. 1 hen was an average good mother, but No. 2 quite a typical one, almost continually on the move, treating her chickens to all the tit bits, while she ate very sparingly. The following was the result on July 1st:—

No. 1, largest 5 lb., smallest 4 lb., average 4 lb. 10 oz.

No. 2, largest 7 lb., smallest 5 lb., average 5 lb. 12 oz.

Now I treated these exactly alike in every respect, and can only attribute