

beautiful young chickens. His delight, however, was somewhat diminished, and his surprise considerably augmented, when Mr. A. came forward to claim the chickens as his own, contending that, inasmuch as the eggs belonged to him, the chickens also were his. The fact that the eggs had been laid by Mr. A.'s hen could not be disputed, but what Mr. B. did dispute was that the chickens which had been hatched by his own hen belonged to any one else than himself. When two parties, with their respective friends and sympathizers, differ on a point like this, it is almost a natural consequence that they should go to law, especially if they have the means for doing so. To law accordingly they went; and the important question had thus to be decided, To whom did the chickens belong—to the owner of the hen that had laid the eggs, or to the owner of the hen that hatched them? Well, then, the case was tried in due course in the local court of the district. There was, no doubt, much learning and much oratory devoted to the elucidation of the problem involved, and many, doubtless, were the authorities cited thereon. Anyway, the court, after due and proper consideration, said that there could be no doubt on the subject, and decided that Mr. B., the owner of the hen that hatched the eggs, was entitled to the young brood, and accordingly awarded them to him, with condemnation of the other side in the costs of the action.

This decision was, no doubt, eminently satisfactory for Mr. B., and no less so for his white hen and also for her chickens, whilst probably the black hen, could she have understood all about it, would not have been much troubled in mind concerning the matter. But as to the losing party, it need hardly be said that this judgment did not please or satisfy him—who ever heard of a judgment that did?—and so it came about that appeal was noted to the Circuit Court, and that, as we stated at the beginning, the town of X., on the occasion of its sitting there, was in a state of considerable excitement.

When the case was being heard in the Circuit Court, there was a large attendance of spectators, apparently anxiously interested in the question which they considered to be at issue: Which is the mother of the chickens, the hen that lays the egg or the hen that hatches it? And there they enjoyed the privilege of listening to very profound discussions on the philosophy of hen's eggs—much to their own profit, it is to be hoped. And who shall say that this question was not one well worthy of public interest? For has not a Greek tragedian of old, in one of his masterpieces