

## A Chapter from Early History.

## CHAP. VII — ALARMIN' DEMONSTRATIONS.

My premises were literally besieged with visitors, and my family attendants were worn out with answering the door-bell summons, from morning till night.

"Is Mr. B——at home? Can we see his Coch-in-Chinas? Can we look at Mr. B——'s fowls? Might we take a look at the chickens?" were the questions from sun to sun again, almost; and I was absolutely compelled, in self defence, to send the fowls away from home, for a while, for the sake of relief from continual annoyances to which, in consequence of having them in my yard, I was subjected.

Fifteen, twenty, often forty callers in a single day, would come to see my "magnificent" Coch-in-China fowls. But I sent them off, and then "the people" cried for them!

"Who's dead?" quired a stranger, passing my door one day, and observing the carriages and vehi-ciles standing in a line along the front of my garden-fence.

"Nobody, I guess," said another; "that's where the *Cochin-Chinas* are kept."

"The what?"

"The Coch-in-Chinas."

"What's them?"

"Don't you know?"

"No; never heard of 'em afore."

"Never heard of Burnham's Coch-in-Chinas?"

"Never! What are they?"

"Well I reckon you ha'n't lived in these 'ere parts long, my friend," continued the other; "and you'd better step in and look at 'em."

In came the stranger, and after examining the fowls he returned.

"How do you like 'em?" asked the man who had already seen them, and was waiting for his friend outside.

"They're *ronchers*, that's a fact!" exclaimed the gratified stranger. And this was the universal opinion.

Nobody had ever seen such fowls (I had seen a good many better ones!)—nobody had ever beheld any so large, so heavy, so fine. And every one who came to look at them purchased or engaged either eggs or chickens from these "extraordinary" and "never-to-be-too-much-lauded" royal Coch-in-China fowls!

For my first broods of chickens (at three and four months old) I really obtained twenty-five dollars a pair: and every one of them went off "like hot cakes" at this figure. It was too low for them, altogether; and I had occasion to regret subsequently, that I did not charge fifty dollars a pair; —a price which I might just as easily then have

obtained as if I had charged but one dollar a pair, as events proved to my satisfaction.

But everything connected with this fever could not well be learned at once. I was not a very dull scholar, and I progressed gradually. One year after the receipt of my Cochins, I got my own price for them, ask what I might. I sold a good many pairs at one hundred dollars a couple; and, oftentimes, I received this sum for a trio of them.

Things begun to look up with me. I had got a very handsome-looking stock on hand, at last; and when my numerous customers came to see me, they were surprised (and so was I) to meet with such "noble" samples of domestic fowls. "Magnificent!" "Astonishing!" cried everybody.

A splendid open carriage halted before my door, one day, and there alighted from it a fine, portly-looking man, whom I had never seen before, and whose name I did not then learn; who, leaving an elegantly-dressed lady behind in the vehicle, called for me.

I saw and recognized the *carriage*, however, as one of Niles'; and I was satisfied that it came from the Tremont House. As soon as the gentleman spoke, I was also satisfied, from his manner of speech that he was a Southerner. He was polite and frank, apparently. I invited him in, and he went to look at my fowls; that being the object, he said, of his visit.

He examined them all, and said, quietly:

"I'd like to get half a dozen of these, if they didn't come too high; but I understand you fanciers have got the price up. I used to buy these chickens for a dollar apiece. Now, they say, you are asking five dollars each for them."

I show him my stock,—the "*pure-bred*," ones,—and informed him at once that I had not sold any of my chickens, lately, at less than *forty* dollars a pair.

He was astonished. He didn't want any—much: that is, he wasn't particular. He could buy them for five dollars; shouldn't pay that, *now*; wanted them for his boy; would come again, and see about it, &c. &c.

A five-year-old stag mounted the low fence at this moment, and sent forth an electrifying crow, such as would (at that period) have taken a novice 'right out of his boots;" and a beautiful eight-pound pullet showed herself beside him at the same time. The stranger turned round, and said:

"There! What is your price for such a pair as that, for instance?"

"Not for sale, sir."

"But you *will* sell them, I s'pose?"

"No, sir. I have younger ones to dispose of; but *that* pair are my models. I can't sell *them*."

The gentleman's eye was exactly filled with this pair of chickens.