

## Animal Actualities.

NOTE.—Under this title we intend printing a series of perfectly authentic anecdotes of animal life, illustrated by Mr. J. A. Shepherd, an artist long a favourite with readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE. We shall be glad to receive similar anecdotes, fully authenticated by names of witnesses, for use in future numbers. While the stories themselves will be matters of fact, it must be understood that the artist will treat the subject with freedom and fancy, more with a view to an amusing commentary than to a mere representation of the occurrence.



VI.

### The Faithful Cochin



HIS is a story of chivalry on the part of an old rooster, repaid by the lifelong affection of an old Cochin hen.

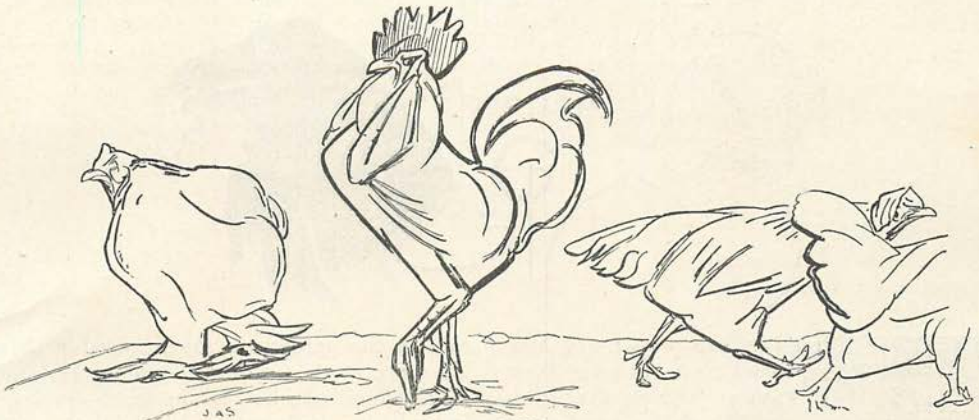
These birds, with a number of other hens and one young cockerel, were the property of Mr. Shepherd, the artist. The old Cochin hen was called "Granny," and for long was chief of all the hens in Mr. Shepherd's stable-yard; till at last she met with an accident. The master was setting out for a ride, and, as usual, all the fowls in the yard crowded about his mare's feet as he mounted. But this time the mare made an unlucky step, and brought her hoof down on poor old Granny's foot. After that she was always lame.

Now, it is a melancholy fact, but a fact nevertheless, that in the animal world the weak and the helpless receive little mercy from their fellows. No sooner was the old hen rendered incapable of defending herself than her life became a misery

in consequence of the abominable treatment of all the other hens. From first place among them, she at once fell to last, and was the butt and pecking-block of the whole crowd. The other hens would surround the poor old thing and peck her unmercifully, drive her from her food, and generally make her miserable, the loutish young cockerel looking on and rather enjoying the fun, till the old cock came by. He, however, would instantly stalk in to the rescue, driving the persecutors away in a clucking mob. So things went for long, the old cock being Granny's one constant friend and protector; till at last the cock himself fell ill. Then it was Granny's turn. She kept by him through it all, tending him and bringing him food, while the other hens disregarded the king of the yard altogether, and looked after themselves. And at last, when the old cock was found lying dead, there was poor old Granny,

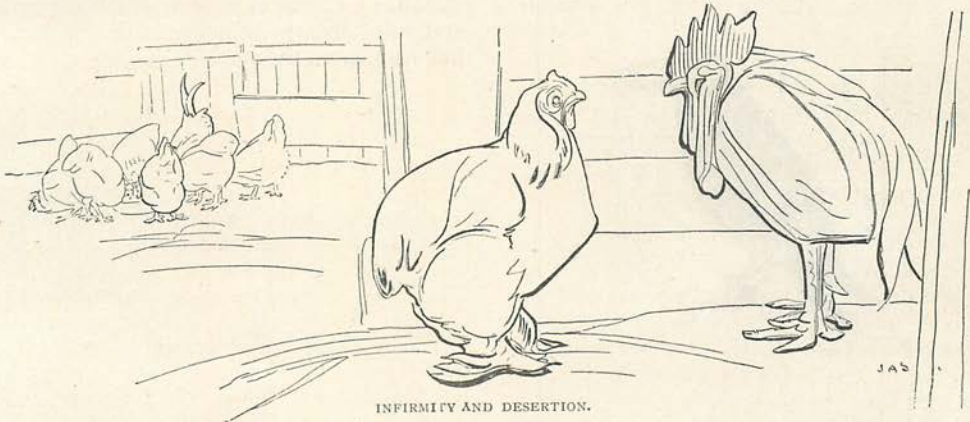


PERSECUTION.



PROTECTION.

nestling close down by his side, forlorn and young cockerel, now chief of the yard, grief-stricken, but faithful to the end, and lorded it in mighty style, the other hens



INFIRMITY AND DESERTION.

refusing to leave the corpse, notwithstanding following him admiringly, altogether forgetful all inducements. Meanwhile, the loutish of the dead master.



FIDELITY AND DISSOLUTION.