

## Animal Actualities.

NOTE.—These articles consist of 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.

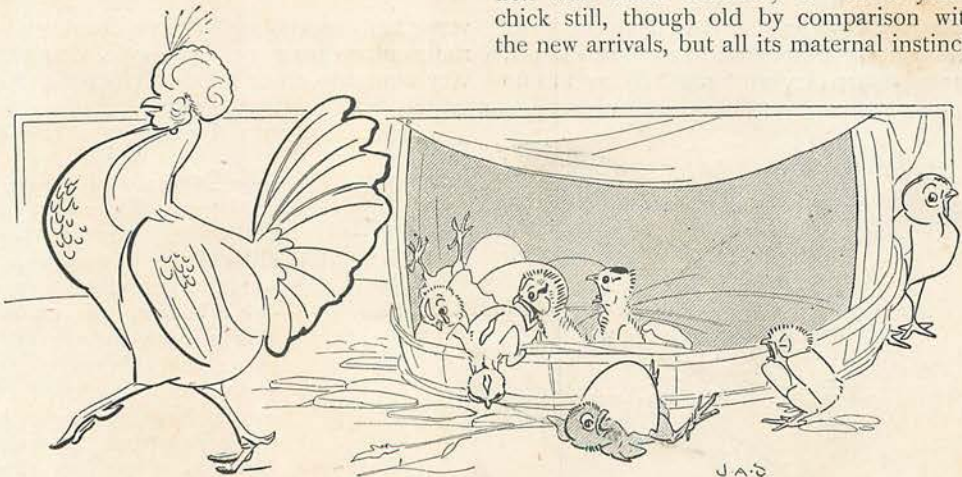
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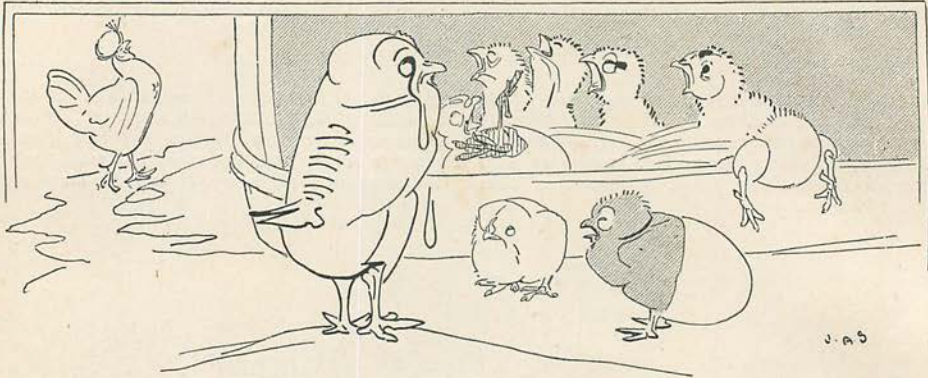
**I**N the fowl-run of the Rev. Robert Evans, at Walton, near Stafford, two years ago, occurred a sad example of misplaced instinct.

It was a populous fowl-run, this of Mr. Evans's, and the large families of the many hens were constantly welcoming fresh broods. It is with one particular chicken in one of these broods that this story is concerned. If you search the biographies of great men you will find in many, perhaps in most cases, they gave no signs of any special distinction in their early years. This chick was like those great men. It

was so much like the other chicks of the same brood of both sexes, that only its mother could have told it from any one of the others. At the age of three weeks, however, began a great development of character and instinct. Just at this period another hen had produced a hatch of nine. This hen was of a flighty, fashionable disposition—a *fin-de-siècle* society mother—and as soon as the chicks were well through their shells she set off calling on other hens in her set, and left the unhappy chicks to sprawl about and look after themselves. The three-weeks' old chick viewed this maternal desertion with much concern; it was a young chick still, though old by comparison with the new arrivals, but all its maternal instincts



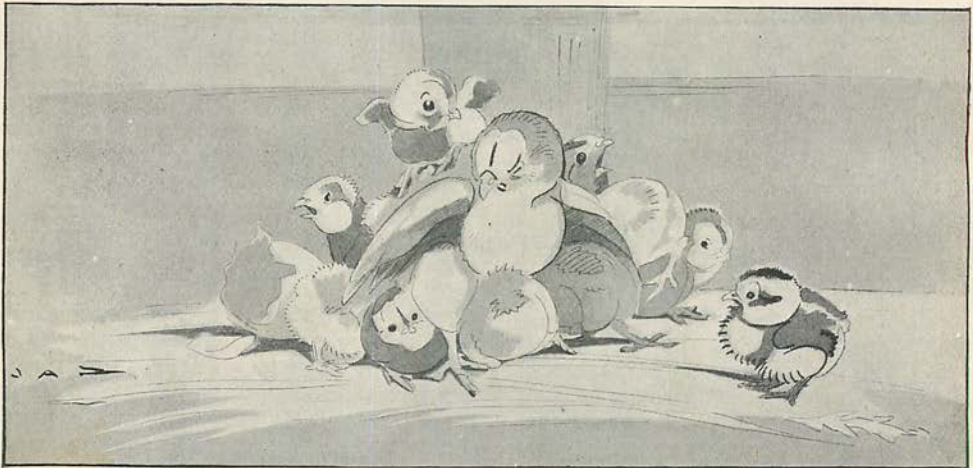
A SOCIETY MOTHER.



MUCH CONCERN.

were aroused by the sight. You have no doubt seen a very tiny boy or girl staggering about a street under the weight of a baby

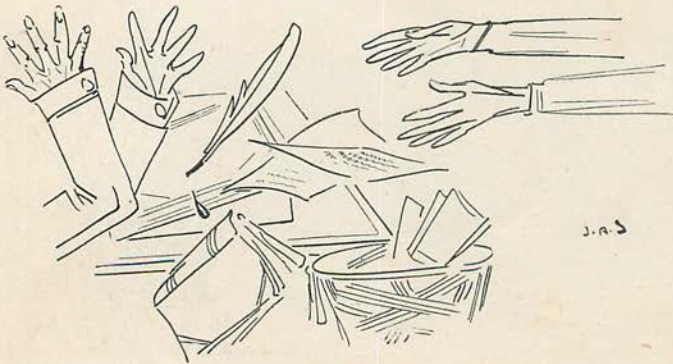
distinct indication of its legal engagement as nurse by the society hen, but it took upon itself all the duties, and every evening this



MOTHERLY INSTINCT.

about half a size smaller than its nurse. The maternal chick presented a similar sight, translated into chicken terms. There was no

very small chicken might be observed, with a rudimentary wing on each side, doing its very utmost to cover another chicken only a little smaller. And not the two chicks alone; for the remaining seven, seeing them so comfortably lodged and protected, rushed to get their share of those ridiculously inadequate wings. Thenceforward that chick became the mother of the nine, who nested under the shadow of her wings—and no doubt got as much shelter from the shadow as from the wings. Mr. Evans and his sister were most tenderly affected



SHOCKING NEWS.



GALLANT AND POPULAR.

by the scene. "Dear, dear," they said, "what wonderful and beautiful instinct! What a mother that chicken will become!" And they pictured a glorious future for that bird (and, incidentally, for themselves), with a long succession of broods of thirteen each, always well and healthily brought up. The bird, indeed, seemed likely to be so valuable that Mr. Evans felt some scruple about keeping it selfishly for himself, and gave it to his small nephew.

But they were deceived. The bird was maternally virtuous enough, but it had no right to such virtues—no right whatever. One morning Mr. Evans's sister burst into her brother's study, with dismay upon her face. "What *do* you think?" she exclaimed. "The white hen is a cock!"

And true it was. The motherly chicken, growing older and larger, and more shelter-some of wing, had now developed a comb and wattle and a tail altogether inconsistent

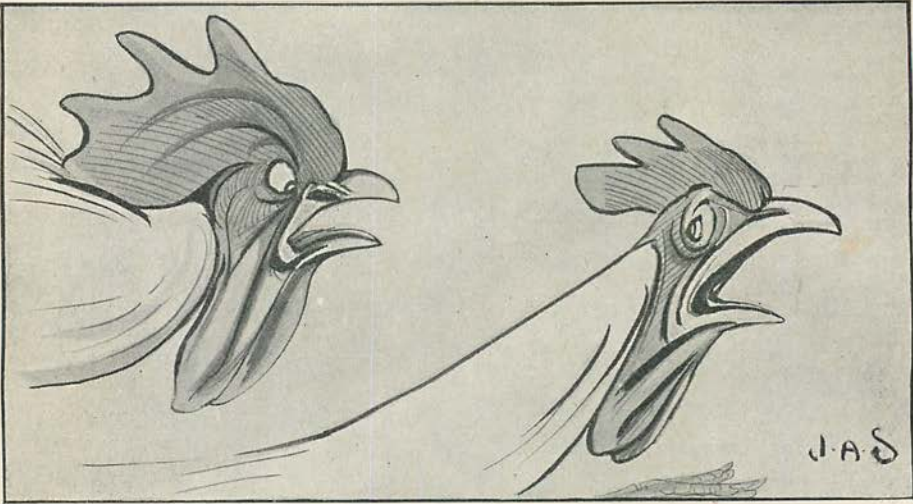
with henhood or motherliness of any sort. It *was* a cock! And as motherly and old-womanish as ever!

Now, Mr. Evans already had a fine young cockerel—a very dashing and gallant bird of military bearing, most exceedingly popular with the hens. Another wasn't wanted at all—for the sake of peace in the yard. What to do? One obvious course was to kill and eat the white hen which was a cock. But then it was no longer Mr. Evans's bird; he had given it to his nephew, who was now away at school; so that it was scarcely possible either to eat it or to give it away. And besides, to eat such a kindly, unnaturally virtuous bird would be at least as bad as eating or giving away Dr. Barnardo.

So the white cock with the hen's disposition was spared, and neither eaten nor given away. He grew up a weak-spirited, effeminate, henny sort of bird, with misplaced motherly instincts which could never attain



DESPISED!



CHASED !

realization. Imagine a big boy nursing a doll while his schoolmates were at cricket or football; what sort of life would he lead in the school? Just such a life as this cock lived in the fowl-run. He was a disgrace to cockhood, despised by the hens and chased by the gallant cock. This military despot gave him no peace, and on the slightest sign of attention to the ladies he chastised him mercilessly. "A hen you've made yourself," said the tyrant—said it in his every movement—"and a hen you shall remain!"

He still lives, and must still live. One of the two had to go, and it was the tyrant. He,

ill-fated gallant, proved as fine on the dish as in the yard. But as for his unworthy successor—never was such a failure as lord of the poultry yard. He neither reigns nor struts nor rules the roost as do other cocks. He cannot be called cock of the walk, nor even cock of the run—unless it is because he runs away from the hens. They let him live, and that is about all. They despise him, peck him, bully him, and he can't muster a return peck. Any hen—any chick, even—would despise such a peckless, timid creature. He is afraid of everything. Perhaps he is most afraid of his wives—but, then, that is a



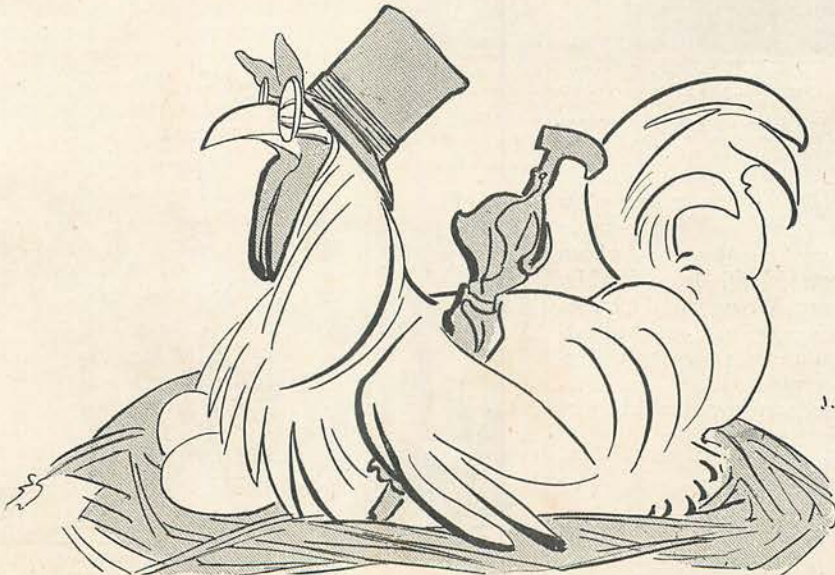
HENPECKED !



"OH! I'M AFRAID!"

thing not altogether unheard-of in species of higher development. But he is also afraid of his own shadow, of a chance-blown piece of paper, of a pert sparrow—almost (though certainly not quite) of the early worm that rewards his early rising. And although he has not yet been observed to be greatly scared by any handful of grain thrown in his way, it is a fact that he is too timid to go through a small opening in a wall which leads

into a field, and which is the usual means of exit for all the rest of the poultry. Perhaps he is afraid that his martial tramp may disturb the wall's foundations and bring it down on his back. And still, through it all, that preposterous motherly instinct exists! He sits about, intent on persuading Mr. Evans to mistake him for a broody hen, and to provide him with a sitting of eggs. And he will never be really happy till he gets it.



REALLY HAPPY.