

Probably some of "Mrs. Dorking's" fowls are worse than the rest. Let her kill them, or at least separate them from the others; try the remedies you recommend, and kill all those which are not cured at the next moulting; rearing chickens from other stock this summer.—E.

DO BRAHMAS BREED TRUE?

In January last I procured a fine pair of dark pea-combed Brahmas with the view of breeding from them. The hen began to lay on the 25th of February. I set all her eggs in successive hatchings of seven each, under Cochin pullets. Most of the eggs were addled, and the few chickens that I have from this pair of fowls differ widely in size, comb, and appearance. One chicken is vulture-hocked, with feathers almost touching the ground; another is, apparently, clean-legged; and all of them are smaller than Cochins of the same age.

If my experience is not exceptional, surely dark Brahmas are not a distinct variety, or good specimens are rare.—AMATEUR.

[We have our correspondent's name, and that of the dealer from whom he purchased the birds.—EDS. C. G.]

HENS WITH DISORDERED EGG-ORGANS.

WHAT are the exact symptoms of an egg-bound hen? The writer had a remarkably fine bird with a large protuberance under her tail. On consulting an individual who had a great reputation in the locality as one who was "poultry wise," she was pronounced to be suffering from an incurable tumour, instant execution being the only alternative. On her being opened a mass of shellless eggs was disclosed, from forty to fifty, in different stages of development. The hen had ready access to lime, looked well, and did not carry her tail in a drooping manner. The writer has a Cochin-China hen with similar symptoms, which he has liberally dosed with castor oil, but hitherto without any good effect.—A SUBSCRIBER.

[The hen you killed was not what is termed "egg-bound;" for this term is confined to cases where the egg is perfect in every part, but the egg-passage is so constricted that the egg cannot pass out. The hen in question, we have little doubt, had inflammation of the ovaries. In this case, as well as in cases where the perfect egg cannot pass, the symptoms are usually the same—a swelling of the hen's abdomen; going on to a nest frequently, and remaining there long without laying; and when the inflammation has continued for some time, the excrements are usually unnaturally glutinous, and clog the feathers around the anus. All such ovarian derangements usually arise from feeding too much and too nutritiously. Low diet is the remedy. Keep the hen for at least a week upon boiled mashed potatoes and boiled rice; and during the time give her each second day a pill containing one grain of calomel, and one-twelfth of a grain of tartar emetic. Let her also have as much green food and exercise as she chooses. A good grass run is the best for this purpose.]

INTERCOURSE BETWEEN COMMON AND LIGURIAN BEES.

"A DEVONSHIRE BEE-KEEPER" states (page 94) that he caught a common drone entering one of his hives of the pure Ligurian stock. Will he have the kindness to state at what distance in a straight line there are hives of the common bee? I believe it is not known how far the drones commonly wander from their own hive. Andrew Knight believed, as stated in the "Philosophical Transactions," that the queen was seldom fertilised by her own blood-relations, the drones of her own hive. Does "A DEVONSHIRE BEE-KEEPER," who seems to be so conversant with the habits of bees, believe in this doctrine of Andrew Knight?—C. D.

[I have this day (May 24th) seen pure Ligurian drones for the first time in one of my stocks, but believe none have yet taken flight. The distinction between the two species does not appear nearly so strongly marked as in the workers; but this may be owing in some degree to their not being properly matured. The apparent difference being so slight, has, however, modified the opinion expressed by me at page 94, and I am now inclined to believe the "unwelcome stranger" to have been a small hybrid drone which had come to maturity in my pure Ligurian stock, instead of being, as I at first supposed,

a straggler from some other colony. The presence of a small hybrid drone is easily accounted for by the fact that I had previously strengthened the Ligurians by adding to them a couple of hybrid brood-combs, and it is more than probable that in so doing I had overlooked one or two small-sized hybrid drone grubs.

My idea is that females among bees are very generally fertilised by the offspring of the same mother, because they appear the most likely to meet during the nuptial excursion. The degree of success which attends my efforts to breed pure Ligurians may, however, throw some light on this subject.

Some years ago I witnessed a circumstance which leads to the inference that drones do, in point of fact, extend their flight to a greater distance than is generally imagined. A strong stock in full work was, at the latter end of May, removed during the night to a new situation quite a mile distant from its old locality. During the next and following day some hundreds of workers returned to the accustomed spot to meet a melancholy end in the unavailing attempt to find their habitation. The weather happening to be cloudy, not a single drone appeared until the third or fourth day, by which time not a worker was to be seen; but a bright sun then happening to shine out heralded the approach of some scores of drones, which, like their predecessors of the (not in this case) "gentler sex" also perished miserably.

When the season is a little more advanced, specimens of Ligurian drones and workers will be very much at the service of "C. D." if he will favour me with his address.—A DEVONSHIRE BEE-KEEPER.]

FRATERNISATION AMONG BEES—FORMING LIGURIAN STOCKS.

I HAVE frequently before remarked how readily bees of adjoining hives will fraternise under peculiar circumstances, where they would be the bitterest foes in ordinary cases. An instance occurred three days ago in my apiary. To understand the case, it is necessary your readers should know that the two hives in question stand side by side on the lower shelf of my bee-house, at a distance (entrance from entrance) of not more than twenty inches. The left-hand stock (as seen in the house), appeared weak* in bees, and had begun to show signs of invasion from that pest the Wax Moth; not, as far as I could see, amongst the combs, but on the floor of the hive, among the broken fragments of opened honey-cells. On discovering these I instantly removed the board, and examined the condition of the hive, thinking to destroy and plunder it. I was agreeably surprised, however, to see the combs perfectly clean and free from Moth, and an evident and considerable increase in the population since I last examined the hive two months ago, and there appeared a large quantity of brood. I therefore contented myself with cutting out some nice pieces of empty comb for guide-combs to other hives, and removing the infested board, substituting a clean one for it. It was then replaced in the bee-house. An hour after I proceeded to give a nadir, or under-box, to the adjoining stock on the right hand; this stock being extremely populous and overcrowded, in spite of a small super already given to it. Some little time was taken up with this job, during which the bees of this hive, which returned home from the fields, were, as is usual in such cases, in great perplexity at finding an empty box in place of their full hive. Then commenced the fraternisation to which I have alluded. For the distressed insects (many of them heavily laden with pollen), catching sound of the peculiar hum of pleasure which ever and anon proceeded from the adjoining hive, as some straggler after the late disturbance of that hive found its way home again, began to creep in the direction of it; and soon there was a grand rush of bees in rank and file in the direction of the weak stock. This continued for more than two hours, even long after I had replaced their own parent hive on the top of the nadir. I thought they would afterwards return to their own hive. Not so, however. They have permanently joined the weak hive, which is now so strong that the bees were working comb in it both yesterday and to-day (May 17), and play in and out almost as actively as some of my other hives.

I have been so much occupied of late, that I could not remark hitherto upon "A DEVONSHIRE BEE-KEEPER's" caution to the inexperienced in reference to a mode of increasing Ligurian

* "THE DEVONSHIRE BEE-KEEPER," who paid me a pleasant visit last autumn, will remember warning me to expect the dissolution of this stock in the spring, and his advice to me to plunder it.