

AN ESSETRIC HEN, ANATOMICALLY EXCUSED

A. F. Reiter, 1921.

A little black mongrel hen, so active that fences were no barrier to her range, decided to settle down to incubation. She was encouraged in this by receiving a setting of eggs which she carefully brooded. She hatched her brood and mothered them a few days when she turned cannibal, killing and eating her whole flock of chickens within a few hours. The hen was then allowed to feed with other chickens for about ten days when she was slaughtered. The hen was found to have two complete systems of ovaries and oviducts. In one was found eggs in all stages of development up to egg in shell. In the other were eggs up to the size of a pea.

Evidently the hen hatched her brood when both ovaries were inactive. With the beginning of active life in caring for her brood one ovary began developing eggs which gave the hen the impulse to wean her brood, her mother instincts being satisfied with egg in duct. In trying to wean her chickens she killed one and ate it, which developed her canabalistic habits, which were not satisfied until the last chick was devoured. A laying hen does not care to be annoyed with a brood of chickens following her.