

A SUCCESSFUL SEASON.

MR. E. O. ROSELLE, in the *Country Gentleman*, relates his experience on a matter of interest to all breeders.

A successful breeding season is the delight of the poultryman's heart. Whether the season just finishing has been up to the mark with the majority, is impossible to say. We hear rumors that eggs have not hatched out over well, yet this is an annual complaint, and but little attention should be paid to it. With all the advantages of modern incubation, both natural and artificial, and the better understanding with regard to the care of the old stock, eggs should be as fertile one year as another, and they should hatch equally as well. Some seasons hens are inclined to sit early and others late, but as we are no longer dependent upon the whims of Mistress Biddy, it is the breeder's fault alone if he refuses to use an incubator and waits for the tardy hen to make up her mind to hatch him some chicks. I will venture to say that the breeders who use incubators and know how to run them successfully utter fewer complaints about poor hatches than the conservative hen men.

Artificial incubation is undergoing changes every season, and improvements are constantly being made, not so much by the inventors, but by the operators. In fact, the operators usually make valuable suggestions gratis to the manufacturers, and they are gladly accepted and added to the revised catalogues. The stumbling-blocks of a very few years ago have been removed, and to-day, or rather during this hatching season, the machine men have had many advantages and better opportunities for greater success than the last. The two great points of moisture in the machines and heat in the brooders have not yet been thoroughly tested to satisfy the majority.

A few remarks on my own season—the most successful I ever had—may be of benefit to the discouraged ones.

To begin with, I discarded the hen as a sitter and hatcher last year and made up my mind I had had trouble enough with her, and hence I used machines entirely. I shall not write a *record* of my season, but simply give a few points which I consider led to my success. First, I used no moisture whatever in my machines (Prairie State.) My hatches averaged about 88 per cent. of all fertile eggs. After the chicks were all out, I left them always 36 hours in bottom of machines, and some hatches as long as 48 hours. The result of this was strong, active, hungry youngsters, ready to stand the change to the brooder and strong enough to keep their legs under them and ready to eat at once. Every hatch was removed at night to the brooder and started at

90°. The next day they all remained almost constantly outside of the hover in the indoor runs and were ready for their feed every three hours. The second night I made it a practice to reduce the heat to 85°, and kept it so for generally one week, sometimes a little less than a week. On the fourth day I let them out-doors, to run in and out freely, and found they would invariably cover the entire length of the outdoor run (25 feet) almost continually. I must state, however, that my first hatch was not placed in the brooder until about April 1; hence the weather was suitable for outdoor exercise.

My feed was the same I had used for two previous years—Spratt's chick meal, with the addition of bone meal and a handful of small-size grit to every mess, thus compelling them to eat a little of the grit with the food. Instead of feeding every two hours, I fed about every three, and sometimes at longer intervals, taking pains to note that they were quite hungry before feeding them. Keeping them hungry compelled them to exercise and helped to keep them healthy. After one week, I fed them small grain and sifted cracked corn and reduced the Spratt's food to morning and night feed. I gave them green food usually the second day and continued it daily—first, oats grown in pans, and then, as soon as obtainable, lettuce. Charcoal and water were always before them; also a box of chick grit.

The result of the above system gave me strong, active chicks, and less bowel trouble than I ever hoped to see in any flock. In fact, I have had so little of this trouble that it has hardly been noticeable.

At the end of a week, the heat in the hover was reduced to 75°, and kept so until they were five weeks old, when they were shut out entirely from the heat and hover and left at night to the indoor runs; and if the weather proved to be warm, the windows were left open all night. The indoor runs are six feet long; hence the chicks were about six feet or less from the open windows and sufficiently protected.

To follow the course I pursued after the chicks were five weeks old, I placed them in the upper end of brooder house where they had the run of two or three acres free. Later I separated them, dividing them into flocks of fifteen or twenty, and placing them in dry-goods boxes for coops, giving them free range and feeding them three times a day—a mash in the morning, and whole grain noon and night, all they would eat. At present I have about fifteen hundred very strong, active chicks, of different ages, but all healthy and fine in every way.

I tried an experiment with my last hatch, which came off July 2. As the weather began to get hot, and I did not care to run my brooder-house stove to accommodate 78 chicks