

Artificial Rearing of Domestic Fowls.

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The first notice I received was the death of two very pretty chicks, whom their fine coats and large and beautiful tufts made me take a great liking to.

They were hatched on the 15th of January, they had not been affected by the sharp cold of the air without the place, they had grown in three weeks time as much as chickens could have grown in the finest of seasons, they were as lusty as any chicks of their age could be. They thus appeared to my eyes but two hours before my gardener came dejected to tell me he had just found them dead under the mother. They had been killed, and as it were, crushed themselves to death, invited by the warm air or some other motive in endeavoring to reach the extremity of the artificial mother, their efforts had carried them much too far. These repeated efforts served only to put their bodies into a state of a too violent compression. They never thought of using their strength to retire, and having exhausted all their vigour it was no longer in their power to extricate themselves out of their sad situation. Although one had not seen to what degree their body was squeezed, it might have been conceived by considering the large and deep impression which remained in the fur lining of the mother. Many a chicken was afterwards brought me, found dead under the mother, with the body quite flat, before I even suspected they had occasioned it themselves. I was no sooner apprized that it was possible for young chickens to kill themselves under too low a mother but the cause of the sad condition in which I had seen a multitude of them ceased to be a secret. I knew not what reason to assign for the trembling of the legs of some; this was so remarkable that they seemed unable to support their body; coming from under the mother to enter the chicken house they ran a few steps, then tumbled down and could not immediately get up again, nor was it in their power to step in a more steady or regular manner. That difficulty of standing was an almost certain indication of approaching death. They had put themselves in that condition by the violent efforts they had made to go too deep under the mother, and in striving to extricate themselves from it. The rule which these observations prescribe to us with regard to the construction of the artificial mothers, is, always to give their hinder part such an elevation that the chicken which makes any attempts to go to the very bottom of that he is under may find no insurmountable opposition in any part of it, but may be able to

walk or at least drag himself through with his feet gathered up in the lower places; he then runs no danger under it, and has room enough to clap his back against the fur lining of the under part of the roof, or it would even be enough to clap it against one of its sides.

The reader will from thence conclude that as the chickens grow bigger, higher artificial mothers must be given them—mothers of four different heights may suffice for the whole bringing of the chickens up. There is not, indeed, so much comfort in them, but then there is no manner of danger in keeping them under mothers a little too high for their bodies; their backs may even in these meet with some of the hair hanging from the roof and the sides will supply them in plenty with choice of places against which they may clap their backs by turning themselves a little that way, as they very well know how to do.

Those which have taken their meal first in the chicken house, and have tired themselves with walking about, are the first that return under the mother, there to rest in a warmer place. They always push further into it till they get quite to the end. Those which come after in their turn under the mother take the very same method, and all of them get as deep into it as they can; the chickens, therefore are all crowding together towards the extremity of the mother, the strongest get on the backs of the weakest, who were squatted, I have seen some of these crushed and stifled every day. Those which are nearest to the hinder extremity lie in the warmest place of all; when that end is closed up, in vain they would strive to get fourth to enjoy a more moderate air; they are never able to break through the crowd in their way or get to the door of the mother; the heat, which becomes excessive to them, leaves them barely a faint breath of life, which is at least entirely taken from them, as they are smothered by the weight and perpetual trampling of those that are mounted on their backs. As I am desirous not to omit mentioning anything that may be usefully employed in peculiar cases, I may say that I have made use of mothers that were perfectly round, for this name may be given to round baskets whose edge is a little higher than that of the baskets wherein the eggs are put to be warmed. Their inward surface was lined all over with fur, and their bottom was covered with straw. These round mothers or furred baskets may even be very usefully employed for new hatched chickens, and for those yet very young. After they have taken their food and filled their little crops very well in the chicken house, they like extremely to be put into the furred basket and remain for two or three hours together in the oven, where they are taken out to feed and then returned to the oven. This oper-