

### Artificial Rearing of Domestic Fowls.

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The difference is very great between the condition of the chickens which have a mother to lead them about and that of those which are brought up in the manner I have just described. The reader will see how considerable the advantage is on the side of the latter, to be deprived of a real mother, if he but considers that most commonly the hens though prodigiously fond of their chicks, occasion the death of some of them either by being too awkward or out of consideration. The pleasure of having little ones, far from making them clearer sighted, seems rather to blind them, especially at first; they will put on an excess of uneasiness, keep them too near themselves, whence it happens very frequently that they set their foot upon some of them, whereby they are either crushed or mortally hurt, and they even crush some by barely setting on them; very desirous of procuring them a feast, they scrape the ground in order to fetch out some worms or insects, which are a very nice bit for them, but a hen that is thus scraping does not reflect whether the foot she is pushing backward will not meet and strike one of her chickens roughly enough to throw him a good way from her. In short, let the affections of the hens for their broods be ever so great, they cannot hinder the little ones from passing from great heat to great cold, they neither can or ought to sit on them constantly, they must eat and run about; very rainy days must needs prove fatal to them, notwithstanding all they can do; therefore nothing is more common, as we have already observed, than to see a hen which has hatched ten or twelve chickens out of a brood of eggs unable to bring about three or four of them to the age at which she ceases to lead and tend them. So many experiments have taught us that hens cannot, in spite of their pains, bring up in cold seasons the chickens they have hatched, that nobody cares to encourage or indulge the desire, which some of them show of sitting on eggs when the winter is near. In most of our provinces they decline giving eggs to the hens which seem inclin'd even about the beginning of September. The chickens kept in our chicken houses enjoy a perpetual summer, but then it has happened, and I have more than once wondered at it, although I ought to have expected it, that during a period of some days of a very severe cold I lost none of the chickens which were born a week or two before, nor even any of those which were hatched when the cold was most piercing—there had not been any sensible change in the

temperature of the air as to these.

We have now brought the chickens to that period at which they may be left at liberty in the poultry yard, as though all of them had reached that term; nevertheless the major part of my first trials have not, by a considerable deal, procured me the pleasure of seeing even the major part of those who had been put in chicken houses live to that desirable time. I have seen some of them die there at all the intermediate ages, and sometimes in so great a quantity that the number of the dead has been considerably greater than the number of those that survived them. I have sometimes been so unfortunate as not to be able to save and secure the life of one or two chickens out of forty; there have been times at which I saw chickens hatched every day in my house, whilst the number of those I had alive was hardly increased by them; those which were hatched from day to day did hardly anything else but replace those which had expired that very day. Many different causes have made me loose them; some of these causes were easy to be known, and commonly they were very easy to be prevented for the future; others were more hidden and of a more mysterious nature. I was not able to find them out for a length of time, that is after I had been deprived of a multitude of these little creatures, the life and preservation of which I could not but have much at heart. I am equally bound to acquaint the reader with every one of these different causes; it is incumbent on me to spare him all disheartening attempts, and I am sorry that I cannot possibly do it without entering into a number of minute particulars which must needs be tiresome to all those who do not think of falling to this work themselves; but the work I propose to write is only useful, not entertaining.

I have had many occasions to complain of those artificial mothers, or rather I have had frequent reasons to blame myself for not having sufficiently seen all that their construction and disposition required. The first I caused to be put into a weaning box, cost a great many chickens the loss of their lives. It was open at both ends, the lowest end was placed against the board of the warmest extremity of the weaning box, but it was not put quite close to it, it left a vacancy into which the chicken nearest to it was tempted to thrust himself in order to jump upon the mother; he was no sooner got partly into it but he made efforts to raise his body there, he strove to heave himself up with his wings, which, being tender at the time were twisted in a very singular manner by these efforts; the tip of the wing stood straight upwards, or was bent towards its back, after having made a whole turn. The chicken whose attempts towards coming forward had been needless, went back into