

Incubator & Brooder Department



We invite correspondence for this important department of commercial poultry raising, which is growing so rapidly in Canada.

ARTIFICIAL INCUBATION.

BY C. J. DANIELS, TORONTO.

It is not to be wondered at that much thought and labor should have been devoted to the subject of hatching by artificial means. Early chickens are important to all poultry-keepers whatever be the object they have in view, and to the fancier who desires to have birds fully matured and ready for exhibition for the autumn snows, they are absolutely essential to success, but hens rarely want to sit at such seasons unless perhaps in the case of Cochins or Brahma Pullets, and as these seldom go long enough with their chicks for very cold weather, the obtaining of suitable mothers early in the year is one of the fanciers most anxious cares. Often indeed all his efforts fail and he is doomed to see such eggs as money could not purchase wasted for want of hens to sit upon them while at the same time he would be willing to give almost any price for the means of turning them into those chickens which he has well founded hopes would win him many a prize at next season's shows. The man keeping poultry for the market finds himself also handicapped getting sitters. Having a large flock of birds he has the greater chance of finding a few early sitters amongst his flock, he gladly would set more if he could, remembering the high prices of the early markets which well repay extra housing, feeding and care. It is known that for hundreds of years chickens have been hatched in immense numbers, both in Egypt and China with no apparent difficulty, and with very little failure. There the climate or temperature is very even and near the degree required to hatch the egg.

These large rooms are devoted to the hatching process very little artificial heat being required.

The first thing to be considered is the incubator. There are many good machines in the market. If we have no knowledge in this direction we should send for the catalogues of several leading makes of machines and then make our selection. Do not consider the price but endeavor to get the best there is in the market. Very rapid strides have been made these last few years in perfecting the incubator and every vexing question of moisture and ventilation has lately been solved most successfully.

A dry well-ventilated cellar is a good place to set up a machine. The object is to get as even a temperature as possible for sudden change from cold to heat will affect the machine, about sixty degrees is a good temperature, the main thing is evenness. Have the room well ventilated but be sure and have no draughts directly on the machine, neither should the sun's rays be allowed to strike it. Keep the room sweet smelling and the air pure. Set the machine perfectly level and solid so that there will be no jar.

Other things being equal the eggs are the direct cause of good or poor hatches and the hens that laid the eggs are at the root of the whole matter while the owner has it within himself to cause success or failure. It is best if the operator can raise his own eggs; it is cheaper, and then he has the power to raise eggs from any variety or grade he chooses, and to have fertile eggs that will hatch if he has done his part faithfully.

Another thing to consider is the variety of fowl, and there is quite a list to select from. The following are all yellow skinned fowls and are the varieties most in demand in Canada and America as broilers and roasters:—Wyandottes, five varieties, golden, silver, white, buff and black; Plymouth Rocks, three varieties, barred, white, buff; Brahmans, two varieties, light and dark; Javas, three varieties, black, white, mottled. White skinned fowls are preferred in England and France, such as Houdan, Minorca, Dorking, &c. The pure Indian Game is an ideal table fowl. If cross bred fowls are preferred I would recommend a cross of Indian Game cock on golden or white Wyandotte, Java or Brahma hens, or white or buff Leghorn cock on Rock, Wyandotte or Brahma hens and you will get a good growing chick. Have