

THE MORTALITY OF BROODER CHICKS.

THE inventive genius of the American people has supplied the poultry breeder with a number of admirable brooders. The problems of furnishing the requisite degree of heat, of preventing crowding or rendering it innocuous, and of furnishing a reliable substitute for the mothering of the hen, have been quite effectually solved. And yet the chickens die.

Some attribute this unhappy result to the men who

operate the brooders. Doubtless there is a difference in the skill and care of the operators, and those who are most skillful and most careful obtain the best results. But as even these operators lose chickens, the explanation is not sufficient. Furthermore, as the writer knows from experience, the same operator will carry through one brood without the loss of a chicken, and from the next brood lose nearly every specimen. And these very different results may come when the same brooder is in use.

What, then, are the causes of the mortality in

brooder chickens? After some study of the question, I believe the chief causes are as follows:

1. Some defect in the management of the incubator, whereby the chickens are hatched with a loss of vigor. It may be that their vigor has been impaired by over-heating of the eggs, or by the reverse—a chilling of the eggs. But whatever be the cause, I am firmly convinced that some broods are so weakly from the start that no brooder and no motherly old hen can possibly rear them. They are stupid in appearance when first put out, never learn to eat well, begin the dying act on the first day or two, and keep it up until few or none are left as evidence that a brood once existed.

2. Overfeeding. This is a cause where the blame attaches to the operator. He ought to know that brooder chickens should come to each feeding-time hungry. If they do not, the meal should be omitted, and they should have no food until they are hungry. Keep them hungry, so that they will make a grand rush every time one comes to feed them, and the chances of their living will be greatly improved. If this is done, even food not best adapted for the pur-

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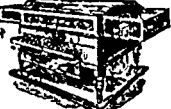
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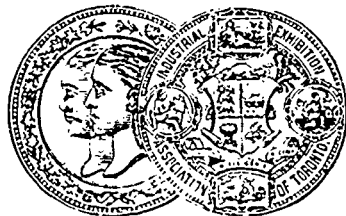


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