



## BIG PROFITS IN CHICKENS.

GUY ELLIOTT MITCHELL.

We all know that there is big money in poultry. How much there is in it for us, depends entirely upon ourselves and whether or not we are keeping up with the procession in raising the kind of chickens which bring the most cash and in getting them into the market at a time when the demand is greatest. The value of poultry production for the United States this season was but a shade under that of wheat or cotton, amounting to over half a billion dollars. Since the perfection of the incubator, the importance of the industry has been greatly augmented. By the use of this splendid device it is now comparatively easy to bring in large quantities of chickens for the winter and early spring market when prices are very attractive. Hens can be urged but they can not be made to set if they do not want to; the incubator can be set at any time. All that is

overcome, and there will be little trouble in teaching the uses and management of the ordinary hatching machine.

### Not Difficult to Manage.

While there is nothing complex or difficult about the successful operation of an incubator, close attention and exactness are necessary; yet the results are more than worth the effort. The woman who fills her lamps regularly every morning, and the man who winds his watch or clock at the same hour every evening, need not fear the task of running an incubator; but unless one is willing to attend to the few wants of his machine at the right time, it will be unreasonable to look for a good hatching of chickens from the best incubator upon the market.

The writer has used incubators and has found great delight in hatching

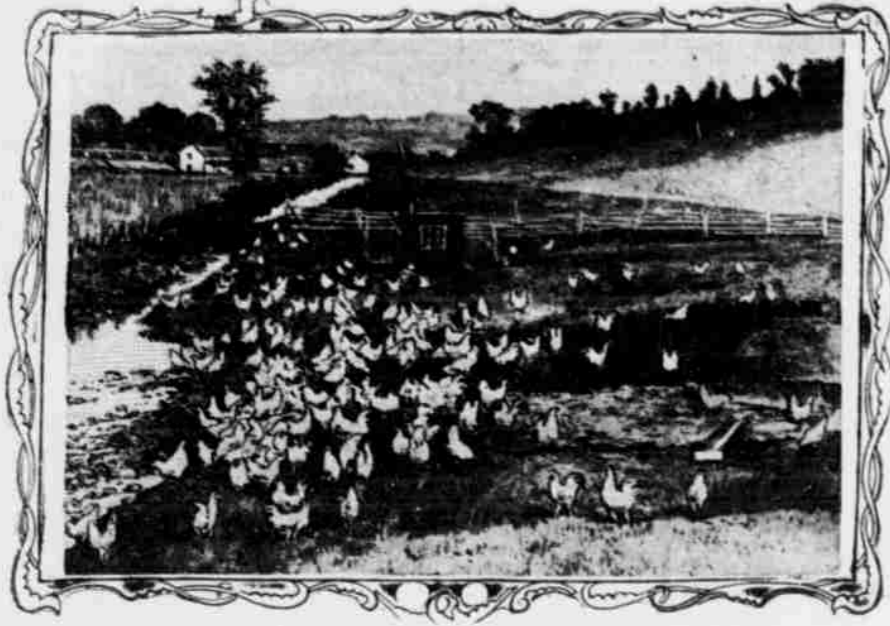
into a big laying, heavy weighted and highly profitable flock, that it seems strange that there should be a single flock of dung-hills throughout the country. It costs no more to feed and care for a broad breasted Plymouth Rock, or a Wyandotte, or a huge Light Brahma, or any of a dozen other splendid standard varieties than it does for the common scrub, and with the low price at which good eggs, or practically pure bred cockerels can be had, it is the easiest thing imaginable to have, after two or three years of systematic breeding, a flock of chickens producing three times the profit of the original flock.

### Standard Kinds of Chickens.

A fascinating little bulletin has been issued by the Department of Agriculture (farmers' bulletin No. 51) which is replete with illustrations of the principal standard varieties of chickens, the reading of which by any chicken grower, however small, should certainly stimulate a New Year resolution to make the flock a real money earner. It is a bulletin, while it will prove, probably, a mere stimulant for more extensive literature on the subject, can be obtained without cost from Senators and Members of Congress, or the Secretary of Agriculture, and the proof of its popularity is apparent in the seven or eight editions which it has been necessary to publish to supply the demand throughout the country.

### Caponizing Fowls.

One of the most attractive features of poultry raising is the production of capons. This is a story all by itself. It is an experiment which one can enter into and with a very slight expenditure for a set of instruments, can follow it to any degree desired. It requires some judgment and a little attention, but caponizing is not difficult. It is one of those things which, while it looks, in the beginning, to be a hard proposition, gradually comes to you all of itself, so that the first thing you know you become almost an expert, and the reward is very considerable. Capons always sell readily and at a good advance in price. The birds become very docile and easily handled and are always money makers. The readiness with which the new capon recovers from the wound is a revelation.



FLOCK OF WHITE LEGHORN COCKERELS.

necessary is a proper regard to the temperature, and to the brooding of the young chicks during the tender period of their existence. The incubator has interested thousands of women and children in the work of chicken raising, and it is not to be said that the returns are less profitable than plowing or other heavy manual labor.

### Cheap Machines the Most Expensive.

There are many excellent incubators upon the market, but there are also many cheap, imperfect machines, the purchasers of which, failing to secure good results, become disgusted and inform their neighbors that artificial incubation is a failure and a fake. On the other hand, the purchaser of a good

large flocks of fine chickens from them, but it was necessary to do a little experimenting first to get the machine in good working order, to keep the lamp trimmed so that it burned a clear, white flame and to do a dozen other little things, which in a very short time made the owner as familiar with the incubator as with any other simple piece of farm machinery.

The period of incubation is always one of expectancy and when the chicks begin to come forth from the shell there is either keen joy or a decided dampening of ardor, according as to the results of the hatch. But don't become discouraged if the first hatch brings you only 50 per cent. of chickens. Go right ahead, determined to omit the mistakes of the first trial and aim for 85 or 90 per cent. of the next hatching, which you should get if you have a good incubator and handle it properly. After a little practice you come to know your machine, how it is acting and what it will do, as well as you know your driving horse, in fact you can gauge it even more closely, for it is a machine and you can control it to a nicety.

There are hot air machines and hot water machines, there are small machines and big machines—machines to meet every need and requirement; the only thing is to get a good machine.

### An Attractive Side Line.

The poultry business on the farm has always been considered largely within the province of the women folks, and the enlargement of the industry by utilizing incubators has not changed the situation, except that many others than farmers' wives are now raising chickens from incubators.

"Modern chicken raising, as it has been adopted by thousands of people owning small rural homes," said an incubator agent to me recently, "accounts for the sale of an enormous number of our incubators and brooders. In fact, it is among this class largely that we do business, and they are making the money out of it. A vast field is still open among the more conservative residents of the interior farm sections, who still stick to old methods, unaware of the comparative simplicity of a good incubator and of the great profit possible through its use."

### Breeding Up the Flock.

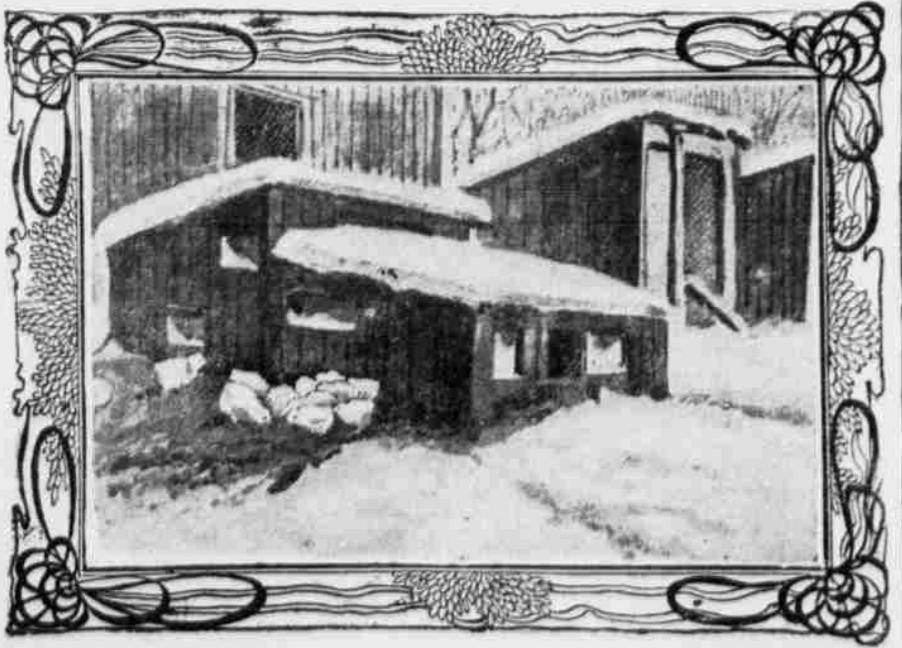
Even through the medium of the barnyard flock, regarded by many farmers as a very insignificant part of



A PLYMOUTH ROCK PRIZE-WINNER.

machine—one which will do its work well—is usually so successful that others in the neighborhood quickly follow his example. Nevertheless, there is no danger of the poultry business being overdone. It is one of the most staple and profitable lines of business in the world to-day, for its products are always in increasing demand in every town and city in the world, and throughout the entire year.

But before going into the incubator business it is necessary to have some good egg producing machinery, that is, good, laying hens and comfortable and cheerful quarters, along with a good system of feeding, to induce them to lay. The fertility of eggs is also affected by the conditions of the hens. The agricultural papers and poultry journals are replete with information upon the management of incubators, and many books have been published



AN OUTSIDE BROODER IN WINTER.

on the subject; but a great many farmers and farmers' wives do not see these journals or books. However, let it be known that the operation of an incubator is easy and simple, and once that almost superstitious dread that some people have of taking up something new and apparently intricate is

their livestock, a very great addition to the yearly income is realized. The flock supplies eggs and meat for the home throughout the year, and even if no additional income results, the barnyard flock has served a great purpose. However, it is such an easy matter to breed up a nondescript lot of chickens

living germs are sold on the street for food at about one-sixth of a cent each.

After being tested they are kept in the jars for seven days, being changed as before. This makes a total of eleven days in the jars. Then they are taken in a bamboo basket and rolled out on a mat on the platform above the jars. Here they remain until hatched. The only heat they receive is from the room, except during cold weather they are covered with a heavy quilt. After they are hatched the chicks are put in shallow baskets for a short time to gain strength and then they are ready for sale. The hatch by this remarkable method is from 60 to 70 per cent.



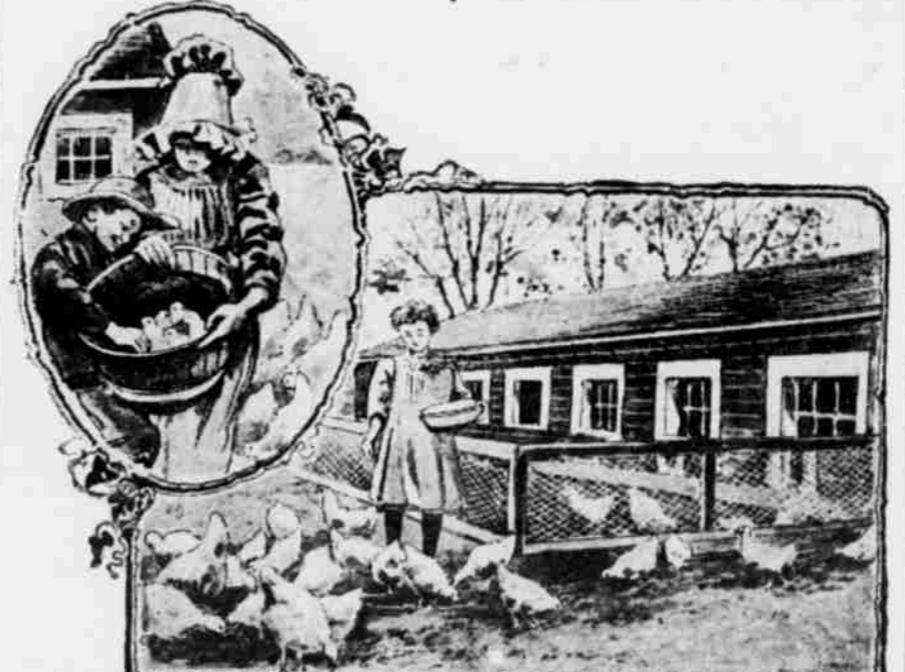
THE AMERICAN INCUBATOR IN TURKEY.

After testing, it is stated that 90 per cent. of those remaining will hatch. This style of incubator probably would not suit American requirements, but the idea of utilizing the heat of the room during the later stages of incubation is very valuable, as it economizes both heat and space.

### POULTRY FEEDING.

An Important Phase of the Chicken Growing Industry.

Poultry feeding is sometimes a most serious problem to those who desire to make this line a specialty. Experience has shown that there are certain special lines of agricultural operations with which poultry raising may advantageously be connected. In dairying there is usually a large quantity of skim milk or butter-milk which may be utilized to furnish a considerable part of the poultry ration. Upon the fruit farm fowls are also of advantage. They keep down insect pests and they may have a free range a greater part of the season without the possibility of doing any damage. Plum growers have found poultry especially useful in obliterating the curculion, and even the apple crop has been considerably benefited. If it is found that



FAMILIAR POULTRY SCENES

the fowls injure small fruits it is best that they be confined during the limited season when the fruit is ripening. Waste fruits, either in winter or summer, are a welcome and valuable addition to the poultry ration. The market garden also furnishes a large amount of waste products which may be utilized for poultry feed. There is the waste lettuce, the small heads of cabbage, the unsold beets, carrots and potatoes, the green corn which cannot be marketed or any

### ORIENTAL INCUBATORS.

Peculiar Facility of Chinese for Artificial Hatching.

If we are to look at the beginning of any particular industry, we are usually told that we might find that this particular work was first carried on in China. This applies as well to the artificial hatching of eggs. Throughout China the hatching of eggs by heat is a very large and important industry and has been practiced since very ancient times. The Oriental who desires to hatch eggs by artificial heat first constructs a building of sun-dried brick, plastered on the outside with mud. Completely fill it on one side and the other also, except for door space and sufficient room for a man to test the eggs, are round, barrel-like mud brick walls with earthen jars set into them. This jar is very deep, and comes within six or eight inches of the ground. The conical bottom is filled with ashes to the depth of eight or nine inches, to keep the temperature more uniform and to avoid sudden changes of temperature when doors are opened and there is a strong wind. On the top of the ashes is thrown a bit of old mat or similar material to keep the baskets of eggs clean and to prevent raising a dust when they are taken out. For holding the eggs a basket is used that leaves a space of about an inch between it and the inner wall of the jar. Round and full, these baskets each hold from 1200 to 1350 eggs.

After the eggs are put into the basket a slow smoldering fire, made with very fine charcoal, is started. After a day the eggs are taken out, a handful at a time, and put into a similar basket. This is done from two to four times each day according to the temperature. The Chinese use no thermometer to test the degree of heat attained in the incubator, the eggs being simply touched to the eyeball. After being in the incubator for four days the eggs are tested to see if they contain a living germ, by holding them up to the light and looking through them. Eggs containing no

purpose, the waste of the small fruits, etc. If properly cared for the hens will bring a steady and reliable income during the winter months. Dried clover, roots, tubers, etc., should be saved for them during the winter. These should be steamed and fed with the mash or cabbage, and beets may be fed raw. A catch crop of buckwheat or oats and peas will furnish much food at little expense. Bran, meal, meal, wheat screenings and oats prepared for poultry will bring good returns in eggs and will also add materially to the fertilizer supply.



BROOD OF INCUBATOR OSTRICHES.

Had Learned the Business. An honest and, singular as it may seem, a stupid Irishman, who had worked for a coal dealer half a year, and shown no capacity to learn his duties, was finally discharged. "Go to the office and get your money. I've been patient with you, but you are too thickheaded to learn anything," said the proprietor. "All right, sir," answered Barney; "mebbe Oim t'ick-headed, as yez say, but Oive learned wan ting, anaway." "If you have, and learned it well, I'll not discharge you," said the proprietor, bantering; "now, what have you learned?" "Oive learned, sor, that sixteen hundred makes a ton in this place," replied Barney, and he went back to work.

### Hours for Sleep.

"Nature requires five, Custom gives seven; Laziness takes nine, And wickedness eleven."

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