

## PHEASANTS AND THEIR MALADIES.

By LA BARONNE H. DE BOERIO.



FEW months ago I wrote to "Our Girls" about pheasants, and boasted that during seven years I had not lost one from disease. Now I write to "Our Girls" to make my wail, beg of them to sympathise with me, and forget my boast, for out of twenty-five young pheasants only two remain, and one of these two has a broken leg. Every possible *malheur* that could happen has happened, as if to punish me for boasting. Certain it is that at the present moment there is not the very faintest sign of boasting left in me. I was most wofully discouraged for a time, and felt very much inclined to give up pheasant rearing altogether. However, after a few weeks' reflection I have become philosophical. Some years are bad for pheasants and chickens, just as they are for potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, etc. I am sure if I were a tomato or carrot grower in Brittany this year I should have some reason to bemoan, and as for cider-apples, why there aren't any worth mentioning. The few small, wrinkled, ill-shapen things calling themselves apples that do hang upon the trees are rather an insult to the grower than otherwise. However, cider-apples are not pheasants, are they? so *revenons à nos-faisans*. Well, having consoled myself by the reflection that I am not so badly off as some people, I have been quietly making plans for my next year's breeding—very grand plans, supposed to prevent the possibility of this year's illnesses being repeated.

The first annoying thing that happened was the utter refusal of all my Bantams and Silkies to sit. I resorted to other people's, but neither would they sit, so, quite in a temper, I put eleven Swinhoé eggs under an ordinary farm hen. In due time six little Swinhoés came out of the shell—dear little golden brown balls, as big and strong as chickens. The mother was very gentle with them, and they got on capitally. But one day I and my husband had the misfortune to absent ourselves. When I arrived home that night I was drawn mysteriously into the kitchen, and there told in a whisper that *cette vilaine petite* Gypsie had got out and killed two of the little Swinhoés right before the eyes of Marie, the cook. Here I perceived that Marie's eyes were very pink, and she declared to me that it had given her such a shock, and made her feel so shivery, she had been obliged to wear her jacket all day. This was very kind and feeling of her, but it did not restore my Swinhoés to life, and at the time rather aggravated than touched me.

Who is Gypsie? I hear you asking. Well, Gypsie is a very pretty and fascinating fox-terrier, who labours under the very erroneous idea that the world was made for her in particular, and that I have no business to notice any animal whatever but herself. She was at one time a very great pet, and accompanied me everywhere. If by chance I left her at home when I went out, she would go and lie on my couch until I came back, as though she knew that, sooner or later, I must return there. This was a habit I did not at all approve of, but I never managed to break her of it. You will understand from this that Gypsie and I were very devoted indeed, and I have no doubt we should have remained so unto this day, had she not taken it into her

naughty little head to burrow holes under the pheasant *volière* in a frantic endeavour to get in. I spoke to her seriously, and my husband gave her a whipping each time. She cried and sighed a great deal, and looked very melancholy, but I am afraid they were only crocodile tears, for within a few days Madame Gypsie distinguished herself by killing and eating a splendid golden game cock, which had been put in an outhouse on its arrival, as the poultry house was not finished. How she got in is a mystery; suffice it to say that there was little left of the poor cock next morning but a few feathers, which Madame Gypsie's cunning little head was tied up in as a punishment. For two days she was given no food, but many whippings for nourishment, and time for sweet reflection, her nose fastened to the spot where the poor cock had met his death; then she was put with the shooting dogs in a big enclosure, where she has remained ever since, except when she has managed to escape to commit still more crimes.

Poor little Gyp! I miss her very much, and deeply regret the error of her ways, for I am punished for them as well as she. In my own mind I am firmly convinced that jealousy prompts her to do these awful deeds, for she is eight years old, and has been brought up from puppydom with fowls and pheasants. I had never made pets of them till this year, or attended to them myself, so I suppose she tolerated them before as not interfering with her prerogatives.

Well, this was my first misfortune with the young pheasants, and I may as well add, while I am speaking of this particular *covvée*, that before two months were over Gypsie very kindly introduced herself to two more of them.

My next lot, four Swinhoés and nine *faisans des bois à collier*, were hatched on June 17th. All four Swinhoés were good, but only five *des bois*, two of which the mother kindly crushed at once with her big feet. The Swinhoés I took away and kept in a basket as soon as they were dry, as they hatched two days before the others, and I was afraid the hen would desert the eggs if I left them. As a rule, I do not put the mother and young ones in a coop until the little things come out from under the hens and look about of their own accord. Picture my dismay, then, when, on the morning of the third day of their little lives, I enter the sitting-house and find all three lying on the ground, uninjured, but dying from cold, and the stupid old hen a little way off calling them most energetically to eat a grain of buckwheat. I picked them up in frantic haste, rushed into the kitchen, wrapped them up in cotton wool, and popped them into the oven. In half an hour, to my great joy, the bundle of wool began to move, a faint little noise cheered my heart, and in another half-hour two dear little grey-and-brown striped bodies wriggled out, and four bright little eyes peered up at me. The third was quite dead. Of all the different sorts of young pheasants I have seen, the *faisans des bois* are the sweetest to my mind, though perhaps not the prettiest. They are such tiny scraps of things, and have the most fascinating way of putting up their heads and looking right up at you with such bright, intelligent eyes. I assure you, I feel quite silly over them, they are so sweet.

For more than a week everything went on very well. The six little pheasants learnt to look upon me as their mother. They couldn't bear me out of their sight, and set up such a chorus of "peep, peeps,"

when they missed me, that I really did not dare to move without them. My life was almost a burden to me, for wherever I went I had to carry the basket of pheasants with me. Every morning at five o'clock I got up and fed them, and always found them very well indeed and as warm as toast. Being six, they kept each other warm; besides which, I put a piece of black fur in the corner of the basket, into which they all cuddled their little heads, and then I again covered them up with wadding, letting the air in by a little paper chimney. However, one sad morning, when I opened the basket as usual, no little heads raised themselves to greet me, no little bright eyes met my view. They were all lying limply in the bottom of the basket, seemingly almost dead. I took them out and warmed them well by the fire, which I had lit immediately. They revived a little. I offered them food and water; they refused the former, but drank greedily, after which they appeared very much better, and in an hour three Swinhoés were running and jumping about as gay as kittens; the fourth remained very ill and died in a few hours. The two *faisans des bois* recovered in the course of the day, and by the evening were all right. The next morning, however, I found one dead in the basket. Quite discouraged, I gave all four to the hen, who, after pushing them about with her beak, took to them very kindly. The little *des bois* pheasant died in a few days, of what I do not know. I have a vague idea that the cook took away the paper chimney, and covered them up too much, in which case the poor little things were of course almost stifled. The third Swinhoé was killed a few days after by a hen who had chickens close by, and into whose coop it ran by mistake. There therefore remained to me two Swinhoés out of the whole sitting. These two got on capitally, when they suddenly died last week, at the age of two months and a half, of *diphtherie*—diphtheria, I suppose. They appeared quite well, and ate heartily until twenty-four hours before their deaths, when they suddenly moped, refused food, and of course died, as they would not "eat to live."

I sent one body to the veterinary of the *Journal d'Acclimatation*, Paris, for autopsy. In due time I was informed, "votre faisandean est atteint de diphtherie. La maladie est contagieuse." This was scarcely encouraging, as I have now fifteen adult pheasants and fifty or sixty fowls of different and valuable sorts. The veterinary then told me to disinfect with carbolic acid, change the drinking water often, boiling it and adding two grains of "acid sulfurique" to every quart, and to separate carefully from the healthy ones those I knew, or suspected, of having the illness. This I have done, but notwithstanding my care several chickens caught it, and died almost immediately.

My next sitting of eight *faisans des bois à collier* and four Swinhoés were a success until they reached the age of one month. Then an epidemic of cholera arose amongst the chickens. In one week I lost seven silver Japanese phoenix, a most elegant gamey species of fowl, introduced into Europe by a French gentleman in 1872, six Silkies, and eight Houdans. My pheasants next took it. I spent my days in nursing them, giving them bread sopped in red wine or in boiled milk with a little salt, raw meat chopped very fine, mixed with the green of onion, and hard-boiled egg. I saved a great many of my chickens, but only three Swinhoés (which, by the bye, became the prey of Gypsie shortly after), and



one little *faisan des bois* which I named Yvonne, and of which I made a great pet. For a short time everything went on well. Lulled by a false security, I bought fifteen eggs of the golden pheasant and seven *Venerés* for fifteen francs, and put them under a hen. My own golden pheasants, being 1888 birds, could not, of course, reproduce before 1889. My ill-luck, however, still pursued me. Yvonne died of cholera, notwithstanding my precautions. All the *Venerés* eggs proved added, and only four out of the fifteen golden pheasants' eggs were good. Three of these the mother in her excitement crushed. I took away the fourth and brought it up in my pocket—this time with success. Fi-fi, as I named it, had cholera, but I managed to cure it, and Fi-fi now is my sole joy in the way of young pheasants. Well, she is most devoted; follows me and my husband all over the garden, and if she loses sight of us and sees no human creature about, she lifts up her head and cries in the most pitiful manner. If a succession of agonised "pew-pews" does not produce any effect, she flies off to the kitchen, where she knows she is sure to find someone. Her basket is in a corner of the kitchen, and stands in a large tin tray, where her food and water are put. Fi-fi is living, that is something to be glad of; but Fi-fi is not whole—she has a broken leg, and for three weeks has been obliged to sit quietly in her basket with her poor little leg set in splints. The accident all came of her love of humanity. Marie, the cook, had gone round to a farm close by for a few minutes, the other servants were out or upstairs, I was away for the day, Fi-fi was alone. This did not please her majesty. Receiving no answer to her "pew-pews," she started forth on a voyage of discovery. A quarter of an hour after, when Marie came back, she found the poor little thing shut in a door by one leg. It had evidently banged as she was passing through. Needless to say, the leg was broken horribly. I sent her to the veterinary to have it set.

"I am afraid, madame, it will be almost impossible," he said; "the leg is very much splintered, and birds flutter so, it is very hard work to set the simplest break."

"Fi-fi won't move," I said; "only talk to her while you are doing it."

He smiled, and looked incredulous; but on

trial he found I was right. Fi-fi never moved a feather, but only blinked her eyes a great deal and was very silent. As a rule, she makes a funny little happy noise when spoken to, putting her head on one side and looking up curiously at you; but for three days after her accident she was very quiet and sad, never made a sound, not even when left alone. This week the setting will be undone, when I hope she will be able to run about as well as ever.

I have told you the greatest of the *malheurs* which have befallen my *élevage* this year, and I think that if you are not bursting with sympathy, you must really be very hard-hearted. However, whatever befalls us, it is possible, as all "Our Girls" know, to learn something good and useful thereby, if we look at it in the proper light, and choose to learn by our own experience. I say "own" advisedly, for, as we all know, young things generally refuse to listen to or take any experience offered them by their elders. They always know best themselves, and call the profferer of advice an "old fogey," or *demodé*. As a sister of mine told me the other day when I ventured to expostulate about something, and remarked that I should never have dreamt of doing such a thing at her age, "Oh, then, of course not," said she, almost contemptuously. "That was in ancient days."

She is ten years younger than I am.

"Our Girls" are probably thinking I am wandering very far afield. Well, so I am; but as I must not take up much of Mr. Editor's space, I will retrace my steps to the pheasants at once, and inform "Our Girls" what this year's experience of pheasant breeding has taught me.

In seven years I never lost one, young or adult, by illness. This year I lost all my young through disease, although I treated them exactly the same. Why was it? I will let you into the secret, and I think I have really found out the real reason. I brought up chickens and pheasants all together this year, whilst the previous years I had pheasants only. My space is limited at night, and they were certainly rather squeezed for room; though I managed to get them all in comfortably enough. Still it stands to reason that seventy chickens, with their mothers, some twenty pheasants, also with hens, and nine or ten sitting hens in baskets, round the outhouse,

must, sooner or later, impregnate the earth to a great and unhealthy degree with their droppings, thus sowing the germ of disease which afterwards carried them all off. This I am nearly certain was the cause of my failure this year. Next year I shall have nice comfortable coops made for the young pheasants, with a slide in front to let down at night and ventilation in the top of the coop, leave them out thus all night, and move the coop on to fresh ground every day. In this way I do not see how disease can arise, unless from neglect of the hen in keeping them warm, which is, of course, a risk one always runs. Out of fifteen hens this year I had one who was a bad mother in this way. She would let her little ones stand round her, "peeping" for hours to be taken into the warm, appearing not to notice them at all. Naturally in the end they died from cholera, brought on by cold and neglect. Then I shall keep my sitting hens and hens with chickens apart; and as the chickens are out all day except in rainy weather, I think this arrangement should answer. If it doesn't, I shall give up keeping fowls and stick to the pheasants.

I do not think pheasants are very liable to any other disease. They get the pip occasionally: this, every one who keeps fowls can discern at once, and cure. It is very seldom they get apoplexy caused by too rich feeding; this is easily avoided, as pheasants are very small eaters, and do not require fattening food. Mine are in very good condition, and they seldom have anything but buckwheat, and of that so small a quantity I often wonder how they live. I am sure any two hens eat as much if not more than any fourteen adult pheasants. Now I think I have told "Our Girls" the chief maladies to fear in rearing pheasants. I do not pretend to know everything about them; *au contraire*, I daresay I have yet much to learn, but I do not remember reading or hearing of any other disease at the present moment, and this is, at any rate, my own experience.

Now I think I have quite exhausted the subject of pheasants in captivity, unless it be the description of the plumage of the different sorts. This I hardly think necessary, but some future day, if Mr. Editor will permit, I may perhaps have a word or two to say about it.



## THE PRINCESS LOUISE HOME.

To the Editor of "THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER."

DEAR SIR,—May I ask your permission to thank, briefly though earnestly, the many readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER who have so generously aided this Institution? The committee of management, feeling naturally desirous to mark in some permanent way their very high appreciation of the sacrifices made by the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, have determined to devote a portion of the Home at Wanstead to the purposes of a Home of Rest for Working Girls—a feature in the work of this Institution long contemplated by the founder of this charity, but never hitherto accomplished. There are thousands of young working girls whose health fails them by reason of long hours, close confinement, sedentary

occupations, or other causes incidental to their avocations, who, without opportunity of rest, change of air, and outdoor exercise, must permanently fall out of employment. To meet such cases as these is the object of the Home of Rest.

It was not without an earnest appeal for Divine direction the Committee ultimately resolved upon instituting this Home; and whilst I am directed to convey to you, to Miss Anne Beale, and to the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER the warmest thanks of the Committee, I am desired also to express their hope that the course they have adopted may commend itself to the sympathies of the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, and that God's own blessing may give life to their work.

The beneficent generosity of the readers of

THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER in £ s. d. form is displayed in the significant figures £638 10s. 3d. (including the two munificent gifts of C. R. S.); but it must not be forgotten that this very handsome sum was supplemented by gifts in kind contributed from all parts of the world in aid of the Knightsbridge Bazaar, and that these must bring the total value of their contributions to little short of a thousand pounds sterling.

May they be moved by God's love and guided by His wisdom in all they do, is the very earnest prayer of

Yours (and theirs) ever gratefully,

ALFRED M. GILLHAM.

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