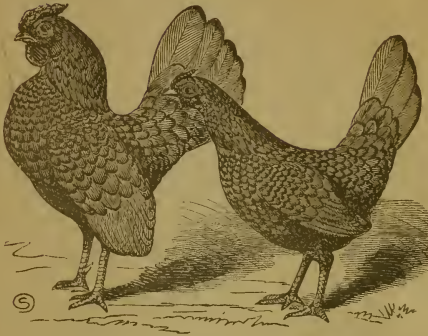


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THE
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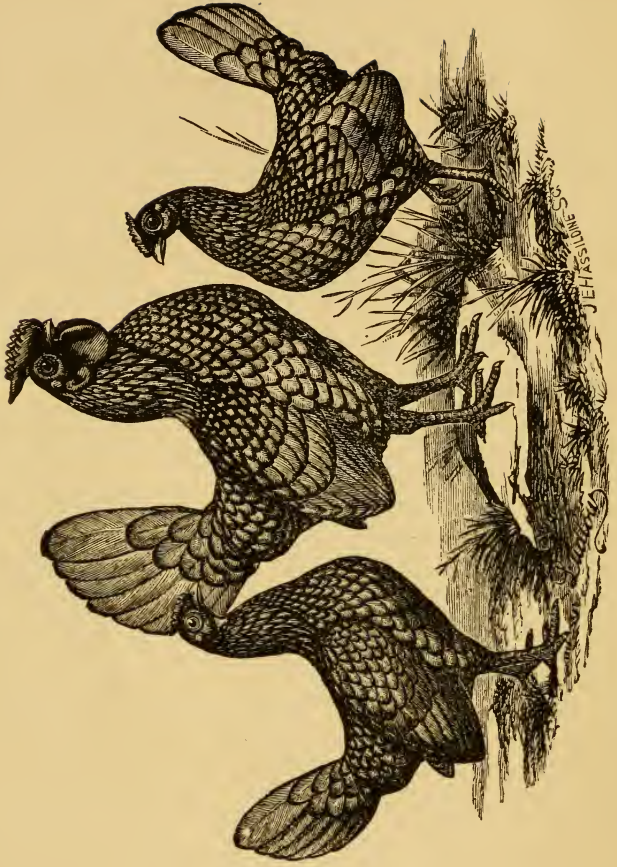


A BRIEF TREATISE
UPON THE
SEVERAL VARIETIES.

BY H. H. STODDARD,

EDITOR OF "THE POULTRY WORLD," "THE AMERICAN POULTRY YARD," AND "THE
CO-OPERATIVE POULTRY POST." AUTHOR OF "AN EGG FARM," "POULTRY DISEASES,"
"POULTRY ARCHITECTURE," "LIGHT BRAHMAS," "WHITE LEGHORNS,"
"BROWN LEGHORNS," "PLYMOUTH ROCKS," "WYANDOTTES,"
"THE BOOK OF THE GAMES," "DOMESTIC WATER FOWL,"
"INCUBATION; NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL," "HOW TO FEED FOWLS," "HOW TO WIN
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PUBLISHER OF "HOW TO RAISE POULTRY ON A LARGE SCALE,"
"A POULTRY COMPENDIUM," ETC.

HARTFORD, CONN.
1886.



REVUE SCIENTIFIQUE
DE JEAN-BAPTISTE
LAFONT

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A BRIEF TREATISE

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Mating, Rearing and Management

OF THE

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REMARKS ON THE

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THE BOOK OF THE BANTAMS.

INTRODUCTORY.

“ The god of love 's a little wight,
And beautiful as thought,
And thou art little, nice and light,
And everything—in short.”

DEAN SWIFT, in that remarkable satire, Gulliver's Travels, tells of a country where the inhabitants were but midgets of men, among whom an ordinary man appeared as a veritable Goliath. We have looked for Liliput upon the map, but our geographies fail to locate it. Wherever it be, it may be considered the home of the Bantams, for such little people as the Liliputians would have required a fowl like the Bantams for their daily use. They are indeed the Liliputians of the galinaceous family.

English monarchs used to have about them, as a necessary part of their court, one or more dwarfs, selected on account of their diminutive size and comical airs. These dwarfs were the recipients of many favors from all classes of people, who were greatly interested in and entertained by them. This practice has died out, but the feeling which it voiced, a love for little beings, still

lives in the hearts of mankind. Diminutives are often used as terms of endearment, and not a few large, strapping, robust women rejoice in the appellation, "wifey," or little wife. This feeling is transferred to fowls, and in an inverse proportion to their size they seem to be endeared to their owners. Because of it, the Bantams are the chosen pets, not only of ladies and children, but of men.

They are especially suitable for pets. Their small size enables them to be kept anywhere. Not only the farmer, who looks over his boundless acres, the country gentleman who enjoys his green fields, the villager with his half acre, but the city resident, with his forty-foot front and narrow back yard, may keep Bantams. In densely populated districts the deep-voiced crow of a Brahma cock may become a nuisance. "Man shall arise at the voice of the bird," but he doesn't wish always to arise with the Brahma. Cocks have an inconvenient habit of crowing in the middle of the night, and there is something startling in the tremendous sound of a Brahma's voice as he wakes the midnight echoes with reverberant sound. But "the slender oaten pipe" of the Bantam may sound and the sleepers not be disturbed.

Again, the littleness of the Bantams enables them to be handled well nigh with the ease of a pigeon. This counts for much in the long run, in the pleasure to be derived from poultry keeping. One does not care to caress a twelve pound fowl, but a twelve ounce Bantam seems just made for this purpose. They are dainty and neat and light. They can rest on the outstretched hand without causing weariness, but it would require the mus-

cles of a trained athlete to hold out a Brahma in this position.

They are full of activity and pert and consequential airs. No fowls, in this respect, can compare with them. They remind one by their sense of importance of the story told respecting a farmer and a young dandy. A number of people had been ascertaining their weights upon a pair of Fairbanks' scales, when a young dandy, in "skin close pantaloons" and tight boots, pompously asked an old farmer, "Well, sir, what do you think *I* would weigh?"

"Waal," said the farmer, "if you were as big as you feel, I should think you mought weigh about a ton."

A Bantam is the incarnation of strut. He is proud, and he is as brave as he is proud. He is always ready to show off his fine points or to attack any larger fowl that may intrude upon his domains. Mr. Dixon humorously attributes the passionate temper of the Bantams to a too liberal diet of pepper-corns which they pick up on their native island of Java; their extreme arrogance to the feeding upon an herb called *bang*; and their propensity to make every rival turn tail to the etiquette of court which obliges all subjects to turn their back upon their sovereigns whenever they pass by.

Bantam breeding possesses the interest which is common to the breeding of any fowl; the study of biology, experiments in coloring, the growth from the egg to the matured specimen, help to account for this interest. In England, it is said, that the fascination of Bantam breeding has been so strong, especially among Game Bantams, as to materially reduce the number of Game breeders

and the interest in the larger fowl. Just as much skill is necessary to produce a prize winner in the Bantam as in other classes.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BANTAM.

Whether Bantams existed as original breeds or were bred from larger varieties is to a certain extent an open question. We know that some Bantams have been bred down from larger varieties, but we do not know and cannot know that this is true of all varieties. For the Bantam has a very respectable antiquity of its own. Aldrovandus who wrote three hundred years ago was acquainted with them. Buffon knew them and described one variety as having a strong resemblance to the *coq pattu* of France, "having feet covered with feathers on the outside, forming a sort of boot to the very claws." He distinguishes between two English varieties, "a large booted sort, and a dwarf of golden plumage and having a double comb."

Mr. Doyle, in "The Illustrated Book of Poultry," remarks that "The Bantam species has much resemblance to the wild cock (*Gallus Bankiva*), but the position of the tail differs, being horizontal and vaulted in the latter, while in the former it is more upright, and forms two vertical planes. The feathers which fall from the neck over the top of the back, are long in the cock, and with divided barbs; the end of each feather widening a little and becoming rounded."

"Temminck considers that the Turkish cock, which is allied to the Bantam, belongs likewise to the *Bankiva* species; and this naturalist considers the Bantam and the

Turkish together, by reason of the strong analogy between themselves, and with the Bankiva. They resemble each other in smallness of size, in the form of the tail, and may, according to our present authority, be considered, perhaps, as the result of a breed, less crossed, more directly proceeding from the Gallus Bankiva. The chief difference is found in the feathering (more or less long) with which the tarsus and toes are covered; and this difference is not a specific difference, but the effect of domestication. The races whose tarsi and toes are so heavily feathered, owe, according to our naturalist, this peculiarity to the superabundance of nutriment, which produces those feathers on their lower extremities, as, in the instance of the crested fowls, it produces tufts on the head."

Lewis Wright, on the other hand, asserts that "There is not the slightest reason for supposing that any of the diminutive fowls known as Bantams are descended from an original wild stock. They are in many cases the exact counterparts of ordinary domestic breeds, carefully dwarfed and perfected by the art of man; and even where this is not so, the process by which they were produced is occasionally on record."

The fact that they are "exact counterparts of ordinary domestic breeds" does not necessarily prove that they descended from these breeds, for one might with equal propriety affirm, because of this resemblance, that the larger breeds descended from them. The argument that Bantams constantly tend to increase in size would not necessarily prove that they were made small by art, for it might lend color to the view that the larger breeds

sprang from the Bantams. The larger breeds also tend to grow smaller, so that from these positions no conclusion can be safely arrived at.

The Sebright Bantam was made, it is true, but it was made from another Bantam; so, too, was the Polish Bantam made, and in like manner from another Bantam. Still there can be little doubt that large fowls may be Bantamized, and Bantams greatly increased in size. "Where doctors disagree," etc.,—the reader can make his own application. This, however, we may say, that the Game Bantam, "the little coxcombical, impudent, and vain puppy, who holds up his head, and struts in his gait, and carries his inwardly curved tail so high that we might expect to see him elevated from the ground, which he almost disdains to tread, and blown away by a blast of wind," is very likely descended from the *Gallus Bankiva*, a very similarly looking bird, with very fine drooping sickle-feathers, the change in these to an upright position being the chief alteration which has been wrought in his appearance. We need not stagger at this, for there is very good reason for believing that all our domestic fowls descended from this same wild species, and between the *Gallus Bankiva* and the Bantam there is less difference decidedly than exists between many of the varieties of fowls in our yards to-day, all of which are fertile when bred together and all of which understand the spoken language of the others.

THE BANTAMS OF "AULD LANG SYNE."

Among the varieties of Bantams once popular, but which have dropped by the wayside in the march of time, we may enumerate:

The Yellow or Nankin Bantam.

The Spangled Bantam.

The Partridge Bantam.

The Silk Bantam.

The Jumper or Creeper Bantam.

The Yellow or Nankin Bantam has a special interest, beyond what would attach to itself, for the reason that it was the foundation upon which were built the beautiful Sebrights. Its name does not indicate its origin, for it is not assumed that the Bantam came from Nankin. It is not improbable that the color may have given it its name. The cotton manufactured in China or India is of ginger-yellow color, and the name of the goods has been corrupted into *Nankeen*.

“The cock has variegated and very showy plumage, in which orange and scarlet, with deep chestnut on the back and wings, are apparent; the tail-feathers black; hackles slightly purplish; breast black, with some of the feathers edged with white; comb either double or single, —a few prefer the latter, but neither disqualifies these fowls for competition as show birds.

“The hen;—plumage principally ginger-yellow; hackles dark; comb small; legs of a lead-blue.”

Such is the description given thirty years ago to a fowl then well known.

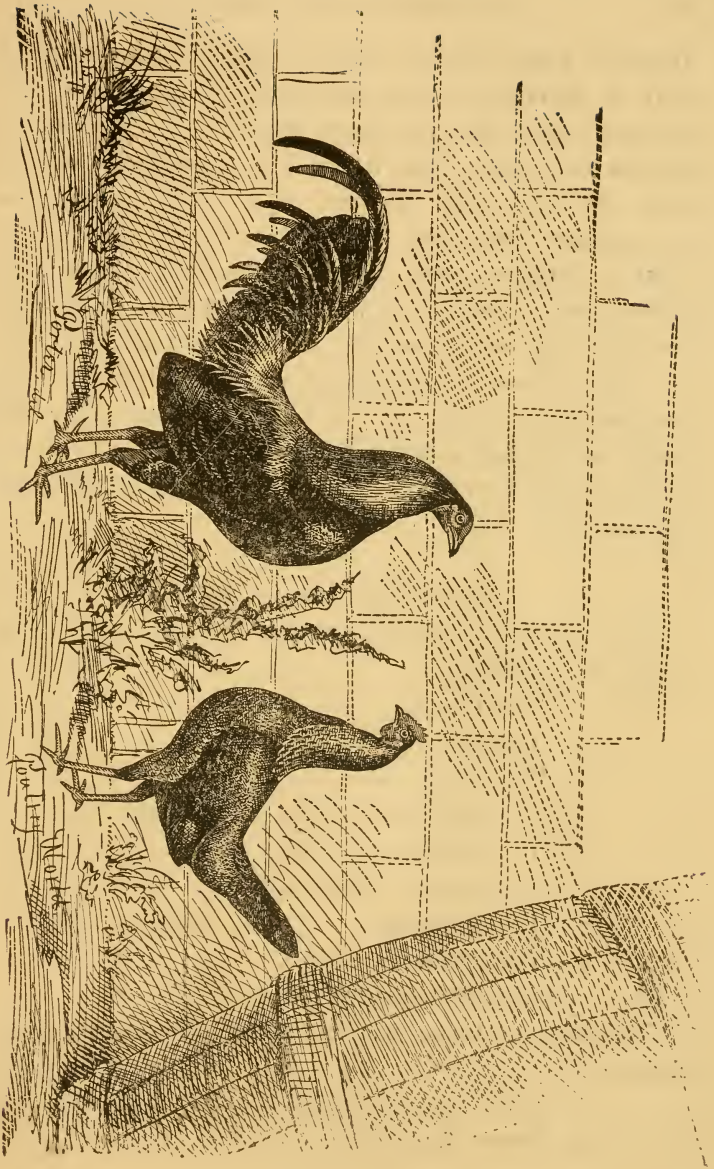
The Spangled Bantams, once popular, have entirely disappeared. It is probable that they originated in crosses with the Silver laced and other varieties, as lacings very easily become spangles, to the frequent sorrow of the breeder of laced fowls. The legs were booted, the breast spangled, and probably, so far as can be gleaned

from old poultry books, they somewhat resembled in plumage a Silver Spangled Hamburg. Were they not so old a breed one might infer that they were produced by a cross of the Silver Spangled Hamburg upon the Booted White Bantam. Such a cross might produce a variety which would make good whatever loss has been sustained by their disappearance.

The Partridge Bantam on the other hand bore a striking resemblance to the Golden Hamburgs. They had a rose comb, blue legs and Hamburg plumage. When young the chicks closely resembled young partridges, and it is said that the hens were employed for hatching and rearing partridges. From which fact they obtained their title we do not attempt to pronounce definitely, but probably from their resemblance to young partridges. Dixon says of them, "They are Hamburgs among the Bantams; just as many birds of one continent are found represented in another by corresponding though quite distinct species of the same genus."

The Silk Bantam was pure white in color with single comb and booted legs, and with a soft silky plumage, like the fowls known to our *Standard of Excellence* as Silkies. They were very beautiful and very rare. They were probably allied to the Silkies in their origin.

The Jumper or Creeper Bantam is described by Buffon as follows: "Their legs are so short that their wings trail on the ground. They are very like the dwarf fowl of Brittany, which perhaps is reared there on account of its fecundity. It has always a jumping gait; in general form these fowls are in body about the size of ordinary fowls, and are only dwarfish in the legs, which are very short."



BLACK-BREASTED RED GAME BANTAMS.

Whether Buffon means that the Bantam, or the dwarf fowl of Brittany, or both, had a body "about the size of ordinary fowls," does not clearly appear. If he means the Bantam had such a body it would be erroneous to include what all of the older readers will at once recognize as the Creeper fowls, once quite common in the poultry yards of farmers, among the list of Bantams. They were popular for a time, as it was supposed that their short duck-like legs would prevent them from scratching, but as, after a time, they demonstrated their ability in this direction and proved that a hen, no matter what the length of her leg, was "a scratching animal," their popularity declined in favor of a longer legged and more graceful fowl.

THE BANTAMS OF TO-DAY.

The *American Standard of Excellence* recognizes nine classes of Bantams :

1. The Game.
2. The Golden Sebright.
3. The Silver Sebright.
4. The Rose-comb Black or African.
5. The Rose-comb White.
6. The Booted White.
7. The Japanese.
8. The Pekin or Cochin.
9. The White-crested White Polish.

The class of Game Bantams is sub-divided into seven classes :

1. Black-breasted Red.
2. Brown Red.

3. Red Pile.
4. Silver Duckwing.
5. Yellow Duckwing.
6. Black.
7. White.

This gives us a total of fifteen varieties of recognized Bantams, to which we may add the Cuckoo, and a new-comer, the Rumpless Bantam, making a total of seventeen.

GAME BANTAMS.

The Black-breasted Red Game Bantam has the same characteristics as the larger fowl bearing the same name.

The cock has a light red hackle and saddle, a deeper red back, a glossy black breast, wings with a wide black bar across them, and a black tail.

The hen has a brownish yellow hackle, striped with black, back in color light brown penciled with black, breast of a light salmon hue, and a dark brown nearly black tail.

The standard weights for all Game Bantams are :

Cock, 22 oz.	Hen, 20 oz.
Cockerel, 20 oz.	Pullet, 18 oz.

The disqualifying weights are :

Cocks over 28 oz.	Hens over 24 oz.
Cockerels over 24 oz.	Pullets over 22 oz.

For breeding stock select birds as small as convenient, as there is a tendency in all varieties of Bantams to increase in size, and the margin is small between the standard and the disqualifying weights.

Matings of standard birds of each sex will produce a

fair percentage of standard chicks, but the following special matings can be recommended :

A cock with orange-red hackle and saddle feathers ; back and shoulder-coverts violet-red, with a tinge of orange ; breast black with a steel-blue shade ; tail glossy black with a purplish shade in the secondary sickles. This we may call Breeding Cock A.

A cock with a brick-red hackle and saddle ; back and shoulder-coverts red with slight violet tinge ; breast and tail black. There is less variety in the plumage of this bird than in that of the preceding. We may denominate him Breeding Cock B.

The breeding hen should be as follows :

Head and neck golden colored, striped distinctly with black ; body of a partridge color, this color extending even to the upper feathers of the tail ; breast salmon-red, from the throat down, shading slightly to an ashy hue on the thighs ; the flight feathers of the wings without penciling. We will call this Breeding Hen A.

Hen with yellow hackle striped with black ; back and saddle of a partridge color with a slight creamy tinge ; wings with a ruddy blush, but not too pronounced ; breast salmon-red, shading off to an ashy color about the thighs. It will be noticed that this hen is lighter throughout and has more yellow coloring in her plumage. We may name this Breeding Hen B.

Hen with a light golden hackle but slightly striped with black ; back and wings of a light partridge color, more yellow appearing throughout than in the previously described birds ; breast of a yellowish ashy color ; tail black. This we will call Breeding Hen C.

The mating of Breeding Cock A with Breeding Hen A will give beautiful pullets and some fine cockerels.

The mating of Breeding Cock A with Breeding Hen B will give splendid cockerels, but the pullets will be light.

The mating of Breeding Cock B with Breeding Hen A will produce fine pullets of a rich deep color.

The mating of Breeding Cock B with Breeding Hen C will give some fine cockerels.

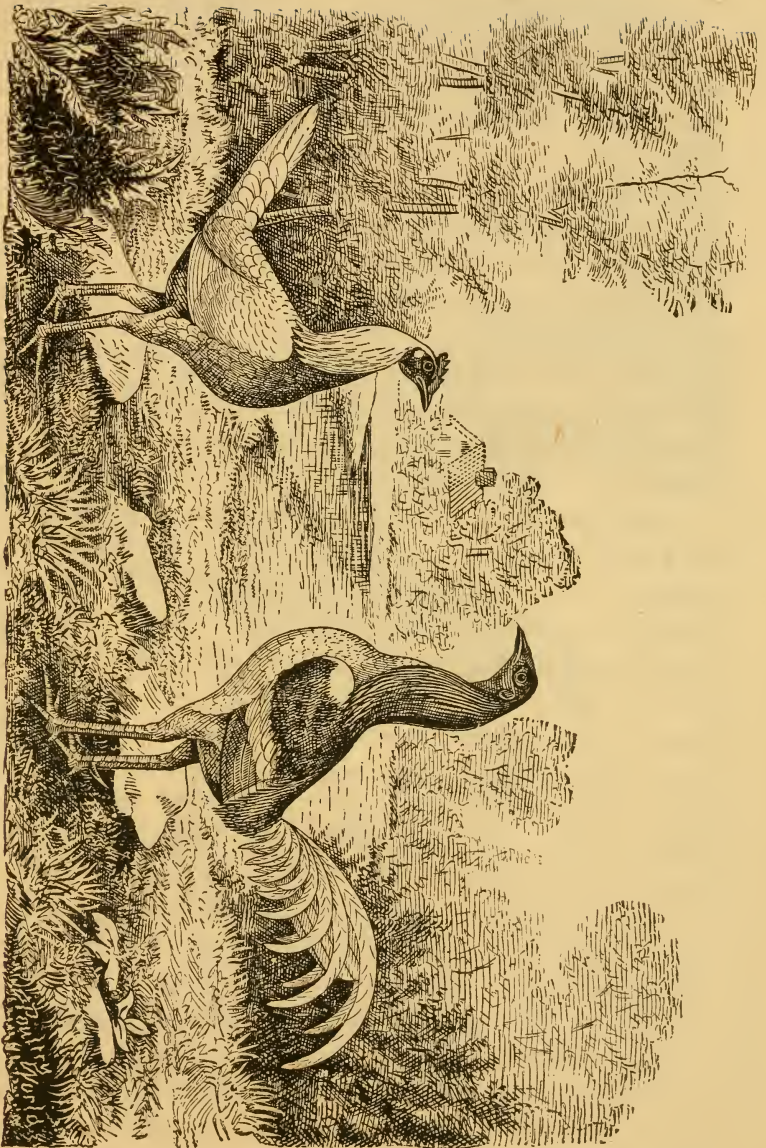
There is still another mating which is deemed very desirable for the production of beautiful cockerels, that is the mating of Breeding Cock B to a Weedon or Wheaten hen. This hen has a buff breast; back partridge color marked with a ruddy buff hue; hackle buff striped with black; and tail with a buff tinge to the black feathers. The name Weedon, it is said, was given because hens of this color were abundant in the neighborhood of Weedon; and Wheaten because of the fancied resemblance of the plumage to the outside envelope of red wheat.

In selecting breeding stock of all varieties of Game Bantams, there should be had a special reference to the peculiar shape and style of the Game fowl, for no matter how good the color the stock will be inferior and unsatisfactory unless the distinctive symmetry is obtained. The beak should be strong, especially at the base, and slightly curved; the head long, thin and tapering, and well set on at its junction with the neck; the eyes should be large and prominent, of a bright red color, and of a bold and fearless expression; the neck should be long and nicely arched, and the hackle short and close; the back ought to be rather short, quite flat, and wide at

the shoulders, narrowing to the tail; the breast should be broad and full; the body cylindrical, with no hollowing at the sides, firm and muscular to the touch, and tapering to the tail; the wings ought to be of medium length, slightly raised at the shoulders; the tail carried not very high, and of medium length; the shanks rather long, well rounded, and strong. The carriage of the bird should be bold and upright, impressing you with his height and yet not looking stilty. In a good Game one sees a rather slender, but a strong and powerful-looking bird, that seems ready to dare and to die if necessary. Every movement is indicative of courage and strength, "a foe-man worthy of your steel." This characteristic should appear in every well-bred Game Bantam, despite his diminutive size.

In studying the characteristic symmetry of the Game fowl and of the Game Bantam, as also the details of plumage and markings, great help may be obtained from the *Standard of Excellence*, issued by the American Poultry Association. We can give in the limits of this book only a general description of the several varieties, and must for details refer the reader to the *Standard*.

The Brown Red Game Bantam cock has a dark red head, with a purplish colored face; eyes of a dark brown or black color; hackle red, shading off to lemon, finely striped with black; dark crimson back; saddle like the hackle; breast black, the shafts and margins of the feathers being a ruddy brown, growing darker as it approaches the thighs; wing-bows dark crimson, wing-butts black or dusky brown, wing-coverts glossy black; tail black; shanks olive, dark willow, or bronzy black.



PILE GAME BANTAMS.

The hen has a dark brown head; neck of a bright lemon or golden hue, striped with black; dark brown back; breast black in color; wings very dark brown or black; and a black tail.

The Brown Red Game Bantam is difficult to breed. But few of the chicks are really what are desired. The difficulty of breeding to feather has rendered this beautiful variety less popular than their Black-breasted Red cousins.

Certain special matings are recommended by Game fanciers, as more likely to produce standard birds than mating together those fowls which are described by the *Standard*.

From the mating of a starling-breasted cock, *i. e.*, a cock with orange-red hackle with a darker shade in the center of each feather, dark crimson shoulders, breast dark with a bay stripe in the center of each feather, thighs streaked with bay, and a black tail, with a standard hen, some cockerels like their sire will be bred, some with solid black breasts and dark hackles, and some nearly black with a smutty dark red on shoulders and back. Some of the pullets will be like the dam, some nearly brown, and some nearly black with a coppery tinge upon the neck.

The mating of a cock with a pure orange hackle, maroon back, breast black with each feather slightly laced around the edges with light bay, with hens of brilliant black color and golden hackles striped with black, will produce some very handsome chicks.

A cock like the one last described, but more crimson on the shoulder, and less orange in the hackle, mated



YELLOW DUCKWING GAME BANTAMS.

J. E. HARVEY, NINE, 67
N. 3D ST., N. Y. WORLD

with a pure black bodied hen, will produce some fine starling-breasted cockerels, a few dark pullets, but the majority of the pullets will be of a light brown color, and prettily penciled.

The Brown Red Game Bantam shows darker blood than the Black-breasted Red in both the color of the face, the plumage of the hen, and the red that appears upon the cock. Perfect specimens are quite rare, owing to the difficulty of producing them, but when obtained are an ample reward for the labor and skill bestowed upon their production. The Brown Red is when at all approaching perfection a very beautiful bird, of varied plumage and rich hues. Their beauty gives them a fair degree of popularity despite the difficulty in breeding them to feather.

The Red Pile Game Bantam cock has a deep chestnut red head, hackle and saddle; a crimson back; a white breast slightly laced with chestnut; wings with a wide crimson bar; white tail; and shanks that are yellow, willow or white. The eyes are red.

The hen has a brownish-red head; a white hackle, laced with gold; white back; dark salmon breast; white wings, tinged with chestnut; and a white tail.

The Piles breed quite true to color, which added to their beauty, brings them not a few admirers. An occasional cross with the Black-breasted Red is resorted to to give hardness of feather. Fine Piles are also produced by mating a Weedon Black-breasted Red hen with a White or with a Pile cock.

The Silver Duckwing Game Bantam is an exquisite bird. There is a vividness in the contrasting colors,

and an iridescence to the wing-bars, which heighten the beauty of the cock, and a softness to the harmonious colors of the hen which pleases the eye and gratifies the taste.

The cock has a silvery white head, hackle, back and saddle; a solid black breast; silvery white wing-bows, black wing-butts, and steel blue wing-coverts forming a broad bar across the wing. The eyes are red and the shanks are willow, olive, bronze or blue.

The hen has a silver gray head; silver gray hackle striped with black; ashy gray back; light salmon breast; ashy gray wings; and dark gray, nearly black, tail.

A fair percentage of good birds, and especially pullets, may be obtained by mating together standard birds, but the best colored cockerels are produced by mating a Silver Duckwing hen to a bright Black-breasted Red cock. Good pullets may be obtained from breeding a Silver Duckwing cock to a standard Black-breasted Red hen.

The Yellow Duckwing Game Bantam cock closely resembles the Silver, except that the hackle is of a light yellow or straw color, the saddle the same, and the back of a bright copper or golden color. The wing-bars are either like those of the Silver or are a glossy black.

The hen is darker than her Silver sister. The silvery hue becomes an ashy gray, or slaty gray, and the light salmon of the breast becomes a dark salmon. She is still beautiful—the one perhaps a blonde, the other hardly dark enough to be designated as a brunette.

The best colored cockerels are produced, as in the

case of the Silvers, by a crossing in with the Black-breasted Red.

The Black and the White Game Bantams have the distinctive characteristics of the Game, but are, as their name implies, solid colored birds; the one a solid black, the other a pure white. In selecting breeding stock great care should be exercised to choose only those birds which have a rich plumage—in blacks full of iridescent hues, in whites having a shining whiteness, with no admixture of feathers of a different color. The problem of mating solid colored fowls is a comparatively easy one, and its solution may be given in a very few words. Mate together only standard birds, and the very best you have; and yet, easy as it is, many fail to produce those lustrous blacks or shining whites which win in the exhibition room, from a failure to select the deepest, purest, brightest, and most iridescent colored birds for their breeding stock. Of course in other matters, style, symmetry, and so forth, it is just as difficult to produce good blacks or whites as it is to produce good parti-colored specimens; and so there is room for the exercise of skill and judgment in the mating of solid colored fowls, and the problem ceases to be so simple and easy as it at first appeared to be. The plumage difficulties vanish, but plumage is but one of many points requiring careful consideration.

THE SEBRIGHT BANTAM.

For the production of the Sebright Bantam the world is indebted to the late Sir John Sebright, M. P. for Herts. It has been said that he obtained the foundation



GOLDEN SEBRICHT BANTAMS.

blood of this variety of Bantam from India, and it is also believed that he used the Yellow or Nankin Bantam for this purpose. The latter is the more probable theory and rests upon the better evidence. The Polish fowl was crossed with this Bantam, which gave to the offspring a plumage with a spangled character, but succeeding crosses resulted in the present laced feathering. By frequent inbreeding the size was reduced, and by rigid selection the crest was removed. Finally the hen-tail was engrafted upon the breed by the crossing in of a cock possessing that characteristic. It required years of patient skill to produce the Sebright Bantam, and a man of less fixity of purpose than Sir John Sebright would probably have retired, baffled and disgusted from the field. Says Mr. Baily, "None but those who understand the process can imagine the difficulties of producing the Sebright Bantams; they were the result of years, and can only now be kept up by frequent changes of blood; if this be neglected, and the same stock is bred year after year, the lacings first disappear, next the colors come in patches, at last you get single combs, sickle-feathers, and ugly yellow and black birds."

The carriage of the Sebright cock is thus described by Mr. Lewis Wright, an eminent authority upon poultry subjects: "Carriage of the cock, the most conceited it is possible to conceive of; head thrown back till it touches the nearly upright tail; wings drooping half way down the legs; motions restless and lively, always strutting about as if seeking for antagonists. The bird is, in fact, 'game to the backbone,' and will attack the largest fowl with the utmost impudence."



SILVER SEBRIGHT BANTAMS.

Mr. Martin Doyle, the author of "The Illustrated Book of Poultry," describes the carriage of the variety in these words: "No class of Bantams is more vain and impudent than this laced Bantam. Both sexes—but more especially the male—seem conscious of their really captivating appearance, and as if they prided themselves on weighing but fifteen or sixteen ounces, and would not eat anything that might be found to give grossness to their tiny and graceful forms, of which the breast protrudes in a truly impudent manner."

The ear-lobes, of both the Silver and Golden variety, are required to be white, a requirement next to impossible to be complied with without losing something of their exquisite lacings. Mr. Hewitt, an English gentleman who is entitled to speak with authority upon this subject, says: "In the Sebright laced Bantams, I have yet to see a specimen in which the ear-lobe is perfectly white; all that I have yet had were *blushed*, and many were perfectly red in the ear-lobe. I should prefer the white, but it is not to be generally, if ever, obtained. I have also invariably noticed that any unusual whiteness of the ear-lobe is accompanied by a sad falling-off in the lacing, and therefore, if attainable, only at so great a cost, it must not be insisted on. Whether the ear-lobe is white, or possesses the blue tinge, either form would place the bird above those of its competitors, who, equal in other points, manifested the decided red stain, which, it must be remembered, is widely removed from the 'blushed' appearance above alluded to."

The *Standard of Excellence* requires every feather to be laced with black around its edge. The shoulder and

tail-coverts are likely to be faulty in this respect. The primary quills of the wings are usually only tipped with black. The tail-feathers of the cock also are rarely laced, but if nicely tipped with black will pass muster even in pretty close competition.

The cock should be perfectly hen-feathered. Not only should the tail be free from curving sickle-feathers, but the feathering upon the neck and saddle should be like the hen.

The Golden Sebright has a plumage of a rich golden hue, each feather being laced with black. The Silver Sebright is of a silvery white similarly laced. The white is generally of a creamy color, and often approaches yellow, but the clearer the white, the more beautiful and valuable the specimen. In both varieties the comb is rose with a well-developed spike, and the shanks are blue. While the cock should be perfectly hen-feathered for exhibition purposes, such cocks are sometimes sterile, and a mild approach to sickle-feathering is looked upon as a sign of greater procreative powers. Such cocks are valuable for breeding purposes. We are aware that some perfect hen-tailed cocks are used for breeding, and that some of the eggs hatch, but in no variety of fowls is there a greater complaint because of infertile eggs. We are acquainted with one conscientious breeder who refused to sell any Sebright eggs for this very reason. The eggs would not hatch a fair percentage of chicks.

Mr. Hewitt, as quoted by Mr. Lewis Wright, remarks with respect to the breeding of Sebrights, "that although at three years old the birds become more or less grizzled with white, and therefore greatly deteriorated

for exhibition, the stock then produced from them is frequently far superior; and, strange as the fact may seem, that better marked birds are usually obtained by mating a heavily-laced cock with a hen scarcely sufficiently marked, than when both parents are perfect in their plumage."

In conclusion we may add that the Sebright Bantam enjoys a distinction afforded to no other variety, in having had societies formed for the purpose of exhibiting this single breed, its rare beauty having awakened the enthusiasm necessary to sustain such associations. This is a great honor for any fowl to have attained. In this it stands without a rival.

The standard weights for Sebright Bantams are:

Cock, 26 oz.	Hen, 24 oz.
Cockerel, 24 oz.	Pullet, 22 oz.

The disqualifying weights are:

Cocks over 28 oz.	Hens over 24 oz.
Cockerels over 24 oz.	Pullets over 22 oz.

From this it appears that there is a margin of only two ounces on cocks and none on cockerels, hens and pullets. The object is, of course, to keep down the size, the rule being that, other things being equal, the smaller the Bantam, the better the bird. The Sebrights tend to increase in size as much or more than any other variety, and it requires a constant watchfulness to keep them within the disqualifying weights. It is said that the Silver variety requires even more care to do this than the Golden.

THE ROSE-COMB BLACK OR AFRICAN BANTAM.

The standard and disqualifying weights for this variety are the same as for the Sebrights. They are a beautiful and justly popular variety. The cock has a plumage of glossy black full of iridescent hues of green or purple, the former being the preferable shade and the one demanded by our *Standard*. The comb is rose, with a well-developed spike inclining slightly upwards. The ear-lobes are white and, unlike the Sebrights, are easily obtained. The shanks are clean and of a black or dark leaden-blue color. The tail is well-developed and furnished with sickle-feathers.

The hen resembles her mate with the exception of having a less lustrous plumage, although the best specimens are not greatly inferior to the males even in this respect. "They are reported," says Mr. Doyle, "to be domestic and quiet, good layers, good sitters, but not very careful mothers; their eggs are long, oval, and tinged with buff; of these they will lay—as do most of the varieties—great numbers in the course of the year, a circumstance highly in favor of the breed generally, in confined situations, where larger fowls would suffer from want of space and free range. Their size is so diminutive that they have been compared, when first born, to the queen of the black bumble-bees, and as having legs apparently more designed for an insect than for a chicken."

They have an indomitable courage and do not hesitate to boldly attack larger birds. They seem never willing to give up, as they will call none master so long as life exists. They resemble the Game in this respect.




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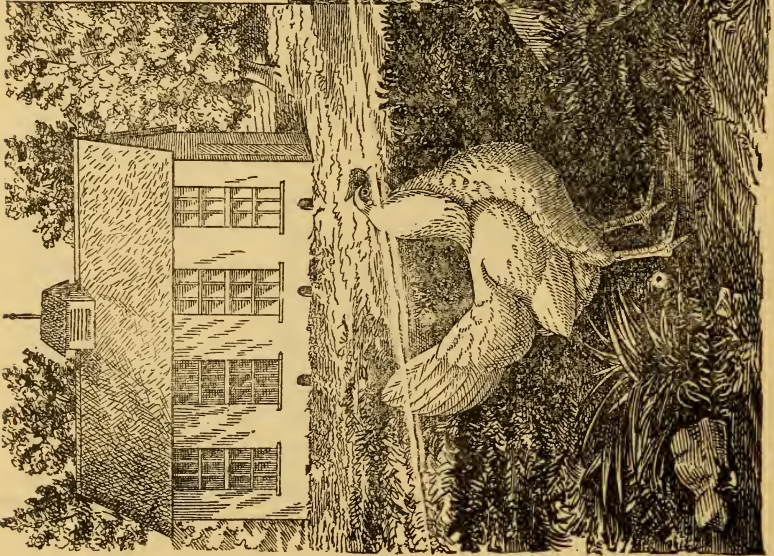
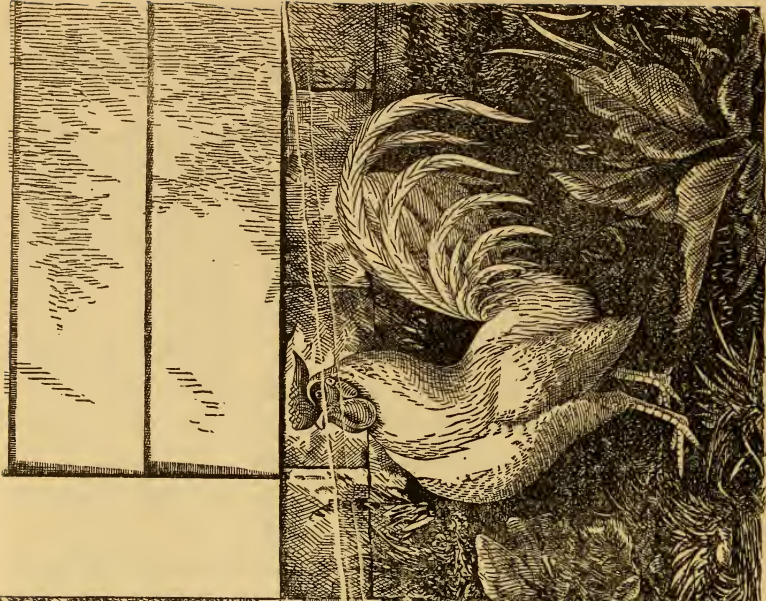
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Mr. Dixon relates the following anecdote concerning their pugnacious disposition.

“There were two cockerels in this brood; they were little things, beautifully shaped, but ridiculously diminutive. These two little imps spent the greater part of their time in fighting, which only made us laugh, judging serious injury impossible; but shortly observing one unusually triumphant, (for it had always been a sort of drawn game between them), and the other walking about in an odd and uncertain manner, though firm and fearless, I found that this latter had both its eyes closed, from wounds received the day before. I carried it to my dressing room, to relieve it by sponging, and set it on the stair-cloth while I went to fetch some warm water. Still blind, it began crowing vivaciously; in a few minutes its eyes were unsealed and it was returned to the yard; but battle after battle was immediately fought, and we were obliged to eat one of the combatants to prevent the mutilation of both.”

Occasional sports with feathered legs have been thrown by this variety, from which a booted variety might be bred, and might prove a success with the public, although not a few would probably prefer the clean-legged Bantam.

The Rose-comb White Bantam resembles in style the Rose-comb Black, but is clad in a plumage of spotless white, has red ear-lobes and white or yellow shanks. There is a tendency in this variety, especially if bred with yellow legs, as in nearly every other variety of white fowls, to show a yellow tinge upon the hackle and saddle of the cocks. The yellow pigment which gives



color to the beak and legs, usually makes itself apparent also in the skin and plumage. For this reason, we should advocate for those who wish pure white cocks, there being no economical considerations entering into the problem as is the case in the larger varieties, to breed from birds possessing white beaks and legs. Such birds will show a larger percentage of chicks free from the objectionable yellow tinge. Our markets require a yellow-skinned bird, and although Bantams may be very delicious morsels and well fitted to titillate the palate of an epicure, our markets don't call loudly for Bantam poultry. Bantam breeders have listened attentively, but so far as heard from none have reported a brisk demand for this class of poultry. So the considerations which might influence a breeder to look with favor even upon the yellow tinge of a Leghorn or Brahma cock's plumage have no weight with the breeder of Bantams. He wants the pure white plumage, and makes no sacrifice in getting it by breeding from white-legged birds.

The White Bantam is of a quieter disposition than his Black cousin. While the latter bears the blood-red banner of conflict, the former offers the olive branch of peace. And yet he is not entirely destitute of courage. The matter of precedence is settled, by battle if need be, and then mild peace resumes its genial sway. Bred in perfection this variety is very beautiful, and a desirable addition to the household pets.

The Booted White Bantam, unlike the preceding variety, has a single comb of medium size. The shanks are heavily feathered upon the outsides, and the outer toes to their ends. The hocks are furnished with long

stiff feathers which almost touch the ground. The wings are ample with slightly drooping points, and the upright tail full, well expanded, and well furnished with long curving sickle-feathers. The ear-lobes are of a bright red color.

They are interesting birds, and being so heavily feathered upon the shanks and toes, do little harm in the garden by scratching. They are well fitted to be the gardener's assistant, and if allowed to range will destroy an immense number of insects injurious to vegetation.

In breeding them care should be taken to select birds of a pure white plumage throughout and heavily feathered upon the shanks and outer toes, and especially well furnished with vulture hocks. The same objection applies to them as to all pure white birds, the cocks have a tendency to become yellow, and the plumage of both sexes is liable to become soiled. Too much stress, however, is apt to be laid upon the latter objection, as we find little difficulty in keeping white birds, even in close confinement, in presentable condition. A fowl is a cleanly creature and if the premises are kept in a condition to insure health the birds will look fresh and clean. If they get soiled, the dust bath quickly removes the stain. It is astonishing that dirt should surpass all the chemical preparations for the laundry, in removing dirt upon a fowl. Into it they go, fill their feathers full, give a sudden flirt, and lo! they look as if they had just stepped out of their dressing-room and were ready to make a call or receive company. The admirer of white fowls need not be deterred from keeping them because they are said to get soiled easily.

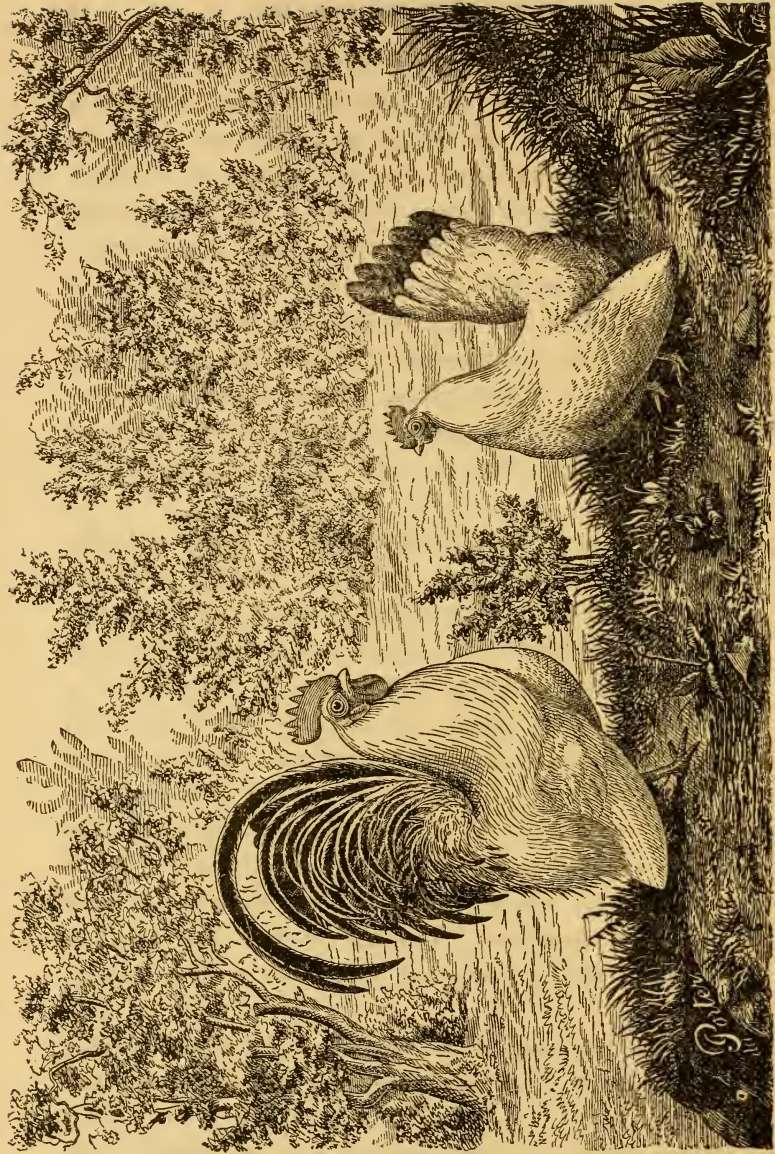
THE JAPANESE BANTAM.

For this variety we are indebted to that remarkable people who inhabit the kingdom known as Japan, a people who, isolated from the civilization of Christian nations for centuries, have within a few years made wonderful progress in all humanizing arts and sciences, established schools, sent out the flower of their youth to be educated in the most enlightened nations and to return with their acquirements to aid in raising their native land to a higher plane. Japan presents a wonderful and encouraging spectacle to the world, almost an enlightened nation "born in a day" from a semi-civilized people.

The Japanese are distinguished for many cunning devices and peculiar forms of art, and it is not surprising that their poultry should exhibit their peculiar characteristics. Where else would one naturally look for the Yokohama or Long Tailed fowl, or where for a Bantam, with short yellow legs, high single comb, erect carriage, upright tail coming in contact with the head, the sickle-feathers of which are nearly straight, and black in color with a narrow edging of white? The plumage of the Japanese Bantam is pure white with the exception of the tail which is black and the sickle-feathers as we have described. The hen is like the cock in color, white, with a black tail, carried in a very upright position.

Japanese Bantams of a Dominique or Cuckoo color are also shown, but such are not recognized by our *Standard*.

These birds are comparatively rare and bring good



prices, ten to twenty-five dollars a pair not being uncommon. They, like all the Bantams, are amusing pets, filled, as they apparently are, with enough self-esteem to leaven thoroughly a much larger body.

THE PEKIN OR COCHIN BANTAM.

The original progenitors of this remarkable breed of Bantams were stolen from the Summer Palace at Pekin, during the Chinese war. They were first exhibited in 1863. In appearance they are diminutive Buff Cochins, possessing the solid figures, the buff plumage, the heavy leg-feathering, the dome-like saddle, of their larger prototypes.

The cock has a single comb of medium size, red earlobes, deep buff or orange plumage, and dark chestnut or black tail.

The hen is of a lighter buff color than the cock.

Starting as they did from a single stock, much inbreeding has been necessitated, which, as a natural consequence, has resulted in not a little sterility and constitutional weakness. This has been remedied to a considerable extent by crossing with other feather-legged Bantams, the offspring of which have been bred back to the original strain. Of late years there have been importations from China by which the introduction of fresh and pure blood has become possible.

The Pekin Bantam is quite liable to be too dark in the leg, a fault which may have arisen from the introduction of foreign blood. They should have a pure yellow leg.

They seem to possess the mild disposition of the



Cochins and make the tamest of pets. Altogether they may be regarded as a great acquisition to the poultry yard.

In mating them for breeding, care should be exercised in order to produce the best colored specimens. The following matings may be recommended :

A cock of an orange color with chestnut tail and wings to hens of a clear buff color of medium shade.

A cock of medium shade, having some black in tail and wings, to hens that are standard birds in color. The pullets will be fine.

A very dark cock with nearly or quite black tail to pale buff hens.

From the first mating the average of the chicks will be higher for both cockerels and pullets than from either of the others. This we regard as the best mating.

The last mating is recommended to utilize those birds which otherwise might be rejected as unfit for breeding purposes. From this mating some excellent chicks will be produced, but for breeding purposes we should prefer chicks bred from the first or second mating.

THE WHITE-CRESTED WHITE POLISH BANTAM.

As its name would indicate, the plumage of this breed of Bantams is white throughout, for both male and female.

The crest of the cock is very large, abundant and flowing, and is composed of feathers similar to those forming the hackle. It should rise in front sufficiently not to obstruct the sight, and should fall to each side and the rear evenly and regularly.

The comb is single, and the smaller the better.

The neck is neatly arched and of medium length.

The breast, as in all the Polish class, is round and prominent.

The large wings are folded neatly against the sides of the body.

The tail is large, carried in an upright manner, and has an abundance of curved sickle-feathers and tail-coverts.

The shanks are rather short and of a white color.

The hen is a fit mate to her master. Her crest is globular, and large and well filled in, so as to present a close and even surface, and stands more erectly upon the head than that of the cock. She possesses the characteristic symmetry and style of the Polish class, and is a neat and jaunty little body full of innocent coquetry and demure airs.

The White Polish Bantam is one of the most recent productions of poultry art. Like the Sebright Bantam, it is a made breed. It is a purely American production, just as the Sebright is an English production.

The following letter, by a well-known breeder of this variety, addressed to that enthusiastic fancier and voluminous, elegant and accurate writer on poultry, H. S. Babcock, Esq., will be read with interest by all who admire this beautiful Bantam. We give it in full:

“GLENS FALLS, N. Y., *December 3, 1885.*

H. S. BABCOCK, ESQ., Providence, R. I.:

Dear Sir:—In reply to yours I would say, as in all other new breeds, there are some secrets and guess-work

concerning the origin of the Polish Bantams, but I will freely give you all the information I can, and I assure you that I have left no stone unturned in my attempts to obtain the fullest details.

They originated about the year 1872, or 1873, by an accidental cross of a White Polish cock with a common speckled Bantam hen in the yards of one Isaac Murdock, of Agawam, Mass., since deceased, who bred them for four or five seasons before his death. At his death, a blacksmith, named George Newton, of Springfield, Mass., bought the entire stock, and I purchased the first birds he ever offered for sale through the advertising columns of the poultry journals. They, at that time, very often bred chicks with colored feathers. I have taken great pains in breeding them since they came into my possession, until they now breed true in respect to plumage, with crests at least one-half larger than those bred upon the original birds. Since the establishment of the firm of which I am a member, we have bought Mr. Newton's entire stock.

They were admitted to the *Standard* in 1879 or 1880, through the influence of a warm personal friend of Mr. Murdock, but I never have been able to ascertain this friend's name. I have been informed that none of the birds were exhibited at the time of their admission to the *Standard*, and I was credited with exhibiting the first pair ever publicly shown in the year 1881.

They are fair layers and model mothers. After four weeks of age they are as hardy as any Bantams, but like all the Polish class they cannot stand damp quarters, and should be kept housed when the cold fall rains be-

gin. With such treatment they may be called hardy, but if these precautions are neglected they suffer in consequence.

They are very easy to breed as to size, as they rarely attain what we term overweight, and in other respects are as easy to breed as any of the Polish family. Crests and symmetry are the chief points to be regarded and consequently they should be mated in the same manner as the large White-crested White Polish fowls to produce the best results.

Truly yours,

F. B. ZIMMER."

This letter, being so full of details, renders it superfluous for us to say anything further upon the breed, beyond remarking that the mating of standard birds is the very best mating that can be made, and that from this mating a good percentage of fine chicks will be obtained.

These little beauties are still comparatively rare and bring good prices, a fact which will doubtless cause them to be bred more extensively in the near future. Like all the Polish class, their large crests, while being a great ornament, cause them to require more care, for if exposed to cold rains these crests get soaked with water, which may induce colds, catarrhs, and roup. In other respects they require no more and no greater care than other varieties of Bantams.

THE CUCKOO BANTAM.

There are, so far as we know, but one pair of this variety of Bantams in the United States, and they were

imported this season (1885). The Cuckoo Bantam, however, is a popular variety in England, and is there known also as the Scotch Grey Bantam from its close resemblance to that variety.

They have white legs, single combs, and are of a Cuckoo or Dominique color.

There is also another variety of Cuckoo Bantams with rose combs, produced probably by a cross between the Black and the White Rose-comb varieties. The Cuckoo or Dominique color is often produced by a cross of the black and white, as was the case in the Plymouth Rock.

THE PERSIAN OR RUMPLESS BANTAM.

At the Rhode Island State Fair in 1885 Mr. William H. Bateman, of East Greenwich, R. I., exhibited two pairs of Rumpless Bantams. In appearance they resembled the Rumpless fowls, but one pair had the ground color of the Golden Sebright, with some black markings, suggesting the possibility of their origin being found in a cross between a Rumpless fowl and a Golden Sebright Bantam. Those exhibited appeared to be a trifle larger than a Sebright Bantam. In order to ascertain the particulars of their origin we wrote Mr. Bateman and received a reply from which we are enabled to make the following statements.

About twenty-five years ago, a New York bird fancier, who was on the lookout for rare fowls for Mr. Bateman, wrote him that he had three pairs of Rumpless Bantams, very rare and odd birds in appearance, which he had received direct from Persia. They were thought to be the only Bantams of this variety in America. Mr.

Bateman went on to New York and returned with the birds, which consisted of one pair of milk white, one pair of speckled, having a variety of colors intermixed, and one pair of dusky orange or brown.

These Bantams as bred by Mr. Bateman, by crossing from one pair to another, have proved very hardy. Three winters ago out of forty-one chickens, of the same age, forty of which were of the common or dunghill variety, and one a Rumpless Bantam, during a very cold snap the Bantam was the only one that survived.

The prevailing colors at present are a mixed speckled to dark, the white variety having become extinct.

The hens are average layers, good sitters and excellent mothers.

The eggs are slightly darker than those laid by the common Bantam.

The chicks when first hatched resemble those of the Black-breasted Red Game Bantam, except being of a slightly lighter color. They are rather wild in disposition, and if allowed to roam are somewhat difficult to raise, but if their roving propensities are restrained they are not more difficult to rear than other varieties of Bantams.

The color of the legs is immaterial, each of the three pairs received by Mr. Bateman having differently colored legs. The combs are both rose and single, no especial care having been taken to breed them to one fixed type. The ear-lobes are small and of a bright red color, although in some specimens there is a slight tinge of white to the ear-lobes.

OTHER VARIETIES.

Among the new varieties of Bantams which are appearing and claiming a portion of the public interest, we notice that there were shown in England last season some very good specimens of Andalusians, some Malays, and a pen of Black Cochins. Frizzled Bantams with a Cuckoo plumage were also exhibited, and a pair of Sultans that were very nearly Bantams.

Attempts are also making to produce Cochin Bantams of all the prevailing colors, Polish Bantams with the plumage of the several classes of this variety, and White-faced Black Spanish. It is not altogether improbable that in the course of a few years there may be a Bantam for all, or nearly all, the varieties of domestic fowls. With the present varieties to work from, and with the knowledge that ages of experience in dwarfing fowls have given, by judicious crossing and rigid selection, the results aimed at may be accomplished. Whether it is desirable to do this is a question foreign to our purpose. Certainly all Bantams are interesting and some of the new varieties will probably prove popular. But some will be more popular than others, and the producer of new varieties of Bantams will find it of interest to study the matter carefully and to determine beforehand what varieties are likely to prove the most desirable. The one who can forecast the future is the one who will reap the greatest reward for his labors in this field. The Polish, the Cochins and the Spanish, ought to prove popular as Bantams, especially the first named, and, although the task may be difficult, we need not be surprised to learn that it has been accomplished.

BREEDING BANTAMS.

The breeder of large varieties is ever striving to keep his stock up to standard weights, and to exceed them if possible. His chicks must be got out early in order to have time to mature, and must be generously fed to induce rapid growth. But the breeder of Bantams has an entirely different object in view. With him it is not how large, but how small the fowl shall be. To decrease rather than to increase size is his object. A few ounces of overweight disqualifies his bird, no matter how perfect it may be in other respects. How shall he accomplish his purpose?

1st. By selecting the smallest specimens, always providing they are standard birds in other respects, for his breeding stock. From diminutive specimens he will be more likely to obtain small chicks.

2d. By hatching them late in the season, July and August, and even September and October, being favorable months. Late hatched chicks have less time to grow than those of earlier broods, and the cold weather of winter serves to retard the growth of the half matured specimens and permanently dwarf them.

3d. By feeding them sparingly. It will not do to starve them, but just enough food should be given them to keep them in health and to enable them to grow slowly.

These are simple but imperative rules for Bantam breeding. They cannot be neglected and great success obtained. In the observance of them there is great reward, for when the exhibition season arrives the finest specimens, resplendent in plumage, and graceful in shape,

will not be disqualified by the unfeeling judgment of the scales. The blue ribbon may flutter from their coop, while the owner's less fortunate and unwise neighbor may find his early-hatched well-fed birds, otherwise equal, disbarred from competition by that extra ounce of flesh, and may exclaim :

“Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into an everlasting dew.”

THE YOUNG CHICK.

The Bantam chicks, whether balls of snowy down, or jet black or striped like a chipmunk, are interesting objects. Their tiny forms and pert ways make them a universal object of admiration. Little children ache to get their hands upon them, ladies become an animated exclamation, with their ohs! and ahs! and how lovelys! and sober men unbend from their customary gravity to watch the movements of the little creatures. There is nothing like a Bantam chick to smooth out the wrinkles of care and imprint a smile upon weary faces.

The little chicks are, when first hatched, rather tender and require the best of care. A cold storm may quench their feeble flame of life as easily as the wind blows out a candle. But they soon develop into hardy birds capable of withstanding cold and storm and able to bid defiance to disease.

For the first week we should advocate a diet of hard-boiled eggs chopped into minute particles and mixed with stale bread crumbs. The best way of preparing their food is to rub the bread between the hands until it is

reduced to very fine crumbs and then stir in the chopped egg. Give an exceedingly small quantity.

After the first week, feed fine cracked corn, and dry steam-cooked oat meal. Add whole wheat as soon as they will eat it. Give cooked meat, cut very fine, several times a week. Bantams seem to require rather more animal diet than other and larger breeds of fowls. Small seeds, like millet, are excellent for an occasional feed. Hemp seed is also an excellent article to feed once in a while, as it is very stimulating. It should be used infrequently, as its stimulating properties tend to promote too rapid growth and to overheat the blood. Boiled rice is excellent as it contains but a small amount of bone producing material and tends to keep the chicks small. When the chicks are once well started the food may be given to them more sparingly to retard their growth, but one must not be too niggardly or the chick will not be sufficiently nourished to live.

"War to the death," "no quarter given," should be the mottoes in respect to vermin. Be ever on the lookout for their appearance, and take precautions to prevent them from gaining a foothold. Cleanliness is of great importance in preventing their appearance; and with Bantams one can never emphasize too emphatically the aphorism, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." It is a trite saying, but it is true, and we need never hesitate to act upon it because it is old. Nothing better has been discovered and there is no likelihood that there ever will be.

Bantam chicks should be allowed to get at the grass, *when the dew is off*, in order to help themselves to green

food. If this is impossible or inconvenient, then green food in some form should be supplied. A sod given daily, or fine cut tender blades of grass, finely chopped cabbage, the leaves of turnips, or some similar substance, make an excellent substitute for a grass run.

Water — fresh, pure, cool water — in drinking fountains or in shallow dishes, frequently renewed, should be always kept before them.

For mothers, we prefer the brooding wings of the Bantam hen, but other light varieties, like the Game or some common dunghill fowls, may be brought into requisition to perform this service. Bantams may be raised successfully under the largest varieties of fowls, but the best success is usually attained by selecting small active hens.

THE ECONOMIC QUALITIES.

Can Bantams be raised at a profit when their eggs are consumed in the family and their bodies served upon the table? This is a question often asked and never satisfactorily answered. We do not know, for we have never kept a debit and credit account with our Bantams, but we believe that a decided, affirmative answer can be given. We base our conclusion upon the following facts:

1st. Bantams are small eaters. A little grain goes a long way with them. The grain box "spends well," as the farmers say of their hay. The cost of keeping them is a very inconsiderable item.

2d. They are tolerably fair layers. They will lay, not so many eggs, perhaps, as the Leghorns and Hamburgs, but in the course of the year they will produce quite a large number. The eggs are large in propor-

tion to the size of the fowl, and are especially rich in yolk. The yolk of a Bantam's egg, in proportion to the white, is larger than in most of the breeds of fowls. This makes them especially valuable for culinary purposes.

3d. They are quick growers. Their bodies are small, it is true, but it doesn't take many months for them to grow, and but little feed for them to develop upon. We believe that a pound of Bantam flesh can be produced quite as cheaply as can be a pound of flesh upon any other fowl. It is not the number of pounds that a fowl will grow to, but what it costs per pound to make the meat, that must settle the question of profit or loss in raising table poultry.

4th. They are excellent for the table. Their little bodies are round and plump, and the breast is especially well developed. Whoever saw a narrow-breasted Bantam, unless in the Game class, and even then the breast is as plump or plumper than in the larger Game fowl! The round and prominent breast is one of the marked characteristics of the Bantam, a characteristic that every person has noted and every writer commented upon, recognized by breeders and observers universally and specifically required in the *Standard of Excellence*.

These considerations, outside of every question of pleasure, lead us to believe that there is money in raising Bantams for family use, and to give as our opinion an affirmative answer to the universal American question, "Will it pay?"

Another phase of the economic question was, some forty years ago, thus stated by a practical and professional correspondent of the *Gardener's Chronicle*.

“Having caught a hundred wood-lice, they were presented to three Bantams, which devoured them in about two minutes. Seeing how serviceable they were likely to be in this way, he had them in attendance when turning a compost; and neither wood-louse nor any insect escaped from their active beaks. In gardens, it may be concluded, they would save various crops which might otherwise be injured.”

The clean-legged varieties might do a little injury by scratching, an objection which would lose some of its force with the feather-legged varieties, but the benefit they would confer would more than compensate for any damage which might thus arise.

We are too apt to overlook the indirect, but none the less real benefits, that fowls confer. It is not strange that this should be so. They escape the attention of the careless observer, and most observers belong to that class, and even the most careful cannot tell just how great they are. He knows that his plums and his pears are free from worms; that his trees bear well, while his neighbor, who does not keep fowls, has a scanty yield of unsightly fruit; and yet he cannot say that this is wholly due to his fowls, for it may not be, nor can he tell just what their share has been in producing this favorable result. He may be satisfied that much is due to them, but is unable to give them credit on his books, because the amount cannot be determined. He continues, however, to keep fowls, because he knows that they pay, both directly and indirectly.

PREPARING BANTAMS FOR EXHIBITION.

Nearly every poultry society, in its rules and regu-

lations, has a requirement like the following: "All live specimens must be exhibited in their natural condition, Games and Game Bantams being an exception so far as to render the ordinary dubbing and trimming admissible."

The exhibitor of Game Bantams is therefore expected to dub his cockerels, which consists in cutting away the comb, ear-lobes and wattles. The operation is a comparatively simple one and can be best performed by having an assistant to hold the bird firmly. Then seize the comb and with a pair of scissors cut it away from beak to back. Next remove the wattles, and finally the ear-lobes. Scissors are preferable to a knife as by their compressing power less blood flows. The operation is not very cruel and the fowl quickly recovers from its effects. It is best performed when the chick is about four or four and a half months old, and should be done at least six weeks before exhibiting in order that the wounds may be perfectly healed.

Whether Game Bantams ought to be dubbed or not is an open question. Dubbing insures the males against the attacks of Jack Frost, and, in the eyes of many, adds to their beauty. That it does add to their beauty may be well doubted, however, because our tastes depend not a little upon our habits, and, if we were accustomed to see undubbed Game Bantams, bred with a small evenly serrated comb, we should probably think the comb was as great an ornament upon them as it is upon all other varieties of fowls. By requiring Game Bantams to be dubbed, the *Standard* removes one of the properties to be bred for, and, to this extent, robs the genuine fancier of an opportunity to exercise his skill in mating.

The more properties a fowl possesses, the greater the triumph in producing a perfect specimen, and, therefore, the greater the stimulus to a thorough fancier. Bantam breeding is the farthest removed of all kinds of fowl breeding from purely utilitarian considerations, and makes its strongest appeal to what is denominated in common parlance, the fancy; and in it, if anywhere, a high standard and the accumulation of properties, or points to be produced, can be defended. The requirement of a perfect comb would be one more property, now removed by the practice of dubbing. If it were restored, by requiring Game Bantams to be shown in their natural condition, fanciers would have 'scored a point in their favor. Will it be done? Time will tell. There is now a growing sentiment in its favor, which we expect to see much stronger in a few years. We will make no predictions, but we shall be neither surprised nor grieved to find a few years hence Game Bantams shown undubbed.

All other varieties of Bantams must be shown in their natural condition, but this does not prevent, but on the other hand requires, that certain special preparations should be made. No fowl is really—coming down to the strictest meaning of the word—in its natural condition when its legs are covered with filth and its plumage soiled by contact with foreign objects.

Bantams should be prepared by such a system of feeding as will put them into the highest condition of health. No better rule can be given than to prepare a pen for the exhibition birds, about five or six weeks before showing, the floor of which is clean sand to the depth of two or three inches. Into this house, divided

into as many apartments as necessary, so that the cocks and hens may be kept separate, the birds destined for the exhibition are placed. Here they are to be fed upon a variety of food, and so fed that they will be strong and healthy, well filled out, but not carry a grain of superfluous flesh. Foods that are of a non-fattening character, like barley and oats, should form the staple of their diet, but a sufficient variety should be given them to keep them in health. A Bantam out of health loses the brilliancy of plumage which counts for much in the awarding of prizes. A few sunflower seeds and a little hemp seed may be given to increase the beauty of the plumage.

The day before shipping, the birds, if white, should be washed to remove any stains from their plumage. To one who tries it for the first time the difference between the bird before washing and after will be a great surprise. He never dreamed of the change that it would make. After washing the bird should be carefully dried so as to take no cold.

The ear-lobes may be brightened up by bathing them in whiskey or alcohol and water in equal parts. The face also should be sponged off with the same preparation.

The feet and shanks of all varieties should be carefully sponged off and wiped dry with a cloth. If just the suggestion of oil has touched the cloth it will do no harm, but too much oil will cause dust to cling to the legs and be a detriment rather than an advantage.

Those varieties which have feathered shanks and toes require that this feathering should be carefully cleaned.

These operations take some time, but they pay because

they help to win the prizes; and the object of the exhibitor is to win the prizes. This does not mean that he is sordid and wishes the money; far from it — the honor of winning, the sweet success of beating all competitors by fair and honorable means — this it is which he desires, this is the crown he covets. For this he has mated his birds, bred his chicks, and prepared them for exhibition, and for this he has honorably contended, and this is the compensation which repays him for all his labors.

BANTAMS FOR THE BOYS.

“What shall we do with our boys?” is a question that the anxious heads of families often ask. The city and the country have each their special perils, and how to avoid them and bring up the boys to a pure and noble manhood are matters worthy of serious considerations. One thing to aid in this work, one factor which must never be lost sight of, is the keeping the minds of the boys interested in some harmless occupation. Their minds are active and will be employed either upon innocent or harmful matters. There is nothing that a boy likes better than something that is alive. Toys interest for a while, but they cannot take the place of living creatures. A father never did a wiser thing than when he made a present of a pair of Bantams to his boy for “his very own.”

The care of them, and the study of their ways, keep the mind employed, teach habits of industry, and lay the foundation of success in after years. The boy is at home, out of mischief, and engaged in what will lead him to better things. Home is made attractive, and the

lures that beckon others to destruction are powerless over him. The years go by and manhood comes, and, with it, the labors and the struggles of business life. The mind of the boy, unsullied and unspotted by corrupting influences, is the better able to view the "tricks of trade" in their true light, and has the self-respect to hold himself above the petty meannesses that too often disgrace maturer life. And when, in the fullness of time, he has boys of his own, he doesn't forget the innocent pleasure and the real service that the Bantams, which his father presented to him, afforded him in his boyhood days, and continues the good work by, in turn, giving to his own boy a pair of these engaging fowls.

And here we cannot refrain from producing the following extract from a private letter received just as these sheets were passing through the press:

"Oh! that first pair of Bantams! Even now, as I write these words, there comes back to me over the path of time, something of the pleasure that my first pair of Bantams produced. How well I remember them — the little black hen, trim and dainty, and the black-breasted, red-hackled cock, as full of pomposity as the most finished productions of to-day! They were called Dandies then. To-day they would be, perhaps, poor specimens of the Brown Red Game. Perhaps they were culls — I cannot say — but I know they were beautiful to my boyish eyes and have left a fragrant memory that the world cannot buy, and which I would not exchange for many of the 'gilded baubles' for which men wear out their lives in anxious striving."

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