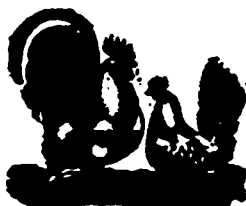


TWELVE BANTAMS.

VIII.

BLACK-TAILED JAPANESE.

BY H. S. BARCOCK, PROVIDENCE, R.I.



Black-Tailed Japanese.

NEARLY all Bantams are dwarfed forms of some larger fowl. The larger fowl we have and we make our standard for the Bantam the same as for the larger fowl, size alone excepted. But in the Japanese Bantam we have a dwarf, without possessing the larger fowl. Whether there is in Japan a large fowl like the Bantam in shape and general characteristics I do not know, but if there is such no mention of it has reached me and I am on the alert for all such bits of information.

The Japanese Bantam has a very distinctive type. It has the shortest leg, the tallest comb, the highest and most erect tail, of any breed we possess. The sickle feathers of the cock are but little curved and often extend several inches above the top of the high single comb. The legs are, in the best specimens, so very short that the bird seems when standing up almost to be sitting down.

The black-tailed white is the original variety and is the best in points as a rule. From it have been produced the black, the white and the gray, but the original gives the very best type of what the enterprising Japanese fanciers can do in bantamizing.

For years I had these fowls and I have never wholly lost my interest in them. The hens were so docile, so prolific and so odd, and the cocks had such remarkable combs and tails that they were an unfailing source of pleasure to me. The eggs hatched remarkably nice, but the chickens were difficult to rear. The little ones were delicate, though they proved reasonably hardy when grown.

It seems to me that we have retrograded in this variety, that better birds were produced a few years ago than now, that in fact we are beginning to lose the real Japanese type. The birds which I see at the exhibitions have neater combs, longer legs and as good color, but we seem to be forgetting that shortness of leg and great size of comb are characteristics of the variety, and to refine the comb and lengthen the leg is to get away from the true type. Our modern specimens are growing graceful at the expense of the old and true type. Let us remember that the comb cannot be too large and the shanks cannot be too short, and the tail should be exactly perpendicular. Let us keep to the model the Japanese have given us in order to keep as great a variety as possible in our Bantams.