



### PEKIN OR COCHIN BANTAMS.

BY P. PROUD, IN "THE FEATHERED WORLD."

THERE is no doubt whatever that next to the rose-combs in popularity comes the Pekin, or what was formerly called the Cochin China Bantam, owing to the variety having originated from China, the first pair we believe having been imported from Pekin about 40 years ago. At that time buffs were the only color established, but to-day we have buffs, blacks, whites, cuckoo, and partridge; to say nothing of mottles or Ancona Pekins, which are the very latest additions to the breed. The original buffs were quite different from the present-day type, both in shape and color, being higher on leg, longer in back and more inclined to be what is termed "vulture hocked," more after the style of the booted Bantam. Through the introduction of Cochin blood by breeding down from the larger breeds, the shape and feather, as well as color, has been greatly improved, whilst the size also has been reduced.

With the exception, perhaps, of the very best exhibition specimens of buff Cochins, the Pekin Bantam can lay claim to superiority over all the other varieties of Cochins, from an ideal standard of perfection point of view.

As an instance of the growing popularity of the Pekin I need only refer to Liverpool show of 1899, where in the two block rosecomb classes we find thirty-nine entries, and in buff Pekins alone there were no less than thirty-eight entries. Although the cup for the best Variety Bantam cock was secured by the winning rosecomb cockerel, the cup for the best hen

fell to the black Pekin, the honors being thus equally divided, and both these birds were pronounced to be as near perfection as it is possible to attain. Pekins can be kept under almost any circumstances, provided they are liberally supplied with fine sand for the floor of their houses and runs to protect the foot feather which is the only drawback to the variety. They are capital layers of tinted eggs, they lay early in the season, and the chickens are easily reared if the breeding stock are healthy. Of course, like all heavily feathered birds, unless the foot-feather of the male stock bird is cut short there will be a large percentage of clear eggs, but this can always be remedied by cutting the foot feather short in cocks and round the vent of the hens, and for this reason it is best to keep birds, especially for stock, apart from the exhibition ones. This is done by some of our most successful Cochin breeders, and is a system I can thoroughly recommend to everyone, as by doing so you will not only have a greater percentage of fertile eggs, but the chickens will also be much stronger and a pleasure to rear. Pekin hens are capital sitters and mothers, they very rarely lay more than a dozen eggs before becoming broody—this is one of the drawbacks to keeping Pekins. Again, for breeding the very best broody hens by crossing the Pekin hen with a Silky cock, their produce cannot be equalled. There is little wonder then that Pekins are such favorites, as even the "culls" in pullets will fetch 5s each as brooders, and find ready sale at this through an advertisement in "The Feathered World" during the hatching season from January to June. I have proved this over and over again, in fact, just through a casual mention of their being such reliable sitters in one of my recent articles I have been infested with applications from all parts for sitters, and have had to refuse quite fifty or sixty applicants, as I have none to spare. Sitting hens suitable for Bantam eggs appear to be a very scarce commodity indeed, and I am surprised that someone does not go in for these as a specialty. Where the fancier has plenty of accommodation I feel sure it would pay well. Unlike the rosecomb mentioned in my last, the Pekin offers little scope for the habitual faker or trimmer, apart from its tail, which, I am sorry to say, is more often left at home than sent with the bird to the show. The time has now come for this fraudulent practice to be discontinued, for it