

forgotten; and in each case there were three birds in the pen, priced and sold in all cases at 30s. the trio; nor was this looked upon as a bad result at that time.

Mr James Dixon was my only opponent then, and selling as I did, I was ultimately taken down by that gentleman.

COLOUR.

At the time named no such thing as beetle-green was seen or thought of, with the exception of a solitary bird here and there. All were of a metallic or purplish raven black, of an iridescent or changing shade, in accordance with the light that fell on them; but so intense in the colour now as almost to vie with that of the black East Indian duck, and it is my opinion that the brilliancy of colour is improving every season, and so precisely has the variety been cultivated that they may be considered equally pure with any of the Hamburg family, reproducing quite as true to feather as any others; or in other words; the stamp of bird is well fixed.

To attain this intense colour, as may be conjectured, extraordinary methods had to be resorted to, and little is now left of the original of the breed but shape, size, and carriage, the two main factors in the improvement of the bird being the white-faced black Spanish and the golden mooney Hamburg, and it is within the knowledge of the writer that a dash of Langshan blood runs in the veins of some strains; this, to some extent, explaining the defect in length of leg and want of depth of keel on the one part, a tendency to white in face and scantiness of feather from the Spanish cross, and of a coarseness of comb in the largest specimens; some of which defects require a great amount of care to extirpate them, and so far they have taken a lot of breeding out, and as a drastic corrective all birds with such defects should be passed over by the judge or relegated to the cross-breed classes.

As a matter of course, the admixture of the mooney blood produced an uncertainty of colour in the offspring, most of the cockerels coming with red golden-streaked hackles, and in some cases with true Furniss colored backs, whilst the pullets of these were in many cases peppered brown on the triangle of the wing and under ears and throat, all those of both sexes showing the defects being of the most brilliant color in body and tail, and only by determined selection and the discarding of all such birds has the breed settled down to anything like fixity, though there are breeders who still use the golden-hackled cock as pullet breeders, and the dullest of hens of the new and improved varieties as the cock breeders, and the defect now referred to will always be found in greater profusion in those birds that carry the greatest likeness to the true Hamburg in shape, so that these

remarks may act to some extent as a guide in the selection of stock.

While on the subject of color, it may be as well to say that the method of selecting chickens in the rosecomb black Bantam also holds good in the case of the black Hamburg; and no bird that is pure black on hatching, or has the upper part of the throat or on the nostrils of a brown, or ochrey, colour, can be expected to produce solid black fowls, as these comes with objectionable red or golden hackle; but these birds, being as valuable as any for all practical purposes, should not be destroyed, but should be used and reared for laying or killing. Those chickens that are white under the throat, breast, and belly to the vent, with two or three white primaries, and a tick of white on the cheek at the base of the upper mandible, and under the eye, are the ones most likely to produce the birds desired.

EAR LOBE.

No Hamburg carries as much ear lobe as does the black, but in this case the quantity of lobe coming from the Spanish cross does not indicate a tendency to a deterioration of constitution, for birds with these immense ornaments are just as hardy as red-faced birds, or birds with smaller ears. Some of the birds seen of late in the show-pens have ears so excessive in size as to be out of all proportion to the size of the bird, and this, coming as it does from the admixture of Spanish blood, as might be expected, entails a tendency to paleness of face—even to whiteness. Some birds show this defect at a very early age, even in the hens and pullets, and it scarcely needs saying that no fault is greater than this in the show-pen, and it must be guarded against if success is to be attained, as no true judge of the breed will admit such birds in competition, so that it fairly amounts to a disqualification pure and simple.

It is a great disappointment, after rearing a good yard of these birds, to find some of the best specimens possessing these defects, and in consequence, many devices have been resorted to for the purpose of rendering them fit for the show-pen, the first of which is the skinning of the white portion of the face; but a bird so operated on is easily picked out, as the surface of the flesh is devoid of the cutaneous roughness natural to the bird, and has a smooth and shiny appearance, but the worst of all is that many of the very large lobes so often seen are cut or rounded out of long and pendant lobes of Spanish likeness.

It may appear strange to the novice, but this is one of the most easy ways of trimming, and is most difficult to detect unless the back of the lobe is turned up, and thoroughly examined. A neatness of lobe, and in full keeping with true Hamburg character, is the thing to be desired.