



### OLD GOLD AND MATES.

Although this Bantam has been bred for nearly a century—I believe the date of its origin is given as about 1800—the difficulty in producing first-class specimens has not been wholly overcome. There may be breeds equally difficult to produce in perfection, but there certainly are few that offer more obstacles to complete success. To obtain a perfect figure, good comb, proper earlobes, rich ground color, accurate markings, and freedom from false color, is a task that few breeders have performed to their own satisfaction.

The ground color, which should be a *rich* yellow, is seldom deep enough. Fairly good color is obtained by the best breeders, but really rich gold is seldom seen in the exhibition pen, where the best birds presumably are found. I know that we often hear poultry men boast of the birds left at home which are vastly better than those in the show, but such boasts seldom pay for a trip to the yards of the boaster.

The earlobes are described as white, and yet I have still to see a Golden

Sebright with a white earlobe. I have seen them somewhat whitened, with more or less, usually less, blueish enamel, but the majority are red, and it seems to me that it would have been better to have described them as red, and thus have made a natural, rather than have described them as white and thus have made an impossible *Standard*. However, the *Standard* says white, and the best we can do is to follow it and get them as white as possible.

The combs are difficult to obtain as one would like them. The points often turn down, and sometimes are lacking, the comb usually grows too large, and is very frequently hollow in front. A perfect comb is about as red as a perfect earlobe, which is equivalent to saying that it does not exist. This remark is specially applicable to the males.

The lacings, which should extend clear around the nib of the feather, have an inconvenient method of stopping short after they have made a turn about the end of the web. They are more frequently crescentic spangles than proper lacings, especially if they

are as narrow as they should be. Broad lacings will extend around the feather, but they also largely conceal the ground color, and give the bird a very dark and blotchy appearance. To obtain a narrow, intensely black lacing, which extends clear around the web of the feather, is no mean triumph in breeding.

The centres of the feathers, that is the ground color, should be clear, but it is very frequently mixed with black, especially in the tail feathers and the large feathers of the wings, and when it is not intermixed with black it is frequently faded out into white, a fault much more serious both in a breeding and an exhibition bird. White feathers will come though they are not wanted, but white feathers are a serious defect.

Then the male birds sometimes develop a full Hamburg tail, furnished with long sickles and curved correctly, pretty birds considered in themselves, but of course disqualified as Sebrights. But more frequently they develop full flowing hackles and pronounced saddle feathers, in the very best strains.