

Extract from "The Feathered World" Year Book 1921



Spangled Orloffs

1st Manchester, 1st York
Property of Christine Colbeck, Boyle hall, near Wakefield

The Orloff

By Miss M. H. Clay, President Orloff Club

THERE are three varieties of the Orloff in England, viz., Mahogany, Spangled, and White. The former is the most popular and the latter the least kept of the three. The Mahogany cock is one of the handsomest birds imaginable, and I know of no bird of more beautiful colouring. He should have a deep orange-red hackle slightly striped with black, saddle of the same orange, and a deep red back and shoulders—a brilliant green-black tail and a wing bar of the same hue. The whole set off by a solid brilliant black breast. His beard and muffing should be a mixture of black and grey. He forms a great contrast to his mate, with her soft mahogany plumage, liberally sprinkled with black, but in spite of his greater brilliance, it is the hen which is, to my mind, the more attractive of the two. For in her is seen to greater perfection, those curious head points which distinguish this breed from any other. The wonderful "twist" or puffed hackle, most difficult to describe on paper, in which the feathers are so twisted or puffed out as to give the neck the appearance of greatest thickness near the head. In the hen the feathers stand right up at each side of the head,

making a sort of fan-like ruff at each side of the head. In the cock, owing to the greater length of hackle, this is not so apparent, as the feathers do not stick up so stiffly, but this "twist" is a most important point in both sexes.

Then we have the hooked beak and broad head with its over-hanging brow and deep-set eye, giving the bird that much-desired "expression"—a savage, outlandish appearance, which is increased by the beard and muffings. The comb, too, is different from other breeds, as it is covered with small bristle-like feathers, which, in the hen, are hardly noticeable. Tail carriage is also an important point. The tail should be well spread and carried rather high. The legs should be fairly long and the whole bird should be very lively and active. The legs in all three varieties should be yellow, and a little fluff between the toes is allowed, in fact, is to be desired. Beaks again should be brown coloured or yellow, and should be covered with a thin red skin at the base.

Double mating is not in the least necessary and is in no way a help to breeding good specimens of both sexes, as they can be just as easily bred from one pen (incidentally I may mention that I won the "Members' " Cup outright at the last Club show," with a hen, a full sister to the cock with which I won it on the first two occasions, proving that birds of the very highest quality can be bred without double mating), and this is a great advantage in any breed from an exhibition point of view. On the utility side, the Orloff, on first acquaintance, appears to be a table breed pure and simple, and does not look like a layer, but on closer knowledge we find it is just as good a layer as it is a table bird, and it has the great advantage of the fact that being very active it does not put on fat, and I find old hens of four years old laying well all through those bad months, November and December, even when they have been going to and fro from shows. The celebrated champion hen, now the property of Mrs. Colbeck, laid last summer—though she must be ten years old!—and my two old hens, four and five years old, laid the day after returning from the Birmingham show, which, taking into consideration that the birds were away over a week—and had two long journeys, speaks well for the breed. Well as the breed thrives in this warm climate of Devon, I have an idea that it does even better in colder places. It is, I think, more popular in Scotland than it is in England—at least, I get more inquiries from there—and as it is very closely feathered and has a very curiously thick fluff in under colour, and has little comb to get frost-bitten, it is obviously the bird for cold exposed situations.

The chicks are very lively, active little things and range far and wide, and if they get the chance will pick up a great part of their living, which makes them very suitable for a mixed farm. At the same time this activity keeps them well and happy in confinement, as they are always busy scratching away in their litter and do not mope about as so many of the heavy breeds do. They are supposed to be non-sitters, but I

find in their second year the larger number of hens will go broody once in the season, but they are not at all troublesome in this respect, and, as pullets, rarely want to sit. They make excellent mothers, as they are very devoted to their chicks and will keep off anything that tries to attack them if they have their liberty. I was pleased to see a good number of fresh names winning at the Dairy, and I hope now the war difficulties are over, that the Orloff may take the position it deserves. Classes have not been filling so well as they should, though quality seems to be higher than ever.

Club Show details 1921, held at Birmingham (4 classes, 47 entries, Judge Christine Colbeck):

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----|-----|
| O. E. GAME | Wigton, Dec. 16, 17 | I. W. Messenger, 56 | 115 | 627 |
| | | J. Millican, H. Heya, and A. H. Fox-Brockbank | | |
| " Fowl | Oxford, Dec. 10 | H. Atkinson, G. Matthews, —, Coulthard, and Capt. Barnard | 27 | 253 |
| " Cumberland | Cleator Moor, Dec. 4 | J. Messenger and C. Nicholson | 15 | 199 |
| " Midland | Birmingham, Feb. 4 to 7, '21 | A. J. Wilson and D. Siviter | 22 | 214 |
| " Wales | No details to hand | | | |
| ORLOFF | Birmingham, Nov. 27 to Dec. 2 | Mrs. Colbeck | 4 | 47 |
| ORPINGTON, Black | York, Dec. 14 to 16 | F. Swindells | 8 | 130 |
| " Buff | Penge, Dec. 8 | F. M. Rogers | 10 | 132 |
| " Scottish | Edinburgh, Jan. 5 to 7, '21 | D. Reid | 19 | 102 |

Orloff Society 1921 Secretary Details:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| O.E.G. Fowl Club | R. J. Verney, 23, Beaumont Street, Oxford |
| " Northumberland and Durham | F. W. Morris, Wantage, Bardon Mill-on-Tyne |
| " Wales | J. Williams, 25, Duffryn Street, Mountain Ash |
| " Midland | D. Siviter, Enderley, Green Lane, Blackheath, Birmingham |
| ORLOFF | Mrs. Colbeck, Boyle Hall, near Wakefield |
| ORPINGTON, Black | G. W. Worrell, 8, Walcot Buildings, Bath |
| " Buff | W. J. Golding, The Bowens, Penshurst, Kent |
| " Scottish | W. Reid, Hallcraig House, Airdrie |
| " White | F. de Steiger, St. Leonards P.F., Ringwood |
| " Wales | W. E. Thomas, Emlyn P.F., Resolven, Neath |
| PHEASANT FOWL | J. S. Cayley, Marklanes, Crewkerne |