

spot on the two sides, but chiefly on the outer side, of each feather. The wing-bars in the true rock-pigeon and in the chequered variety are, in fact, due to similar though larger spots symmetrically crossing the secondary wing-feather and the larger coverts. Hence the chequering arises merely from an extension of these marks to other parts of the plumage. Chequered birds are not confined to the coasts of England; for they were found by Graba at Faroe; and W. Thompson<sup>12</sup> says that at Islay fully half the wild rock-pigeons were chequered. Colonel King, of Hythe, stocked his dovecot with young wild birds which he himself procured from nests at the Orkney Islands; and several specimens, kindly sent to me by him, were all plainly chequered. As we thus see that chequered birds occur mingled with the true rock-pigeon at three distinct sites, namely, Faroe, the Orkney Islands, and Islay, no importance can be attached to this natural variation in the plumage.

Prince C. L. Bonaparte,<sup>13</sup> a great divider of species, enumerates, with a mark of interrogation, as distinct from *C. livia*, the *C. turricola* of Italy, the *C. rupestris* of Daouria, and the *C. schimperi* of Abyssinia; but these birds differ from *C. livia* in characters of the most trifling value. In the British Museum there is a chequered pigeon, probably the *C. schimperi* of Bonaparte, from Abyssinia. To these may be added the *C. gymnocyclus* of G. R. Gray from W. Africa, which is slightly more distinct, and has rather more naked skin round the eyes than the rock-pigeon; but from information given me by Dr. Daniell, it is doubtful whether this is a wild bird, for dovecot-pigeons (which I have examined) are kept on the coast of Guinea.

The wild rock-pigeon of India (*C. intermedia* of Strickland) has been more generally accepted as a distinct species. It differs chiefly in the croup being blue instead of snow-white; but as Mr. Blyth informs me, the tint varies, being sometimes albescent. When this form is domesticated chequered birds appear, just as occurs in Europe with the truly wild *C. livia*. Moreover we shall immediately have proof that the blue and white croup is a highly variable character; and Bechstein<sup>14</sup> asserts that with dovecot-pigeons in Germany this is the most variable of all the characters of the plumage. Hence it may be concluded that *C. intermedia* cannot be ranked as specifically distinct from *C. livia*.

In Madeira there is a rock-pigeon which a few ornithologists have suspected to be distinct from *C. livia*. I have examined numerous specimens collected by Mr. E. V. Harcourt and Mr. Mason. They are rather smaller than the rock-pigeon from the Shetland Islands, and their beaks are plainly thinner, but the thickness of the beak varied in the several specimens. In plumage there is remarkable

<sup>12</sup> 'Natural History of Ireland,' Birds, vol. ii. (1850), p. 11. For Graba, see previous reference.

<sup>13</sup> 'Coup-d'œil sur l'Ordre des Pi-

geons,' 'Comptes Rendus,' 1854-55.

<sup>14</sup> 'Naturgeschichte Deutschlands,' Band iv. 1795, s. 14.