

diversity; some specimens are identical in every feather (I speak after actual comparison) with the rock-pigeon of the Shetland Islands; others are chequered, like *C. affinis* from the cliffs of England, but generally to a greater degree, being almost black over the whole back; others are identical with the so-called *C. intermedia* of India in the degree of blueness of the croup; whilst others have this part very pale or very dark blue, and are likewise chequered. So much variability raises a strong suspicion that these birds are domestic pigeons which have become feral.

From these facts it can hardly be doubted that *C. livia*, *affinis*, *intermedia*, and the forms marked with an interrogation by Bonaparte ought all to be included under a single species. But it is quite immaterial whether or not they are thus ranked, and whether some one of these forms or all are the progenitors of the various domestic kinds, as far as any light can thus be thrown on the differences between the more strongly-marked races. That common dovecot-pigeons, which are kept in various parts of the world, are descended from one or from several of the above-mentioned wild varieties of *C. livia*, no one who compares them will doubt. But before making a few remarks on dovecot-pigeons, it should be stated that the wild rock-pigeon has been found easy to tame in several countries. We have seen that Colonel King at Hythe stocked his dovecot more than twenty years ago with young wild birds taken at the Orkney Islands, and since then they have greatly multiplied. The accurate Macgillivray¹⁵ asserts that he completely tamed a wild rock-pigeon in the Hebrides; and several accounts are on records of these pigeons having bred in dovecots in the Shetland Islands. In India, as Captain Hutton informs me, the wild rock-pigeon is easily tamed, and breeds readily with the domestic kind; and Mr. Blyth¹⁶ asserts that wild birds come frequently to the dovecots and mingle freely with their inhabitants. In the ancient 'Ayeen Akbery' it is written that, if a few wild pigeons be taken, "they are speedily joined by a thousand others of their kind."

Dovecot-pigeons are those which are kept in dovecots in a semi-domesticated state; for no special care is taken of them, and they procure their own food, except during the severest weather. In England, and, judging from MM. Boitard and Corbié's work, in France, the common dovecot-pigeon exactly resembles the chequered

¹⁵ 'History of British Birds,' vol. i. pp. 275-284. Mr. Andrew Duncan tamed a rock-pigeon in the Shetland Islands. Mr. James Barclay, and Mr. Smith of Uyea Sound, both say that the wild rock-pigeon can be easily tamed; and the former gentleman asserts that the tamed birds breed four times a year. Dr. Lawrence Edmondstone informs me that a wild

rock-pigeon came and settled in his dovecot in Balta Sound in the Shetland Islands, and bred with his pigeons; he has also given me other instances of the wild rock-pigeon having been taken young and breeding in captivity.

¹⁶ 'Annals and Mag. of Nat. History,' vol. xix. 1847, p. 103, and vol. for 1857, p. 512.