

of blue and chequered birds; but it will now be seen that when two birds belonging to distinct races are crossed, neither of which have, nor probably have had during many generations, a trace of blue in their plumage, or a trace of wing-bars and the other characteristic marks, they very frequently produce mongrel offspring of a blue colour, sometimes chequered, with black wing-bars, &c.; or if not of a blue colour, yet with the several characteristic marks more or less plainly developed. I was led to investigate this subject from MM. Boitard and Corbié²⁶ having asserted that from crosses between certain breeds it is rare to get anything but bisets or dovescot pigeons, which, as we know, are blue birds with the usual characteristic marks. We shall hereafter see that this subject possesses, independently of our present object, considerable interest, so that I will give the results of my own trials in full. I selected for experiment races which, when pure, very seldom produce birds of a blue colour, or have bars on their wings and tail.

The Nun is white, with the head, tail, and primary wing-feathers black; it is a breed which was established as long ago as the year 1600. I crossed a male Nun with a female red common Tumbler, which latter variety generally breeds true. Thus neither parent had a trace of blue in the plumage, or of bars on the wing and tail. I should premise that common Tumblers are rarely blue in England. From the above cross I reared several young: one was red over the whole back, but with the tail as blue as that of the rock-pigeon; the terminal bar, however, was absent, but the outer feathers were edged with white: a second and third nearly resembled the first, but the tail in both presented a trace of the bar at the end: a fourth was brownish, and the wings showed a trace of the double bar: a fifth was pale blue over the whole breast, back, croup, and tail, but the neck and primary wing-feathers were reddish; the wings presented two distinct bars of a red colour; the tail was not barred, but the outer feathers were edged with white. I crossed this last curiously coloured bird with a black mongrel of complicated descent, namely, from a black Barb, a Spot, and

²⁶ 'Les Pigeons,' &c., p. 37.