

I crossed a male dun Dragon belonging to a family which had been dun-coloured without wing-bars during several generations, with a uniform red Barb (bred from two black Barbs); and the offspring presented decided but faint traces of wing-bars. I crossed a uniform red male Runt with a White trumpeter; and the offspring had a slaty-blue tail with a bar at the end, and with the outer feathers edged with white. I also crossed a female black and white chequered Trumpeter (of a different strain from the last) with a male Almond-tumbler, neither of which exhibited a trace of blue, or of the white croup, or of the bar at end of tail: nor is it probable that the progenitors of these two birds had for many generations exhibited any of these characters, for I have never even heard of a blue Trumpeter in this country, and my Almond-tumbler was purely bred; yet the tail of this mongrel was bluish, with a broad black bar at the end, and the croup was perfectly white. It may be observed in several of these cases, that the tail first shows a tendency to become by reversion blue; and this fact of the persistency of colour in the tail and tail-coverts²⁹ will surprise no one who has attended to the crossing of pigeons.

The last case which I will give is the most curious. I paired a mongrel female Barb-fantail with a mongrel male Barb-spot; neither of which mongrels had the least blue about them. Let it be remembered that blue Barbs are excessively rare; that Spots, as has been already stated, were perfectly characterised in the year 1676, and breed perfectly true; this likewise is the case with white Fantails, so much so that I have never heard of white Fantails throwing any other colour. Nevertheless the offspring from the above two mongrels was of exactly the same blue tint as that of the wild rock-pigeon from the Shetland Islands over the whole

²⁹ I could give numerous examples; two will suffice. A mongrel, whose four grandparents were a white Turbit, white Trumpeter, white Fantail, and blue Pouter, was white all over, except a very few feathers about the head and on the wings, but the whole tail and tail-coverts were dark bluish-

grey. Another mongrel whose four grandparents were a red Runt, white Trumpeter, white Fantail, and the same blue Pouter, was pure white all over, except the tail and upper aill-coverts, which were pale fawn, and except the faintest trace of double wing-bars of the same pale fawn tint.