

in a good pouter. The long-muffed ones invariably strut about in an awkward and stumbling manner, carrying their body in too horizontal a position, lifting high their legs, crossing their wings, and appearing as though they were stepping through water and were desirous of passing through unspotted. This is one of the reasons why the heavily muffed birds do not find the favor their brethren with downy clothed legs so often and so reasonably lay claim to.

Varieties.

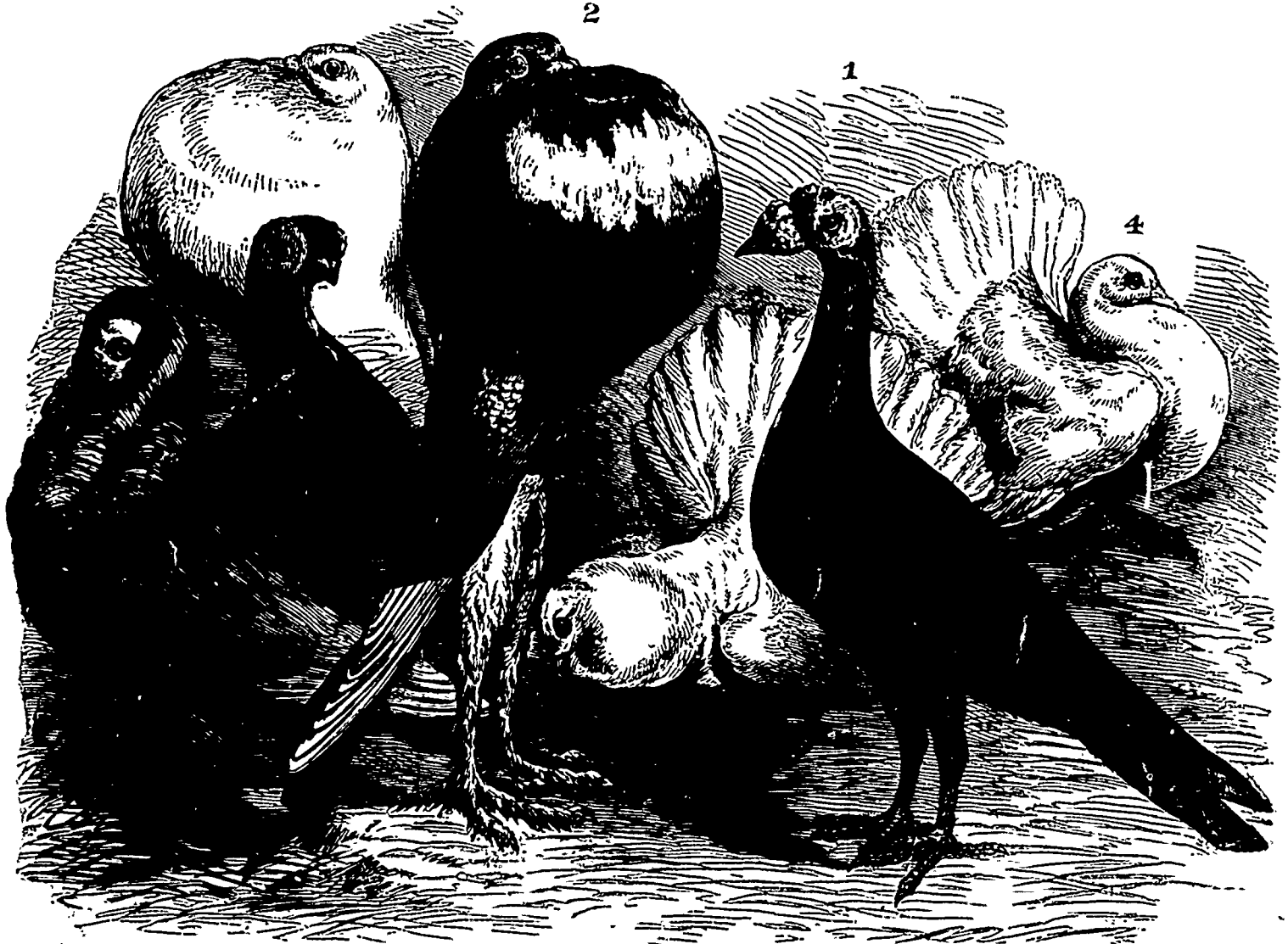
Pouters for exhibition are divided into five varieties, viz.: blue, yellow, white, red, and black. Fig. 2 in our engraving represents a cock bird of the first-named kind. There are also mealy or mixed colored pouters which are the result of crosses with the other kinds, — probably in some cases the amalgamation of the whole, and consequently they are not of a very attractive color, but are nevertheless very useful birds, as they are generally large, and of a vigorous constitution, and are oftentimes introduced with good effect as mates for birds of weaker stock, but of fine

the tail. The crop should be of good size, neither over blown or contracted. The size of the pouter should be large; but it may be remarked that, although apparently of great size when seen at large, yet when taken in hand they will be found much smaller than would be supposed, as their apparent large proportions are considerably enhanced by the quantity of wind, legs, and feathers, of which they are in a great measure composed. The head of the pouter should be neat, and not large or coarse, as too often seen; the forehead should be high and prominent, and somewhat suddenly receding downwards to the ear; the beak is rather dove-shaped, the wattle thereon small and regular; and the eye without any fleshy substance more than is observable in the majority of pigeons.

The color of a pouter is an important property. Blue pouters should be of a clear and bright color, a shade darker upon the head, neck and tail, than elsewhere; the sides of the wings, breast and back, should be blue, descending from the neck, and

often the best in limb and feather, that the fancier breeds, and although as show birds, their color is regarded as nothing, they are invaluable as breeders.

Blue pied pouters should not be matched with black pied as the result generally will be dark birds with checkered wings and black bars, which are neither elegant nor valuable, although in some cases well marked birds of either color are produced. Blues may be matched with reds, if no better match offers, and very good colored birds produced. An excellent cross is a blue cock with a large long limbed mealy hen, the produce will be either blue or mealy. Blue pied and white are not desirable to match, as very white pied birds, or white splashed or speckled with other colors would most probably result. Black-pied may be matched with red-pied or mealy with advantage; but white should be avoided. Red-pied may also be matched with yellow-pied, when good yellow or red birds will be produced; red-pied and mealy may also be matched, but with some risk to the bright red so much prized in the best



feather, for the sake of regenerating them, and keeping up the size and stamina of those of more value.

Almost all pouter breeders, says Tegetmeir, are agreed that length of limb is the most important property, and is measured from the joint nearest the body to the end of the nail of the centre toe. The length should be 7½ inches, and the outline of which should be neatly but not entirely hidden with smooth feathers, extending to the ends of the toes. The length of feather is measured from the tip of the beak to the extremity of the centre feathers of the tail, the bird being stretched out at full length. Good cock birds should measure 20 inches; the hen birds of course are smaller. The back must be straight, high-backed or hump-backed birds, are very ugly, and generally have also flabby crops, which they are incapable of fully inflating, but which hang loosely down, much to their disfigurement. The crop when distended, should be of a globular shape as possible. It certainly should not be so enormous as to extend over the shoulders of the bird, and involve part of the body, nor should it force back the head of the bird till it is bent backwards down towards

terminating in a distinct line from thigh to thigh. The wing coverts (as in nearly all blue pigeons), should be crossed with two black bars, there is also a black band nearly at the edge of the tail; on the sides of the wings. And near to the shoulder should be a few white feathers, as represented in the engraving, these are called the rose, and when good and distinct are a great set off to a pouter. An important feature also in the markings of a pouter is a clear white and well-defined crescent upon the front of the crop or globe. With regard to the reds, yellow-pied, and blacks, they should be marked in a similar manner as blues; they should be rich, bright, and uniform in color, not dappled and uneven. Pure white is a favorite color of many breeders, and few birds can look more beautiful than a clean, long-limbed graceful bird of this color, their eyes should be dark, while the eyes of the other varieties must be red. In addition to these, there are several off-colors, that are not valued in themselves, although the birds may be of the greatest worth as breeding birds. The most common of these is that known as mealy, a kind of dull powdered red of different depths of color in different birds. These mealy birds are

colored birds. Yellow-pied may also be matched with mealy with advantage. It may be observed that mealy birds when matched with either blue-pied, black-pied, yellow-pied, or pure-white, often produce young most perfectly marked or colored without a trace of mealiness; and hence a good mealy bird is always regarded by fanciers as valuable for breeding stock. It is a fact that mealy birds are often the longest in limb and feather, the slenderest in girth, and the best in carriage of any in the stud.

In breeding for length of limb and feather, it should not be forgotten that the influence of the hen over form and size, is generally superior to that of the cock; thus a poor cock mated with a superior hen, will produce much better birds than a good cock if matched with a short limbed hen; size and limb take after the female parent; color more usually follows the male. Thus a white cock with a long limbed mealy hen, would be more likely to throw good white birds than a mealy cock with a white hen. In mating birds, it is always desirable that any deficiency in one shall be counteracted in the other; thus a bird with heavily feathered legs would be judiciously mated with one deficient in this qual-