



Pouters.

Of all varieties of the pigeon tribe the Pouter is the largest, and most striking on account of its peculiarities of shape. It is a great favorite with fanciers. The following description is taken from W. B. Tegetmeier's *Pigeons: Their Structure, Habits, and Varieties*:

We find the earliest history of the Pouter in Moore's "Columbarian;" and as his book is exceedingly scarce, it is desirable to preserve his description, more especially as it has been taken as the basis of almost all the English works that have been since published on the subject,—the "Treatise," and Girton more especially. The modern fancier cannot fail to be struck with the fact that the standard of properties, as laid down by Moore, is in the main identical with that of the present day. Many other breeds have felt the influence of fashion, but the Pouter of Moore's time and that of last Glasgow show, are almost, if not quite, identical.

Writing of this breed, which Moore terms "The English Pouter," he states:—

"This pigeon, which was first bred in England, and is therefore called the English Pouter, is originally a mixed breed between a Horseman and a Cropper, experience teaches us, it will add a wonderful beauty to this bird, and raise in it the five following properties:—1. Length of Body; 2. Length of Legs; 3. Neatness of Crop; 4. Slenderness of Girt; 5. Beauty in Feather.

"1. As to the length of body, the longer they are from the apex of the beak to the end of the tail, the more the pigeon is esteemed: I have seen one that measured this way near twenty inches, although seventeen or eighteen is reckoned a very good length.

"2. The length of the leg is the next thing to be examined in a Pouter, *i.e.*, from the upper joint of the thigh in sight, to the end of the toe-nail;

and in this property some pigeons have been very considerable, wanting a mere trifle of seven inches, yet the bird that produces six and a half, or three quarters must be allowed to be a very good one.

"3. The next property to be considered is the crop, which ought to be large and round, especially towards the beak, filling behind the neck, so as to cover the shoulders and tie neatly off at the shoulders, and form a perfect globe.

"The smaller the girt the better, because by this means a contrast of beautiful shape is given to the whole bird.

"5. The last thing that is generally allowed as a property in a Pouter is the feather, and indeed its plumage affords a very great variety. The Pies are most universally esteemed, and under these may be ranked the Blue-pied, the Black-pied the Red-pied, and the Yellow-pied, each of which advance in their worth according as they answer best the foregoing properties; for instance, if the Blue-pied and Black-pied are equal in the measure of the other properties, the Black-pied will be reckoned the best pigeon, on the account of the feather, and the Yellow-pied, if equal, better than any.

"Before we leave this head of feathers, we must take notice how a Pouter ought to be pied: and, in the first place, the chop ought to be white, girt round with a shining green, intermixed with the color with which he is pied. By the chop is meant the front part of the crop, and this white ought by no means to go behind the neck, for then it is said to be ring-headed. He ought to have a bib or round patch, of the same color with which he is pied, coming down from under his chop, and falling upon the chap, which makes it the shape of a half-moon; but if this bib be wanting he is said to be swallow-throated.

"His head, neck, and back ought to be of one uniform color, and the tail the same; and if the pigeon be Blue-pied, he ought to have two bars or streaks of black across the lower part of both wings; but if these happen to be of a brown color, he is said to be kite-barred, which is not so valuable.

"The shoulder or pinion of the wing ought to be mottled with white, lying round in the shape of a rose; this is called a rose-pinion, and is reckoned the best, though but very few arise to be complete in this property; but if the pinion runs with a large patch of white to the outer edge of the wing, he is said to be lawn sleeved.

"His thighs ought to be clean white, though sometimes the joints of the knees will be edged round with another color, but let it fall here, or any other part of the thigh, he is foul-thighed.

"The nine flight-feathers of the wing ought to be white, otherwise he is said to be foul-flighted,