

time intervals and so strictly rhythmical in character.

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#### ALLEGED REDISCOVERY OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON

IN SCIENCE for November 1 is a communication under the caption "Alleged rediscovery of the passenger pigeon," in which the statement is maintained that a flock of this supposedly extinct bird was recently seen in New York state. Among other observations offered in support of the identification, mention is made of "the whistling sound of their wings." During the seventies and early eighties it was my privilege to form an intimate acquaintance with the passenger pigeon, seeing many thousands of them, shooting hundreds of them and finding numerous scattered nests in the vicinity of Minneapolis, Minn. The wings of this bird never "whistled," the sound made in taking flight being a flapping or fluttering noise similar to that made by the tame pigeon. A flock in rapid flight made a rustling or swishing sound as it passed through the air. On the other hand it is a well-known fact that the wings of the mourning dove produce a loud characteristic "whistling sound" as it launches itself into the air and until it gets well under way. Among pigeon hunters in the old days, this was a commonly recognized distinguishing feature between the two species when other means were obscured.

In and about a "buckwheat field" is an ideal place for an assemblage of mourning doves. Passenger pigeons also fed on grains of various kinds, chiefly wheat and oats, but their favorite food was thin-shelled nuts, largely acorns here in the north.

In view of the fact that no reports of the passenger pigeon from experienced ornithologists have been received for a considerable number of years, in spite of persistent search, it would seem as though this bird must be regarded as an extinct species.

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#### DEMONSTRATIONS OF VISUAL PHENOMENA

##### PURKINJE EFFECT

If a color wheel with a reddish and a bluish color be spun in the light of a strong lantern, and then slowly have its plane turned until the incidence of the light is just grazing, the Purkinje effect is at once demonstrated to a class. As the angle of incidence changes from normal to grazing, the intensity of illumination is reduced to zero, and the red becomes invisible. The effect of this is in general to change the apparent color of the disc through a series of very pretty shades.

##### PERSISTENCE OF VISION

This is easily shown to a class by means of a lantern, with a slide bearing some letters. Instead of imaging the slide on a white surface, the image should be absorbed by black velvet or the image may be formed in an open doorway. Now move a fairly white stick vertically down in the plane of the image. Different portions of the image can then be seen on the stick, and if the stick be moved fast enough, the eye sees the entire image easily.

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##### USONO

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In connection with the discussion in your columns as to a more specific name for our country than "America," it may be interesting to note that the advocates of the international language, Esperanto, solved this problem so far as they were concerned quite a while ago, by the adoption of the name "Usono." This is the substantive form of the expression *US o NA.*, composed of the initial letters of this nation's full designation. *Usona* is, in Esperanto, the adjectival form.

In a rather hasty and superficial glance through the back files of Esperanto publications, I find the word used, either in the text or in date lines, titles, etc., in various magazines, books and pamphlets issued in England, France, Germany, Poland, Switzerland,