

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON.

Being remarks made by the Rev. Dr. C. J. S. BETHUNE, and the resulting discussion at the February meeting of the Ornithological Section of the Entomological Society of Canada.

In my student days, while attending the University in Toronto, I started a Naturalists' Calendar, in which I recorded not only entomological items but also notes of prominent occurrences among the birds, such as first arrivals of song sparrow, robin, etc. On turning up these notes I find two records only of the wild pigeon, one in the last week of March, 1858, and the other the 8th March, 1860; both of these notes were made in Toronto, and they refer to the large quantities of pigeons which were then seen. I remember most distinctly the occurrence in 1858, as I had been detained in Toronto during one week of the Easter holidays for a special examination, and at that time flock after flock of pigeons crossed from the south at Toronto. All of the flocks were fairly long, from east to west, and some of them reached farther each way than one could see, but all were of short dimensions from north to south. I could not, of course, give the exact depth of these flocks, but it would be something like 100 yards or less. In the distance the birds looked like a black cloud, and as there were no trees in front of my room, and but few buildings between it and the lake, I had a very good chance to observe them. The position of my window was so commanding that on a clear day I could discern Brock's Monument, and sometimes on a dull day the spray of Niagara Falls could be seen. Years before, as a child, when living at Cobourg, these birds were seen in immense numbers. In early summer, probably June or late in May, as the trees were in leaf, enormous flocks would come over the lake going north, and the people who were so inclined would then turn out with shotguns, and an incessant firing ensued. As those in the streets of the town fired up into the air, the shot would fall back on the heads of those standing by, and the rattling of the shot as it fell on the shingles of the houses was almost constant. The term "pigeon-shot" was applied to the size used, in the same way as we now speak of duck-shot. Back of Cobourg lay a range of hills perhaps a couple of miles from the lake, and when the flight was