

NEW ORNITHOLOGICAL FACTS.

BREEDING OF THE CANADA GOOSE IN TREES.

The fact of the breeding of the Canada goose in trees has recently been confirmed by Capt. Charles Bendire, who reports its breeding in this manner near Camp Harney, under, however, rather peculiar circumstances. In a letter, dated Camp Harney, Oregon, April 24th, 1876, Capt. Bendire writes as follows:—"The season is very backward, and scarcely any of the small species of birds have commenced to build yet. The water is very high, and the whole lower Harney valley is flooded. The Western Canada geese seem to have anticipated such a state of affairs, as last year I did not see a single nest of theirs off the ground, while this spring all of them, as far as I have observed personally or have heard of through others, are built in trees off the ground, mostly in willows. Some make use of herons' nests, and one of a raven's nest; the only raven's I found last year in a tree." Apropos of this change of habit with circumstances, Capt. Bendire asks the pertinent question, "Is it instinct or reason?"

INTELLIGENCE OF A CROW.

A tame crow (*corvus Americanus*) in my possession has repeatedly amused me by the novel method he adopts to rid himself of parasites. For this purpose, he deliberately takes his stand upon an ant-mound, and permits the ants to crawl over him and carry away the troublesome vermin. The operation seems mutually agreeable to all parties, the ants quickly seizing upon the parasites and bearing them away. I have also noticed the same habit in another tame crow that I formerly had in my possession.—A. M. FRAZER.

SINGULAR FOOD OF THE LEAST BITTERN.

The least bittern (*a exilis*) is tolerably abundant on the shores of lakes Huron and Superior, where they feed upon snails, water insects, and small reptiles. Upon examining the stomach of a male of this species, shot at Belmont, Mass., May 11th, 1876, Mr. William Brewster found that organ fairly crammed with white. cleau *cotton wool*. The greater portion of this had evidently been swallowed in one lump, but there were several smaller flakes. Among these were several white worms, and many others of a similar appearance were coiled around the intestines. Under such conditions, one would hardly expect the sensations of the bird to be of an agreeable nature, but notwithstanding it seemed to be in good health and spirits.

VARIABLE ABUNDANCE OF BIRDS AT THE SAME LOCALITIES IN DIFFERENT YEARS.

It has probably been observed by most of our field ornithologists, that many of our rarer birds are to be found in larger numbers during some of their annual or semi-annual visits, than during others. This is an interesting fact; but it is a fact of much greater interest that our com-