

CURIOSITY OF A HUMMINGBIRD.

Last summer, as I was sitting in the woods behind a summer-house, making the hissing sound which Mr. Chapman recommends to attract birds, a hummingbird came to me and hovered over and flew about my head, now and then alighting a few moments, not upon me, but on some twig near by, surveying me curiously the while. Then off it darted till lost to view. But pretty soon, as I kept on making the sounds, always sitting quite still, back it came again, acting as before. The bird came and went away in this manner four times. It constantly uttered a sound very similar to the noise I was making with my lips. All this took place in a few minutes.

There were two things new to me in the behaviour of this beautiful creature: its chirping and its intelligent curiosity. I find the chirping mentioned in Mr. Saunders's interesting article on Canadian Hummingbirds in *THE NATURALIST* of last July. The curiosity, or rather the essentially bird-like curiosity, shown by this hummingbird, was very surprising to me, as I had been led to believe, by reading Mr. Hudson's account of the nature and habits of hummingbirds, that none but the crudest insect-like curiosity need be looked for in any hummingbird. That most charming of natural history writers, in "*The Naturalist in La Plata*," after noticing that hummingbirds have frequently been stated to be more like insects than birds in disposition, affirms that they are not to be compared even with the more intelligent insects, but have a much closer resemblance to the solitary wood-boring bees and to dragonflies. To support his opinion, he makes, among others, the following statements some of which are of interest in connection with Mr. Saunders's observations: "Their aimless attacks on other species approaching or passing near them, even on large birds like hawks and pigeons, is a habit they have in common with many solitary wood-boring bees. They also, like dragonflies and other insects, attack each other when they come together while feeding; and in this case their action strangely resembles that of a couple of butterflies, as they revolve about each other and rise vertically to a great height in the air. Again, like insects, they are undisturbed at the presence of man