

THE CROW

Find from reading what they visit the Atlantic coast in Autumn for.

Write out a list of ways they are injurious and the ways they are beneficial.

From your observation, would you decide that, on the whole, crows are injurious or beneficial?

Consult some intelligent farmer as to how he can protect his seed corn from the crows.

(b) To the teacher.

The farmer is a sworn enemy of the crow; he considers him a thief and a villain. He is an Ishmael amongst birds, his hand is against every bird and every bird's hand is against him. But he does not worry over his evil reputation, he seems to enjoy it. He eats a good deal of the germinating corn when it becomes soft, and the farmer occasionally has to replant his crop. He also attacks the milky corn when in the ear. Much more villainous than either of these is his habit of eating birds' eggs and nestlings, and what makes him still more hateful to the agriculturist is his appetite for young chickens. This is a formidable indictment against his black knightship. But the dark cloud has a silver lining. For nine-tenths of the season he is searching the meadows for insects and eats prodigious numbers of them. Of course he is not an economic entomologist and does not distinguish the beneficial from the harmful ones. He also eats field mice and other rodents which is to his credit, but he also devours toads and frogs the former of which are the farmers' friends, though not always recognized as such. He also can scent a dead animal from afar and plays the part of a scavenger. On the whole then, the balances are weighed pretty evenly, so let us give such a shrewd old chap the benefit of the doubt. Of course he does not need our good opinion as he is quite able to look after himself as every farmer knows who has endeavored to seek revenge on him with a shotgun. The farmer can make his seed corn distasteful by tarring it. In autumn, when food becomes scarce, crows seek the Atlantic coast to gorge upon the delicate shell fish found on the beach at low tide.