

Like many other birds of a black colour, as the blackbird and the starling, the Crow is sometimes found perfectly white. The sight of the bird is exquisitely keen, and it is by this sense and not that of smell that he is guided in his search of food, as well as in his avoidance of human enemies.

In our second illustration is figured the Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*). This bird is about sixteen inches in length, and is very common in the maritime districts of this continent at all seasons. Our chief authority on the habits of this bird is Wilson from whose interesting description we extract the following: "I first met with this species on the sea-coast of Georgia and observed that they regularly retired to the interior as evening approached, and came down to the shore by the first appearance of day. Their voice first attracted my notice, being very different from that of the common Crow, more hoarse and guttural, uttered as if something stuck in their throat, and varied into several undulations as they flew along. Their manner of flying was also unlike the others, as they frequently sailed about without flapping their wings, something in the manner of the raven; and I soon perceived that their food and their mode of procuring it were also different, their favourite haunts being about the banks of the river, along which they usually sailed, dexterously snatching up with their claws dead fish or other garbage that floated on the surface."

The colour of the Fish Crow is deep steel blue, and their flight is long and protracted. They can disgorge their food like vultures, when wounded and attempting to escape. The female is smaller than the male, and the gloss on the plumage is less bright. They are useful scavengers, and perform many valuable services to humanity.

British Cleanings.

THE REASON WHY.—A countryman visiting the famous convict prison at Dartmoor, observed that a gang of men were working on the moor, each wearing a ball and chain. He asked one of them why the ball was chained to his leg. "To keep people from stealing it," was the reply; "there are so many thieves about here."

POTATOES.—"We learn from the *Mark Lane Express* that the value of potatoes imported into the United Kingdom in 1854 was £17,467; in 1855, £10,196; in 1856, £19,222; in 1857, £175,091; in 1858, £337,821; in 1859, £101,038; in 1860, £136,576; in 1861, £112,347; in 1862, £333,842; in 1863, £241,129; in 1864, £142,986; and in 1865, £161,907."

THE DEMAND FOR REAPING MACHINES.—We learn from an English exchange that the demand for machines for harvesting corn is greater perhaps at the present moment than it has ever been known to be. All the makers, we are informed, are "overdone with orders." This state of things is partly due to the dearth of labour, and partly to the increased acreage of grass for hay, owing to the cattle plague.

IMPORTS OF BONES.—An English exchange says: "Baron Liebig, some time since, energetically protested against England's consuming such an enormous quantity of bones, but the imports last year amounted, nevertheless, to 74,307 tons, and in some years they have reached nearly 85,000 tons. They are principally used for manure and for charcoal for the sugar refiners."

TO KEEP ICE.—*Bell's Messenger* says:—"Make a double pocket of any kind of strong woollen cloth, no matter how coarse and faded it is. Have a space of two inches or so between the inner and outer pockets, and pack this space as full as possible with feathers. You have no need to use goose feathers; hen's feathers are just as good. With a pocket thus constructed and kept closely tied at the mouth, a few pounds of ice may be kept a week."

NOVEL AND DANGEROUS WAGER.—The *Elgin Courier's* Cromdale correspondent says:—"A servant lad in the employ of Mr. Rose, farmer, Dellisleure, laid a wager the other day against two of his fellow-servants, for half-a-crown each, that they would not stir for so many minutes a basin with a handful of snow and a handful of salt. The challenge was readily taken up by one of the men, named John Mackintosh, who succeeded in gaining the wager, but by the time the last minute was expired, his fingers got fixed in the ice. In a day or two he completely lost the use of his hand, and inflammation having set in, he suffered great agony, and had to apply to a doctor for relief. But for the timely relief afforded by the doctor, he would have lost the use of his arm for life. He is now in a fair way of recovery."

STRANGE SAGACITY IN A PONY.—A recent issue of the *Mark Lane Express* contains the following:—"I had a pony once which very frequently exhibited the following peculiarities: Whenever the pony had been turned out to graze, upon being fetched up and put into the carriage, it invariably turned lame after going a few yards; so lame, in fact, that frequently I had to turn back, not having the shame to drive an animal in such apparent pain. I say apparent, because no sooner had the pony been relieved of its harness than it used to canter round the field perfectly sound. The same pony when fetched from the stable would go perfectly well as long as it wished, but when I drove it in any direction contrary to its inclination it became lame directly; as soon as its head was turned homewards the lameness entirely disappeared."

BRITISH COAL FIELDS.—We learn from a British exchange that the Queen has appointed a commission "to investigate the probable quantity of coal contained in the coal-fields of the United Kingdom, and to report on the quantity of such coal which may be reasonably expected to be available for use; whether it is probable that coal exists, at workable depths, under the permian, new red sandstone, and other superincumbent strata; to enquire as to the quantity of coal consumed in the various branches of manufacture, for steam navigation, and for domestic purposes, as well as the quantity exported; and how far, and to what extent, such consumption and export may be expected to increase; and whether there is reason to believe that coal is wasted, either by bad working or by carelessness or neglect of proper appliances for its economical consumption."

INSECT WAX.—We clip the following paragraph from the *Farmer* (Scottish):—"The trade in this article in China is large. In 1864, from the single port of Hankow alone, 5,100 cwt. were exported. It is taken by the Chinese as medicine, but is principally used as stearine in the manufacture of candles. It is one of the most valuable of the many products of Sze-Chuen, being worth 60 and 70 taels per picul (133 lb.). The wax is deposited, for the protection of its eggs, by an insect which inhabits the trees on which the wax is secreted. The formation of the wax was a subject which occupied the especial attention of M. Simon, a French savant, who, a year or two ago, passed a considerable time in the interior, during which he is said to have traversed the greater portion of Sze-Chuen, and to have reached the eastern confines of Tibet. It is to be hoped the result of his researches into the products of the former fertile province will ere long be made public."

LARGE PRICE FOR A CALF.—We clip the following from the column of "Shorthorn Intelligence" in a recent issue of *Bell's Messenger*:—"Col. Kingscote, C.B., M.P., has incontestably shown his zeal as a shorthorn breeder and his partiality for the Bates sort of shorthorns, by buying at Wetherby Grange Captain Gunter's ten-weeks-old bull calf Third Duke of Clarence for 500 guineas. The calf is to go to Kingscote Park in less than a month from this time. Third Duke of Clarence is by Second Duke of Wharfedale (19649), and from Duchess the 80th by Grand Duke of Oxford (16181), her dam being Duchess the 72nd, and her granddam Duchess the 67th, by Fourth Duke of Oxford and Usurer respectively. Col. Kingscote's new purchase is a rich red roan, and is a very grand young animal. If Captain Gunter may claim congratulations as the seller at so large a price, congratulations are also due to Col. Kingscote as the possessor of a shorthorn at once so valuable and so good."

WHICH IS MORE PROFITABLE—TWO-YEAR OLD OR FOUR-YEAR OLD CATTLE?—A correspondent of the *Danfshire Journal* writes:—"A paragraph lately appeared in the newspapers recommending, as profitable, the feeding of four or five-year old cattle of the old Aberdeenshire breed, and, after two years of full feeding, selling them at an average of £35 a-head at the London Christmas market, the weight of the above at that date being from 9 cwt. to 10 cwt. each. Now cattle of the above weight, and only half of the above age, but of a different breed, have been reared and fed in the parish of Oldmeldrum, and were sold in the month of April last, weighing upwards of 9 cwt. One of them having met with an accident, was slaughtered by Mr. Morrison, fletcher in Oldmeldrum, and sent by him as dead meat to the London market, and sold there at the highest price of the day. The weight of beef returned was 133 stones and 6 lb., Smithfield weight, being upwards of 9½ cwt. The exact age of the animal was 24 months and three weeks. Some of the two-year old heifers were slaughtered by Mr. Milne, fletcher in Aberdeen, and weighed upwards of 8 cwt. Whether will the aged or the young cattle pay the rearer of them the best?"

CATTLE STATISTICS.—Dr. Parr, lecturing on our live-stock, at the Agricultural Society's rooms, Hanover-square, London, is reported in the *Mark Lane Express* to have said that "we have now in our hands for the first time, an enumeration of the live stock of the United Kingdom." This is a mistake. The schedules sent out by the Board of Trade to be filled up by the farmers were thrown in the fire in many instances; in others, a beggarly account of empty stalls was sent in, five being substituted for twenty; in many others, the schedules were returned blank. "A burned child dreads the fire." Farmers, particularly the smaller ones, are a jealous and distrustful race; and they think that all papers of the kind referred to, when presented to them, are meant to entrap them in some way, and oblige them to pay more taxes. Hence great numbers refused to supply the information sought on the 5th of March last; and the so-called enumeration is, consequently, worthless.

NON-EXPLOSIVE STEAM BOILER FOR FIXED ENGINES.—"It affords us great satisfaction," says *Bell's Messenger*, "to announce that Mr. James Howard, after devoting much attention to the subject, has succeeded in making a perfectly non-explosive steam-boiler for fixed engines. A saving of fuel is also effected to an extent that will relieve us from all anxiety as to our supply of coal becoming exhausted within the time calculated upon by Mr. Jevons and Mr. J.S. Mill. We understand that the boiler has been in use for some months, and has been tested in such a manner as to establish beyond all doubt its efficiency and economy. We heartily congratulate Mr. Howard on his discovery, the value of which, whether we regard its bearing upon the saving of human life, and the prevention of suffering from those frightful accidents which are of such frequent occurrence, or the economy which it will effect in the use of one of the principal material sources of the greatness and prosperity of England, it is impossible to overestimate."

SIX-STRUCK SALMON.—The *Carlisle Journal* states that:—"Several hundreds of salmon and salmon trout were found upon Burgh Marsh, on the Cumberland shore of the Solway Firth, last week under very extraordinary circumstances. Many were lying dead upon the Marsh, where they had been left dry by the receding tide, and others were floating languidly about in the small pools of water on the shore in a sickly and dying state. As the coast-guardsmen had been exercising a close surveillance over the nets at Bowness and Port-Carlisle during the week, it was at first conjectured that these fish had been thrown out by fishermen who had been infringing the law by fishing at improper times. This supposition, however, proved incorrect; and the conjecture that they had been poisoned was also abandoned as absurd. Old fishermen of the district have now arrived at the conclusion that the salmon, in making their way up the shallow water near the estuaries of the rivers had been visited by something like a sunstroke, the weather having been hotter than had been experienced for many years. The fish were picked up by the inhabitants of the district, to whom they afforded many cheap and dainty meals."

DIMINISHING PAIN.—The *Pall-Mall Gazette* notices an important addition to the means of diminishing pain which has been made by an English physician, who has introduced a new method of producing local insensibility to the knife. "Chloroform robs the most terrible surgical procedures of the worst horrors which formerly surrounded them, and has even rendered possible some operations which could hardly have been attempted without it; but it has its own peril—the peril of death. Surgeons justly encourage their patients by reciting to them the statistics of fatal accidents under chloroform, which, incomplete though they be, demonstrate the extreme rarity of such misfortunes. It has, however, been observed by all authors who have collected these cases that a remarkable large proportion of recorded deaths have occurred where only minor operations have been contemplated. Hence a rapid and efficient means of producing local anaesthesia, and one free from any of the constitutional risks attending the administration of chloroform, is a boon of great price. Dr. B. W. Richardson effects his result by directing on the skin a finely divided spray of pure ether, using an ingenious modification of the spray tubes lately much in vogue as toys for diffusing perfumes. A rapid blanching of the skin and insensibility to pain follow in from about thirty seconds to two minutes. Upwards of a hundred operations have within the last few weeks been painlessly conducted under this method. It is only likely to be generally useful for superficial operations; but these are so often undergone at the cost of great terror and anguish through dread of the risks of chloroform, that the value of this invention must be very great."