

NATURE STUDY LESSONS

2. MIGRATION AND GENERAL HABITS.

(a) Observations to be made by pupils.

- Do any crows remain throughout the winter?
- At what period in the spring do crows appear?
- Do they come in flocks?
- At what season are they seen in the largest flocks?
- When do they depart?
- What kind of perches do they light on?
- Do they migrate during the day or night?
- State ways in which they show their superior intelligence.
- Inquire from old settlers if the crows have increased or diminished in numbers.

(b) To the teacher.

The crows remain in small numbers throughout the winter. They pick up what food they can find, but the majority are giving our farmers a rest and are worrying the southern agriculturist by rooting up his peanuts or cropping the rice. They return early in April to survey the most likely corn fields. They are usually found in flocks of from fifty to one hundred. During the autumn they collect in the evening in immense flocks to roost and each morning scatter over a large area to forage for food. The bird is defiant in its fearlessness. Though no laws protect him, and the farmer is ever on his trail with a shotgun, he perches in the most conspicuous places, swarms the open fields and migrates in broad daylight. He depends on his wariness to outwit the farmer, and the story of how he detects a shotgun and avoids it, more than establishes his reputation. Though an outlaw, and attacked with guns, traps and poison, he thrives in well-settled districts and the universal testimony is that he is becoming more numerous with the settling up of the country. Really the best thing to do is to treat him philosophically, consider him a necessary evil (if evil he is) and settle down and enjoy him. For after all he is a most intelligent and entertaining gentleman and, if he recognizes you as a friend, will condescend to treat you with respect and allow the inquisitive naturalist to inquire into all his ways at close range.