

The Alton, Ill., Horticultural Society voted by a three-fourths majority "to wipe out the Catawba as a worthless rotten thing." There was a strong protest from the minority.

There is an extraordinary dearth of peaches this year in France. The market gardeners of Montreuil, the great source of their Paris supply, estimate the deficiency of their products as compared with an average crop, at £80,000.

In the latest edition of *Downing's Fruit and Fruit Trees of America*, Charles Downing gives the following list of Strawberries that have done well in his experience: *Agriculturist*, Charles Downing, *Downer's Prolific*, *French's Green Prolific*, *Hovey's Seedling Jucunda*, *Longworth's Napoleon III*, *Royal Hautbois*, *Triomphe de Grand*, *Wilson's Albany*.

GRAPES IN IOWA.—At a recent meeting of the Horticulturists at Greenwood, Iowa, whose proceedings are reported in the *Iowa Homestead*, the *Martha*, *Hartford Prolific*, *Clinton*, and *Concord* were all highly spoken of. The *Catawba* had no friends.

GRAPES IN MICHIGAN.—A correspondent of the *Michigan Farmer* says, the varieties that have done best in his locality the past season, are the *Delaware*, *Iona*, *Concord*, *Hartford Prolific*, *Anna*, and a black grape called *Early July*.

Our Country.

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES FOR DECEMBER.

December gales have swept from the trees the last remnants of their withered foliage, and except where relieved by the sombre green of the pine or the hemlock, the spruce or the cedar, the woods are bare and desolate.

The fields are covered with a deep mantle of snow, over which the keen north wind is blowing and piling up great drifts against fence and bank, yet are we not without the cheerful sounds of bird-life, despite the inclemency of the weather, and many "a feathered friend," may be seen, (by those who are observant of such matters) braving alike the stormy wind and drifting snow, and finding the means of subsistence and of enjoyment, even at this inhospitable season.

Among the first of our December visitors to attract attention are those beautiful little birds, the *Snow Bunting* (*Plectrophanes Nivalis*). Flying high over head, their white plumage glistening in the sun, and uttering their short cheery notes, they may be heard almost before they are seen. Suddenly the whole flock swoops down from their airy height,

and alighting on the ground, run quickly about, feeding upon the seeds of grasses or wild plants protruding above the snow, or picking up any oats or other grains which they may find among the droppings of the cattle on the road side.

These birds seem to prefer the most exposed localities, and are most frequently found roving over some bleak common, or sweeping in whirling flocks with the drifting snow along the storm-swept shores of our inland lakes.

Sometimes when food is more scarce than usual they will approach the farm yard or the barn in search of seeds or chance grain. They are generally, however, plump and fat, and are consequently esteemed a dainty morsel, and large numbers of these pretty birds, especially in Lower Canada, fall victims to the gun of the pot-hunter.

The flight of the *Snow Bunting* is both rapid and graceful. It sweeps through the air in long easy undulations, uttering as it flies, sometimes a quick rapidly-repeating chirp, sometimes a soft whistling call-note.

They are very nimble while on the ground, and quick and dexterous in procuring food, which consists of various kinds of seeds, the larvae of insects, and minute shell-fish, with all of which they frequently mix a little sand or fine gravel.

They are not known to breed in Canada, as they leave us in March, and wing their way to "the far north," and the business of incubation is probably carried on amid the dreary wastes of Greenland, or the wilds of Labrador. A single nest of this bird, however, has been found on a declivity of the White Mountains, of New Hampshire. It was seen by a Boston gentleman, and the circumstance is recorded by Audubon. It is described as being "fixed on the ground, amid low bushes, and formed like that of the song sparrow." It contained young ones. The plumage of these birds varies in different individuals; the young birds have more of the reddish-brown marking about them, and less pure white.

The head of the adult male is a brownish-white, the crown and ear coverts pale chestnut; hind neck, greyish-white tinged with chestnut; feathers of the back, brownish, margined and broadly tipped with light yellowish-red; the rump feathers white, tipped with the latter