

Would it not be possible for every child to have some occupation of his or her own choice? Would there not be an education in following it that can not be derived from lessons assigned by a teacher? Do not the very best lessons grow out of occupations? Is not the school more or less artificial?

Of course, an occupation to have educational value must be pursued thoughtfully. There is very little in hoeing

turnips as a piece of drudgery, but there is everything in raising turnips for pleasure or for profit, and in such case the hoeing becomes a most interesting performance. So it is in every occupation. It is necessary to get into things the element of self-interest. Education is not a mechanical process but a living process. The greatest educator said, "I have come that they might have life."

FARMERS' BIRD ASSISTANTS

By J. D. A. EVANS

With the commencement of the nesting season we are privileged to observe the wondrous ingenuity of God's little feathered architects, a majority of whom have returned to Manitoba from distant zones, perchance flown high above roar of sea storm in the journey from islands wherein climatic condition permits bird life to spend winter in comfort and ample sustenance.

The writer does not profess to be a practical exponent of Manitoba's ornithological features. Nevertheless, residence of many years in this province has furnished him opportunity to study its bird life and the application of such toward its economic value to agriculture.

Usually by the first week of May, a greater part of the bird migration has arrived in Manitoba. Adequate protection of insect worms or insect destroying birds has become a question of vital importance to the farmer. Within recent date it has been computed that if the family of insect devouring birds became extinct in Manitoba, within a few years the grain fields could not possibly raise a crop. Until even a recent period certain birds highly valuable in the extermination of insect pests were erroneously considered enemies of the farmer, and very destructive to grain and seeds. As example, the robin, one of the first feathered arrivals, was deemed a plunderer of the farm garden fruit bushes. But investigation of the charge has acquitted the robin,

the diet of which consists principally of harmful insects and worms.

A list of the most important insectivorous bird visitors to Manitoba comprises: Robin, Cat-bird, Wren, King-bird, Oriole, Shrike, Jay, Woodpecker, Chickadee. To this number may likewise be added that alleged egg and chicken thief, the crow.

Indeed, the crow is one of the very few birds which consider potato bugs as a leading feature of the menu card. The bluejay rejoices in a repast of cut-grubs and caterpillars. The woodpecker may be justly adjudicated a most potent factor in the destruction of insect life. The principal hunting ground of this bird consists of tree trunks, from which is removed every available grub, the woodpecker's beak drilling deeply into the timber and abstracts pests immune from attacks of other birds. From the day the sparrow arrived in Manitoba, its character has been stained with a charge of grain theft. The case cannot stand; careful scrutiny of the sparrow's habits will reveal the fact that it is a very decided enemy of caterpillars. The shrike, otherwise butcher bird, possesses great capacity for insect diet of every description. Hawks, owls, regarded enemies of the poultry yard, undoubtedly perform much useful work in the annihilation of mice and gophers. A deadly agent against insects is the swallow. The whip-poor-will must also be the recipient of notice; and reference is necessary concerning the night-hawk,