

# Vox Collegii

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*"Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit."*

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## LESSONS FROM THE BIRDS AND FLOWERS

Observers and students of birds tell us that man possesses hardly a trait which is not reflected in the life of some bird, industry, love, hate, courage, vice, constancy, fickleness, generosity, selfishness, wit, curiosity, memory and reason. Truly a long list of attributes from which we may draw many lessons.

With few exceptions, all birds are industrious. Who has not seen the cheerful persistent sparrow, toiling to raise a long straw to his nest, under the eaves of your home. Often he attempts more than he can first accomplish. He gets up so high, when the weight of his load will bear him to the ground. He looks at it, twitters awhile, shakes his head defiantly and tries again; probably making detours with his load to a post or fence, where he wisely rests for a short time. Then with a final effort he flies to the goal—his nest, where noisy bragging pronounces his victory. He and his mate then shape the straw into the nest, and away they go after more material.

Let us notice next, how sagacious birds are. They all show great wisdom in selecting the position for their nest. It will be the most sheltered spot in the vicinity, against cold winds from the west and north. A bird's main idea when depositing its eggs, is that they shall be safe from enemies of all kinds and unfavorable weather conditions. Then, too, a careful examination of their home will convince anyone that it is a work of art. The red-winged black-bird (whose nest is unusually built

among reeds, flags or bushes) makes its nest very much deeper when the place selected is subject to strong winds, than in more sheltered spots—and then, as a further safeguard the mouth of the nest contracts so that the eggs will not fall out when the flags are swayed by the winds. The Baltimore Oriole hangs his well-built nest, a masterpiece of bird architecture, on the extreme end of an overhanging branch where nothing but a winged enemy can reach it. Yet no matter how adverse the circumstances may be their modest chant always suggests good cheer and contentment.

The thrifty woodpeckers so common in our Ontario groves are very thoughtful for the future and when the nuts are ripe, they store them away in the knot holes of trees, between cracks in the bark and decayed fence rails. These stores are drawn upon when the ground is covered with snow and food is scarce and hard to get.

Cleanliness is a term that may be applied to nearly all birds. We watch them bathing in the clear cool streams. The economic value of birds to the human race is great indeed. Scientists tell us that if we were deprived of the service of birds the earth would soon become uninhabitable. In the air swallows and swifts are coursing rapidly to and fro—ever in pursuit of the insects which constitute their sole food. When they retire the nighthawks and whip-poor-wills take up the chase, catching moths and other nocturnal insects which would escape day-flying birds. The warblers, light, active