

SPRING SPLENDOUR

ELIZABETH CRUICKSHANK, Regina

"The world is too much with us" wrote Wordsworth long ago; "little we see in nature that is ours, it moves us not, we are out of tune."

I thought of the sonnet as we drove along the Craven road in early April checking the signs of spring. Crocuses opened purple faces to the sun on sheltered hillsides but, as wee Nancy noticed, most of them had their fur coats still buttoned up. Chamaerhodos rosettes were freshly green. Brown buds were swollen on leafless trees. Water was rushing in crescendo at the dam. Water beetles had awakened to busy life. Willows shone vividly red by the river. Meadowlarks, robins, tree sparrows flitted about with trig dark juncos. Hawks were gliding and flapping, flapping and gliding over the stubble. Hills were charming in blue cloud shadow. Then a glimpse the poet would have found heart-warming — sunshine turned into song — as bits of heaven, Mt. Bluebirds, flew to the fence beside us unconcerned that we were overwhelmed by their beauty and nearness. No wonder another poet was moved to declare:

"Ah, you are a poem of April
That God endowed with wings!"

In the hill pasture pussy willows were fat and striking in black and white, one tree in contrast though was all pink and copper-brown. Wolf Willow's silver round fruit hung in strange quantity. Yarrow's feathery leaves made emerald patches in the brown grass. Again we were suddenly aware of rare beauty: Pelicans newly arrived, appeared overhead, wheeling and banking in close harmony, mood music guiding them. Our hearts beat in rhythm as a hundred spectacular birds made a symphony of flight.

Tall trees, black and moving, by a farmhouse, swayed not with wind but with hundreds of blackbirds, red-winged and rusty, restlessly settling as they funnelled in from their long journey, a sight and sound never to forget.

Every slough held peeps and ducks in variety, so did the fields. Judy

pointed to tall birds in the distance to startle us with sight of eleven sandhill cranes resting. Mourning doves, sparrow hawks, a flock of blue herons flying as we drove home in pleasant company made us feel earth this day was surely "crammed with heaven."

Later, as a magnificent climax to April's pageant, a few miles from home we saw thousands of geese arrive to graze and rest en route to their ice-rim breeding grounds. Peterson says "geese symbolize the mystery of migration more than any other birds." Fascinated we watched the great skeins darken the blue skies. Canada geese, snow geese, blue geese, brants, swans — great patches of black and white. Noble wild and beautiful creatures gabbled and honked, giant wings spread as they glided to earth or creek. How we wished them luck as they answered the call of the north.

Quiet, we were suddenly conscious of the cold. Coffee and sunset and then thousands and thousands more birds flew in from all directions. We watched in hypnotic fascination, the mystery of it all.

The light faded but sound remained tender, whispering now. Our feelings as we shivered with excitement and chill were that we had caught a glimpse of a glory beyond our ken, so wild, so powerful in its simplicity.

The world is too much with us?
Not if we, and Nature, are in tune.
Then it moves us mightily!

Outing At Green Water Lake

This summer outdoor meeting of our Society was announced in our last issue. Keep the date in mind, Saturday and Sunday, June 12 and 13. If interested in reservations write to Dr. Stuart Houston, Yorkton, stating what accommodation is required. Plan to attend.