

in the bath, our two-year old trying to join them. Where were they when the bath was ice-bound, we wonder!

Last week by the Wascana we saw our first Townsend's Solitaire. Peterson terms it a "confusing bird" and "Taverner" a bird typical of high mountain solitudes, surrounded with an air of mystery that piques the imagination."

Why here — now?

Perhaps there is our answer to why once nature-lovers, always nature-lovers: the mystery and the beauty of it.

Einstein said "He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead, his eyes are closed."

This seeking and wonderment in the pulsing life all about us in the great outdoors is ours to share — to light a spark to tinder perhaps, for out of experience we have learned that

*"What thou lovest well, remains,
the rest is dross."*

The Husbandman

By Rose McLaughlin, Indian Head,
Sask.

In Bible times the farmer was called a husbandman, because in that primitive, pastoral setting men were more sharply aware than we are today of the relationship between humankind and the nurturing soil. For the earth is very feminine — beautiful, fruitful, sustaining, growing more lovely the more it is loved, but becoming harsh, ugly and barren when it is prostituted by greedy men.

When I was a child I used to pass by a spring on my way to school. The first green grass of the year grew tender on its lip, birds built in the willows on its bank, and crops grew lush in the field around it. But every year men sheared closer and closer, breaking the flowered sod at last to its brink. Then came the drouth of the thirties, and the blow-dirt formed a scum on the face of that beautiful, life-giving pool, choking, blinding, burying it, 'till nothing remains today but a rough, weedy hollow in a field.

Springs are not plentiful on the prairie, but many years later I found another. Great trees flung their



Frank Wilson of Caron, Sask., and the "Weeping Birch" in his garden.

branches across it and the surrounding shelterbelts protected within their walls an orchard and a terraced flower garden, and between the two a wide, sunny picnic ground. Down through the years, while the ever-greens grew higher, and the orchard grew wider, and the lily pond came into being, and the weeping birch grew up beside it, and the familiar flowers made room for exotic strangers, visitors have flocked to the place, drawn by its ever-changing, never-ending charm — the flowering and fading, the fruiting and falling, in a kaleidoscope of loveliness.

And during the dry years, when the ravaging winds scoured great pits in the over-cropped soil of the surrounding farmlands, this spring with its encircling gardens became a sanctuary of beauty — beauty evoked by a man who loved and appreciated and *husbanded* his land.

It is exactly fifty years since the owner, an emigrant from Edinburgh, Scotland, discovered the spring on the quarter east of his homestead, and bought the land, as being an ideal location for a scheme he had in mind. For the garden he created there existed first in his heart — just as the deserts which stretch across the once-fertile plains of North Africa and Central Asia were created by men with deserts in their hearts.