

The Country of White Clover. H. E. Bates. *Michael Joseph, 12/6*

This distillation of a practised writer's delight in country matters is far more than a mere collection of essays, well though Mr. Bates turns his hand to that genre, in addition to the novel and short story. Here he has recalled a journey northwards through France in the van of spring, noted the slender pink and mauve Canterbury bells about Sevenoaks, flown from Lympne to Etaples to view all summer in a day and followed the changes attendant upon the seasons—changes not only in Nature's outward costume but implicit in his own reactions. His prose is shot with the delicate colours of Kent and Sussex, but sometimes, too, it bursts apart with a sudden explosion of forceful expression—much as the soft gentleness of a field of English clover would be disrupted by a patch of Madeira's summer dress. A book to linger through with the author, whether sidling along the valleys of Wales in a local train, basking in the blazing sun of southern Europe, or listening to the wisdom of the surviving countryman.