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THE CINEMA

"Western Union." At the Gaumont.——"I Wanted Wings." At the Plaza and the Carlton.

Western Union is a title that conjures up so many romantic vistas of American life that the film can scarcely be expected to fulfil all the promise of its name. Yet Fritz Lang directed it, and, remembering, during the opening titles, his *Metropolis* and *Fury*, one hoped he had brought to the screen the torrent of drama which flows along a nation's telegraph-system. Over its wires Western Union has carried, in millions of urgent phrases, almost a hundred years of American history. Its telegraph-forms have tersely recorded not only the epic moments of the nation's story, but the birth, happiness, sorrow and death of hundreds of thousands of citizens. Here, clearly, is material for as great a film as ever was made. But when the titles are over, Randolph Scott, strikingly handsome in Technicolor, is discovered at full gallop across the prairie pursued by the sheriff's posse, and from the start it looks suspiciously as if the film were all western with very little union. Such, indeed, proves to be the case. *Western Union* hasn't much to say about communication, and the morse-key is accessory only to the revolver. It is true that a timely message on an emergency-line saves an advance-guard of linesmen from scalping by redskins, but otherwise there is a general disposition to assume that the telegraph-line must go through and theirs not to reason why. Abraham Lincoln does send a polite official message saying that his Government must have quick communication with the West, and the almost accidental revelation that during the period of the film the Civil War is in progress comes as something of a shock. The war provides an opportunity for local cattle-rustlers to disguise themselves as redskins and claim to be Confederate guerillas, but otherwise does not disturb the work of extending the transcontinental telegraph from Omaha to Salt Lake City. And this, in its turn, does not disturb the successful efforts of Randolph Scott to change from bad man to hero, nor complicate the time-honoured process of converting Robert Young from a wealthy tenderfoot from the East into a wise Westerner. Slim Summerville provides some nice comedy, but John Carridine is still searching in vain for the worth-while parts which he earned by his performance as Jim Casy in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Hard-riding, hard-shooting Western dramas continue to be the most consistently entertaining of films, and *Western Union*, if it had changed its name and forgotten about telegraphy, would have been a good example of this normally unpretentious *genre*. The prairie in Technicolor, a terrifying forest-fire and a gun-duel finale in the *Stage Coach* manner is good enough for anyone's money.

I Wanted Wings is about learning to fly in the U.S. Army Air Corps. The approach is highly romantic, and the attitude of the young men towards their vocation is informed with a shining mysticism which takes no account of purposes. To our sophisticated European eyes it all may appear a little remote from life. To anyone who has ever experienced a night-raid, the air-raid exercise over Los Angeles is comic in its improbability. There is a conventional love-interest, and the old excitements of flying and crashing are even more brilliantly photographed than usual. The most remarkable thing about this film is its insistence that an ordinary mechanic, a non-University man, who succeeds in becoming a pilot has achieved something very remarkable indeed. Perhaps it was naïve of us to assume that in America wings would be allowed to sprout from the most plebeian shoulders.

EDGAR ANSTEY.

EUTHANASIA

SOMETIMES Death tires of all the old and tattered
Souls that stand thronging at his dark iron gate,
Of eyes lack-lustre and of limbs scar-shattered,
Aims for a child and lets the ancients wait.

Children die carelessly; and not delaying
For any ties, slip out and silent pass
That Pluto may delight to see them playing
With his pale queen upon the withered grass.

DAVID WINSER.

COUNTRY LIFE

Wildfowl Inquiry

It is a fairly long time since I was able to give any news of the International Committee for Bird Preservation. Perhaps I hardly need to say that this war has hit it tragically hard. The delicate business of drawing up plans for an International Convention for the Protection of the Birds of Europe had been going on for some years, and preliminary suggestions were being laid before the various governments concerned; but now, the secretary tells me, every bit of that work has been lost. In spite of it, the British section of the committee, with the orphan Polish section adopted, carries on, and at last its report on the International Wildfowl Inquiry appears: Vol. I: *Wild Geese and Wild Duck* (Cambridge University Press, 8s. 6d.). During the past century conditions governing the habits and distribution of wild fowl in various parts of the world, especially Europe and North America, have been revolutionised. Destruction has been greatly increased by the internal-combustion engine, the steam-engine, and the breech-loading gun, for example, and these three factors especially revolutionised distribution. Volume I of the report examines all the evidence, including migration, decoys, ringing of duck, the distribution of sea-shore plants, punt-gunning, close-time and so on, in a series of expert chapters. British decoys are, by the way, dying out, and the punt-gunner, rather surprisingly, is acquitted of the usual charge of mass-murder. Miss Phyllis Barclay-Smith appeals finally for a close-season in Europe—perhaps with little idea of how much we all agree with her.

Walking Pike

On a hot evening the water was bright, like brown-golden wine, and the fish were not biting well. They were walking on the water. All evening you could see this happening. Wherever the water-lilies were thick enough you could see great pike come up at intervals and wallow on the pads, clear of the water, and then move across them, not swimming apparently, but wallowing on their bellies, playing like seals. Sometimes there would be as many as half a dozen moving at a time, huge brown-steel creatures, wallowing in a kind of heavy frenzy of pleasure at the contact of warm air, milky water and sun. Then for a few moments they would lie quiet, and you wondered where they were until suddenly the dark water of a quiet place was splintered with silver scraps of flying fish, and the coot were sent screaming into the reeds for cover. Then the pike would play like seals among the lilies again, rocking the leaves violently as they wallowed on the surface, leaving the tall yellow lily-flowers trembling and swaying long after they had gone.

Railway Flowers

I do not recall ever seeing a word in praise of railway-flowers; not the flowers of the country-station, but of the cuttings. In early spring the primroses in the south were as splendid as ever on the steep banks by the woodlands, but there were few cowslips. But in Oxfordshire, and across the Cotswolds into Gloucestershire, miles upon miles of deep golden cowslips ran by the track, glowing deeply in the cold spring air. In Bedfordshire, in June, there was a place where Canterbury bells had sown themselves for a mile or two all along a deep cutting, mauve and pink and white, and another that was plushy pink with valerian. Earlier there was another rocky cutting red and brown with wallflowers; several flaming with gorse and broom. By midsummer there were banks of wild strawberries, and everywhere snowy cascades of moon-daisy. In August there will be a glory of bay willow-herb, and in Scotland forests of foxglove, and just now, in Virginia, miles of golden day-lily running by the negro-shacks on the edges of the woodland.

In the Garden

There are several methods of saving tomato-seed. The best I have seen is also the simplest. Fruit is taken from selected plants (I have seen a plant of *Plumpton King* recently, bearing fifty tomatoes to a truss) after it is dead ripe. The tomatoes are then packed into seed-boxes of soil, which should just cover them. The boxes are then left in a dry warm place—on the greenhouse shelf preferably—for the rest of the summer. Under sun the tomatoes will gradually wizen, becoming completely juiceless and fleshless, so that finally only the sun-dried seed remains. Two other tips: spray plants in the early morning with clear tepid water and regard with suspicion any plant that tries to send out rootlets above the soil.

H. E. BATES.

always regarded such magnificent translations as the authorised version of the Psalms and the last chapters of *Ecclesiastes* and Butcher and Lang's *Odyssey* as prose, not poetry. The prose is permeated by the poetic spirit and informed by imagery such as poets use, but the rhythm, being free, cannot be anticipated by the ear as it can in poetry. Some form of scansion or foreseeable stresses seems an inescapable constituent of poetry. No doubt painters who make "poems in colour" and architects who fashion "poems in stone" are loosely referred to as poets, and similarly some writers now producing poems in prose claim, or have claims made for them, to be poets. But this seems a new and secondary meaning.—Yours truly,

23-28 Fleet Street. ARTHUR MOORE.

SIR,—The belief of Mr. Winser that Hebrew poetry does not "scan" is correct, if that word is interpreted rigidly. But, though the Hebrew poets were not bound by a tonal, accentual, and syllabic arrangement such as characterises, *e.g.*, an hexameter, they worked under rules of pulsating rhythm and symmetry, both in sound and thought-expression, which make their verse as delightful and emotion-stirring, both to ear and mind, as any of the familiar classical poetic modes. Hebrew poetry uses twenty different accents which indicate tonal stress, or distinction and parallelism of ideas, and by their aid the expert reader aloud can achieve a kind of melodic flow at least as beautiful as that of most other poetic forms.—Yours faithfully,

5A Gledhow Gardens, London, S.W. 5. H. MARTYN SANDERS.

SLAUGHTER ON THE ROADS

SIR,—I should like to explain why I oppose Lord Fairfield's proposal, fair at first sight, to penalise pedestrians for not wearing white patches in the darkness. (Persuasion is another matter—I wore such a patch before the war and I preach the virtue of such a practice.) Pedestrians have already the fear of death and fear of a fine is not likely to have a greater effect. To make the wearing of a white patch a legal obligation means that the absence of such a patch is reckoned a negligence, and therefore in case of a death the motorist is at once absolved and no enquiry is made whether he was driving recklessly and dangerously. The magistrates, coroners and chief officers of police are motorcar-minded and seize any such excuse. We have an object-lesson in the red rear-light for bicycles. It did not protect bicycles. On the other hand, the rear-light encouraged cars to go faster and increased the fatalities of pedestrians as well as bicyclists. The cyclist is easy game. Prosecutions were numerous and fines of a quarter of a week's wages were common. There were no prosecutions of motorists for exceeding the speed proper to dimmed lights. There were few prosecutions for disregarding speed-limits and fines did not reach a quarter of a week's salary or income. The pedestrian would be even easier game than the cyclist; the consequent bad feeling even greater. The motorist is hard to stop and hard to get convicted. But prosecutions here and there, now and then, are feasible and would inspire caution. If prosecutions of motorists could, by indicators or otherwise, be rendered easy and likely to obtain convictions, and if they were steadily enforced, then the regulations for pedestrians and cyclists could be tightened. A fifteen m.p.h. limit is better than a twenty, but better still would be the enforcement of the duty of the motorist to adjust his speed to his own lights and his prosecution for dangerous driving if he did not adjust it.—Yours faithfully,

Cade House, Heathfield, Sussex. F. GATES.

A QUESTION OF COUPONS

SIR,—In the beginning of March I ordered two summer shirts before there was any suggestion of coupons for clothes. The delivery of material was held up at the factory and the shirts were never ready for me until the other day. The shirtmakers now claim coupons in respect of these two shirts, which seems to me utterly unreasonable, and there are cases of much more hardship than mine. Surely at a time like this bureaucrats should moderate their zeal for tyranny.—Yours, &c., E. S. P. HAYNES.

9 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, W.C. 2.

WATERLESS ALLOTMENTS

SIR,—I think it would be a good idea to bring to the notice of the councils the urgency for providing allotments with a source of water. We have rallied to the call of the Government to "Dig for Victory" and have been planning, as they instructed, to provide ourselves with vegetables all through the winter, but our crops which we planted in spring are dying through lack of water, and until it rains we will not be able to transplant anything. A few people are fortunate in having their allotments within a yard or two of their house, but the majority, like us, who live about a mile away, cannot carry water to our allotments and have to rely solely upon the weather, which at this time of the year hardens and cracks the ground, in which hardly anything can survive. I sincerely hope that something will be done about this in the near future, else this year's crops will be ruined.—Yours faithfully, D. L. HARRIS.

9 Morford Way, Eastcote, Ruislip, Middlesex.

COUNTRY LIFE

Village Shop

All country dwellers, and I suppose most country visitors, know the village shop. Stocking everything from candles to calico, seeds to sardines, it was almost a comic institution in times of peace. Its smell was unique in the world. Now the war has hit it, as it has hit most small shops, very hard. Its stocks were first seriously depleted by evacuees, then by soldiers. By the time serious rationing was in force it found that many of its customers preferred registering with larger concerns. Its shelves, normally fascinating with everything from tea to teething powders, grew emptier and emptier. The big house was empty; the well-to-do had let their houses. It was threatened also by London stores which delivered a higher quality and range of goods far out into the country. And one began to hear stories of its being threatened by something else. One heard of large concerns buying out small country shops which were in difficulties, keeping the shopkeeper in residence and offering to sell back the business after the war—at a price. The country shopkeeper has still another grievance. His stock is now doled out to him from a central depot, where presumably large supplies are concentrated. He is down far below a month's supply. He is wondering what will happen in case of invasion, when he will be perhaps the only local source of goods for three or four hundred people. He is probably right in urging a redistribution of goods now, rather than at a time of emergency, when redistribution will be a far more difficult and perhaps impossible thing.

Honey and Mead

Honey is off the ration; nectar is free for all, and many people may have been surprised that honeycombs are now more than double their normal price. They are apt to forget that the honey season is short, and that bees used to be sugar-fed in winter. Sugar being in short supply and double its former price, it is not surprising that honeycombs are expensive. There are, of course, honeycombs and honeycombs. There is still the honeycomb that can be bought for two shillings, and there is still the honeycomb that tastes like slightly sweetened chewing-gum. My part-time gardener, whose honey takes second prize in the open-to-the-world class, and whose mead takes first for All England, is naturally derisive of such honey. Nevertheless, it is a little disturbing to find an excellent Guatemalan honey coming into the country at about sixpence less than the home bee-keeper can produce it. It is also interesting to find that mead is still made and that there is still a class for it in open competition. Mead is a highly potent and pleasant drink, which sells at something between seven and ten shillings a pint. Finally, a correspondent seeks information about holy bees. I am completely ignorant, and so is my bee-keeper. Perhaps a correspondent can help?

Crazy Coot

"Crazy as a coot" is an expression heard more perhaps in America than here, but it has a firm basis in fact. On a hot June evening I was startled by a great commotion in the reeds of a pond. After a moment out came a pair of coot. Like two birds in a Disney film, they floundered at great speed towards the centre of the pond. There they stopped, reversed and turned up their white and black fan-tails to each other. They then retreated slightly, manoeuvred for position, and all of a sudden flew at each other backwards, with tails fiercely outspread. They repeated the attack several times. Between each attack there was a crazy interval of manoeuvre, in which they gravely waltzed round and round each other with a kind of sinister caution, like a pair of Apache dancers. Then suddenly they would fly at each other again and fight their extraordinary rearguard action, cackling madly, banging their tails at each other, at once very comic and very serious. When the performance was over they left the ring with rather dignified grace and retired to the reeds again, where they appeared to be on the most charming terms with each other.

In the Garden

Rather late, the roses have been magnificent. The singles and the species were never such a joy. The little single *Hugonis* and the cherry *Moyseii* surpassed themselves. The Penzance briars seemed richer in tone and the old perpetuals were never better, with their fragrance of claret and cold cream. The climbers were a lesson in something or other: either nature or laziness. Pruned varieties bloomed moderately. Unpruned varieties were bowed to the ground with thousands of blooms. Remember, by the way, to put in some cuttings of climbers, Wichurianas and ramblers. Two-foot shoots of young growth stamped hard into the ground in bunches will root quickly. August and September is, however, early enough. But it is well to mark out particularly desirable varieties now. I find varieties like *Dr. van Fleet*, *Crimson Rambler* and the delicious old *François Juranville* as vigorous from cuttings as from grafted stock. Bush roses can be similarly treated, and cuttings do well under cloches or under jam jars used as cloches. This is generally held to be against the best rules, but many older garden roses are certainly on their own roots and do magnificently.

H. E. BATES.

of it, about their theory of life as members of the human family. The inhumanities of the social order we have hitherto known spring from the sovereignty of mammon in the hearts of men everywhere. Acquisitiveness, pride of possession, the lust of power are universal, and they are anti-Christian, root and branch. Christians must "face the facts" or their Christianity will evaporate into nebulous "other-worldliness." But—they must be "other-worldly" before they can contribute to the founding of the Kingdom of God.—Yours faithfully,

5A Gledhow Gardens, London, S.W. 5. H. Martyn Sanders.

Sir,—Dr. Relton raises the old but always unanswered question of the Christian policy. He puts it thus: "The primary and essential function of the Church is not to produce 'Christian' programmes, but 'Christians.'" This question is not answered because it has no answer. It is—I beg Dr. Relton's pardon—a silly question. We cannot "produce Christians" in a vacuum. We have to produce them in this world, *i.e.,* we cannot neglect either the world or the individual. Christ produced a good many Christians by healing their bodies ("And straightway he received his sight, and followed Him in the way"). Others were produced by the appeal of His personality and preaching. Does it matter in the end what brought us to Christ if we are brought? The Prodigal Son was received with joy though he only came because he was hungry. The Archbishop of York and many others are trying to produce the sort of world which will produce Christians. No one will doubt that they are trying to produce Christians in all other ways open to them. But why set one method against another?—Yours, &c., Maude Royden.

Nestlewood, Bayley's Hill, Sevenoaks.

MINING REALITIES

Sir,—I feel that I would like to write to you about mining and miners, as both are very much in the news just now. The country at large is hearing now of the failure of the "Ministry of Labour" to secure men for return to the coal-mines. For this reason there is to be registration of all ex-miners who have spent six months in a coal-mine since 1935, presumably to compel such men to return. That, I think, is useless, for, while they can be forced to go back, they will not be forced to win coal. Why? To answer this question I will try to describe the mining conditions—very briefly—in the seam in which I have worked for the last twenty years.

The coal-seam at the very best is only 20 inches high—the best, mark you—and it must be understood that the filler or hewer cannot hope for anything higher. Rather the reverse, for when the filler begins his work—that is, after the cutting-machine has been across the coal-face—subsidence has already taken place and the height is reduced to 14 and even 12 inches. To do his work the filler must use his shovel and pick whilst lying on his side, at full length, or even flat on his back. Our seam is mined in 100-yard strips or faces, and, bad as these conditions are, I would ask your readers to try and imagine what the effect is when water is 2 or 3 inches deep on any face. There are many intelligent men in the mines today, particularly young men, 99 per cent. of whom spend their time trying to find a way out of such degrading conditions. Do you wonder? Many of your readers would not take £10 to just look at such things.

Along comes Mr. Bevin to force the lucky ones—who have found a way out—back again. Of course there is resentment, for, to many of the younger men, the services have opened out golden opportunities of escape, of which they have taken the fullest advantage, swearing never to return. To me, there is only one way in which Mr. Bevin might have some success in his efforts. Better wages by far to the men who return, and a guarantee that the job each man leaves is open for him at the close of the war.—Yours faithfully,

19 York Terrace, Willington, Durham. William Sennett.

OUR NEW ALLY

Sir,—Now that we are at last in alliance with the Russian people we must not forget the pioneers for a better understanding with Russia, such as my old editor, W. T. Stead. One useful thing we can all do is to get the widest possible circulation for Sir Bernard Pares' judicial *Russia* in the sixpenny Penguin series, an admirable introduction to the study of the country. I have sent a thanksgiving gift to Mr. Maisky for the Russian wounded. It is a pleasing memory of mine that at school I was, I believe, the only boy on the side of the Russians in the Russo-Turkish War—and had now and then a rough time of it in consequence! J. W. Robertson Scott.

"Countryman" Office, Idbury, Kingham, Oxford.

Sir,—I hold no brief for Russia, but if the action she took against Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland was solely with the object of pushing out her line of defence against an anticipated attack by Germany, it might be worth her while, even at this late hour, to declare that, whatever the result of hostilities may be, she renounces all claims on any of these countries.—Yours faithfully, Baltic.

THE HOLMES-POLLOCK LETTERS

Sir,—With reference to Mr. Geoffrey Russell's article in your July 11th number, perhaps you will allow me to state that the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press have just completed arrangements with Sir John Pollock, Bart, for the publication of an English edition of the Letters.—Yours faithfully, S. C. Roberts.

University Press, Cambridge.

COUNTRY LIFE

July Promise

There are summers when hay-time and harvest overlap. If they overlap this year it will be rather because of the earliness of harvest than of the lateness of hay-time. There can have been few summers when hay was made so quickly and so easily or under such cloudless skies. The crop is generally very good. Oats are turning colour as I write; wheats, which generally wintered splendidly, have just a touch of silvery-fawn. There is every prospect of an early harvest, though it rather looks as if beans, potatoes and roots may be light. Flax looks good and gives a new touch of delicacy to the land, the blue flowers fresh as water. Fruit is generally bad, and will be fair only in isolated districts, but there is magnificent promise in nuts. Hazels appear to be heavy, and the sweet-chestnut blossom is now the glory of the southern countryside. The long olive-gold tassels on the high-gleaming trees light up the woodlands; the scent is thick and over-sweet in the hot air. Hops look first-rate, though there is still a long season between now and September, and for those who like to be superstitious prophets about hard winters there is one of the heaviest crops of holly-berries for years. Meanwhile the protection of ripening corn-crops against incendiaries is, as I pointed out last summer, a very important thing. No organisation appears to have been created to meet what might well be, after a prolonged period of drought, a costly emergency. In America, I believe, regular fire-watchers are employed in forest and corn areas, and it is probable that the Canadians have some advice to offer us here.

Country Petrol

Has the countryman a right to expect a larger petrol-allowance than the townsman? As a countryman myself I should say there are good reasons for saying yes, and certainly a reduction of the supplementary allowance is going to be very hard on those living in the country. It will be doubly hard on old people in winter-time. Shops, railway-stations, dentists, doctors and most other facilities are generally miles away; buses are never timed to catch trains, and after running all day on a very thin time-table, often cease at six in the evening altogether. Many country people have also, during the last eighteen months, expended much petrol on evacuation, billeting, W.V.S. and Home Guard work, for which some of them, like myself, have never asked for a gallon extra. My own car nearly always resembles a small size bus, full of service-men, children or other country folk. Are these to go down in the log-book? What also is the log-book test for telling the truth? Is there any means by which a recorded journey can be proved as having really been undertaken for the purpose stated? The motorist is full of tricks. He may justifiably remember that the authorities have also used a trick. How many motorists were induced to take out the new year's licence by the fact that petrol-coupons were issued to cover the last months of the old year and the first of the new?

Wings of Fancy

The following are not the names of English inns—*The Spotted Elephant, The Black Arches, The Ground Lackey, The Glory of Kent, The Green Forester, The Lulworth Skipper, The White Admiral, The Purple Shades, The Brixton Beauty, The Rosy Rustic, The Beautiful Pug* and *The Dover Belle;* nor are these the titles of books—*The Crimson Speckled Footman, The Light Feathered Rustic, The Black Chestnut, The Cambridge Veneer* (a gift to a social satirist), *The November Dagger, The Belted Beauty, The Essex Emerald, The Long-Legged Pearl* and *The Ringed China Mark* (two beautiful titles which might fit anything from detection to fantasy), and *The Beautiful Snout* (which is like a gem from Thurber). They are the names of English butterflies. It strikes me as rather odd that these names should be so fanciful and yet should somehow have kept themselves out of the common speech. I suspect them to be of eighteenth-century origin, but whether they are or not it is interesting to come upon another example of that genius for descriptive lyricism which is often a surprising expression of English rural life.

In the Garden

March to May is the critical period for vegetables; July and August are the months to plan for that period. Ground cleared of potatoes should now be sown with kales, to be thinned later, but not transplanted, and with turnips and swedes, planted with broccoli, sprouting broccoli and leeks. Does any correspondent know of a sound method of preserving tomatoes—either the pulp or the whole fruit? Or a really good method of preserving French and runner beans? The Ministry of Food meant to issue, I believe, improved methods of salting beans, but I have not so far seen the instructions. My experience with bean-salting consists of two main periods of trial: the first in August and September, when beans and salt are sandwiched in jars daily, until I get heartily sick of them; the other in mid-winter, when they are opened and are found to be colourless and quite uneatable, and I feel like being sick again. Yet every year I come across bean enthusiasts, who declare that their preserved beans are just as good as those fresh gathered. Is there a secret? H. E. Bates.

Finally, might I suggest that as Miss Perham and those other writers who share her standpoint have not lived in Africa, their research into official documents lacks something rather important? I much admire her book in which some dozen Africans give their own life histories. But they, too, needed the kind of testing that only those who understand Africans talking to one another can give. Still more do official reports need checking which are often truthful but often misleading and sometimes mythological.

We are suffering now, grievously, from the consequences of our country's treatment in the past of the "native Irish." We are repeating in Africa those mistakes, to use no uglier word. They cannot be corrected unless our country knows the facts. That is why I wrote *The Colour Bar in East Africa*.—I am, &c., NORMAN LEYS.

Yalding, Kent.

"A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN WAR-TIME"

SIR,—As a Housemaster at the Public School described by "A Headmaster" in your issue of July 4th, I write to state some facts about this school which may clear up some points in the letters you have received. The older boys who work in the kitchen lose four days' work a term, and make up some of that in their free time. Those who wait at table lose one school period a week. Those who clean the rooms get up 30 minutes early for three days every three weeks. There is no saving in school expenditure, as domestic experts are employed to train the boys. The scheme came in through the impossibility of obtaining suitable help from outside The boys organise the work themselves.

Comments of which I have heard are—from the boys: "many of the jobs are specialised and interesting when gone about in the right way"; "never realised how much trouble went into preparing food"; "interesting to know what goes on behind the scenes"; "grumbles about food are cut by three-quarters"; "it is a change." From parents: "we welcome it, the boys are more help at home, we hope it will be permanent." From the chef: "they are more use than the labour we had before."

In actual fact, it is nothing new for the boys here to do manual work for other people. For the last eight years work on the school estate has been a prominent part of the boys' life. They have worked, in a voluntary organisation, at least one afternoon a week on cultivation, levelling, shed-construction, felling, clearing and planting trees, painting, creosoting, gardening and tool-sharpening. When skilled labour is necessary, the job is directed by the school carpenter, bricklayer or forester.—Yours sincerely, D. R. W.

PATENT MEDICINES AND JAM

SIR,—You refer in your Notes to the Pharmacy and Medicines Bill, which provides for the disclosure of the ingredients of patent and other medicines on general sale. Lord Woolton has just announced that, notwithstanding an increase in the price of jam, the *fruit content* of the new season's jam will be *less than usual*. Should not the labels on the jam jars, following the rule laid down in the Pharmacy Bill, disclose the contents by intimating the precise quantity of fruit per lb., also the nature and weight of the other ingredients? The public are entitled to know what they are buying, whether it be patent medicine or jam. In the past the word "jam" has been largely used as a camouflage for a preponderance of fruit-substitutes.—Yours, &c., P. A. SHAW.

Highfield, Sidcup.

REGRETTABLE BROADCASTS

SIR,—Although I was not interested in Wodehouse and was repelled by his books, I thank you heartily for your condemnation of the broadcast by Cassandra. Both the broadcaster and he who caused the broadcast to be made owe an apology to the B.B.C. and to its listeners.—I am, yours, JAS. W. STEWART.

3 South Hill Crescent, Sunderland.

[We have received many letters to this effect.—ED., *The Spectator*.]

SIR,—Many of your readers, besides myself, must be grateful to "Janus" for his protest against the unseemly attack upon P. G. Wodehouse on the wireless. We may console ourselves by remembering that no one listened to the original Cassandra. We were further disgusted by a broadcaster who informed us that he was in the habit of smoking forty cigarettes a day and intended to continue doing so as long as possible. By his own showing he is so doped with nicotine that he has lost the power of self-control. He therefore begged us all to be lenient towards those who expend petrol on going to dog and horse races. He gave no thought to the fact that by taking more than his fair share he is depriving others. Nor of the fact that cargo-space is required for necessary food and materials. Now that stern self-control by all of us is needed to obtain a final victory and every penny saved is wanted for national defence, such a talk on the wireless is, to put it mildly, very inadvisable. If we are given more of this stuff we shall wonder if B.B.C. stands for Beneath British Contempt.—Yours, &c., M. E. DURHAM.

36 Glenloch Road, N.W. 3.

COUNTRY LIFE

Hudson and White

In a new and excellent introduction to the Penguin *Natural History of Selbourne*, Mr. James Fisher remarks that "there are many great naturalists whose contributions stand higher than White's. How can we explain why White's few words have lived and flourished wherever the English language is used?" The same question might, I think, be asked of W. H. Hudson, the centenary of whose birth falls next week. Like White, he made no startling discoveries; like White, he was more interested in watching living creatures than in dissecting dead ones. Like White, he wrote with a graceful, natural sequence of words, with a high sense of observation and of movement and place. He was, however, less tolerant than White, less comfortable There were things he hated; he was irascible and could show anger. He maintained that the better part of his work was revealed in "the passion for Nature"; whereas, in fact, his portraits of people, as in *The Purple Land*, are perhaps more vivid than his portraits of birds. "It is very fortunate that such a man (*i.e.*, White) lived in the parish of Selbourne," says Mr. Fisher, "in the county of Hampshire, in England, in the second half of the eighteenth century." It is perhaps equally fortunate that the author of *Far Away and Long Ago* was born in the State of the Rio de la Plata in Buenos Aires, instead of in England, perhaps in the County of Hampshire, in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Preserving Tomatoes

Months ago I suggested that there would be an acute shortage of tomatoes this summer, this shortage, and the fact that it will increase again after September, led me to ask for a sound recipe for preserving tomatoes. Some excellent ones have arrived; there is also a Ministry of Food leaflet, *Preserves from the Garden* (H.M. Stationery Office, 4d.), in which straightforward methods of preserving tomatoes and salting beans are given. A correspondent declares that she has bottled tomatoes for 25 years by this same method without a single case of botulism This sounds good. It only uses exactly the same method as for ordinary fruit, *i.e*, in a Kilner or vacuum jar or in jam-jars with the patent clipped lids, using the smaller fruit. There is another recipe by which the tomatoes are plunged into boiling water, skinned, and then packed into preserving jars without water; the bottles are then sterilised, filled up with more tomatoes, which tend to shrink in the sterilising process, then put back into the oven for half an hour. A rather more elaborate recipe sounds interesting. In it the tomatoes are also skinned and packed in jars which are covered with a brine made of 1 quart of water and ½ oz. salt, to which ¼ oz. sugar may be added if required; sterilise as for ordinary fruit, but raise the temperature to 190° in an hour and a half and maintain it for half an hour. Of beans, in spite of some good recipes, I am still rather sceptical; possibly someone may improve on the rather tiresome salt-bean sandwich.

Bad Egg

The egg-scheme was fantastic in theory; it appears to be still more fantastic in practice. Formerly my children walked a quarter of a mile and bought the family eggs, which have in actual fact been rationed to us for a long time, from a poultry-keeper who sent what surplus she had to the local collecting centre; or eggs came with the morning milk. Now, in the heart of one of the richest agricultural districts of England, where millions of eggs are normally produced in a year, my eggs come from Canada. The local eggs formerly came warm from the nest and cost nobody a penny in transport. The new (in one sense new) eggs make a journey of at least 3,000 miles and must be considered, at best, as in their second youth. This is not a personal complaint. If it is happening to me it is, I presume, happening to other people; I gather that in Sussex, or in parts of it, the eggs have been American. Yet Sussex is famous for its poultry. Again, it was a very, very rare occurrence, in the country, to be sold a bad egg. Now my supplier tells me he is heartily ashamed of the sample he receives: a sample which, in normal times, he would not touch. It is fairly safe to say, I think, that no rationing scheme has ever been less popular.

In the Garden

Rain has turned the colour of the cabbage-plants from dry steel blue to deep green. The drought has meant disappointments. Look over the cauliflower-plants, for example, and see how many have the blind eye, and root them out. The percentage this year is very high. Plants of *calabrese*, the excellent green-sprouting broccoli that is for autumn cutting, are short, poor, and turning to seed. I am pinching out the seed-heads and hoping. A correspondent offers me plants of a Portuguese cabbage, the Quintal cabbage, which he says is excellent and which was apparently designed by nature for the communal canteen. It grows so large, says my correspondent, that he has seen specimens which a good sturdy Portuguese lad of fifteen or sixteen could hardly lift. There is still time to put in plants of this, as of cauliflowers, savoys and broccoli for spring. It is dull, perhaps, to keep emphasising this, but unfortunately it cannot be too often emphasised. Plants are cheap now; vegetables will undoubtedly be expensive and scarce again in 1942. H. E. BATES.

nevertheless, behoves the British public to be watchful that Northern Rhodesia remains a British Protectorate under the Colonial Office, until we are certain South Africa has learnt that the black man will achieve equality of status with the white man, and that you cannot keep any race perpetually in subjection. I have kept to a main point in Professor Macmillan's letter. I am not, however, at all certain there is not serious racial discrimination in the matter of land and public distribution of revenue in Kenya, and other forms of colour-prejudice against the educated African wherever he may be, which will be as dangerous as any colour-bar that might proceed from South Africa, via Southern Rhodesia, northwards.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

H. M. GRACE.

Edinburgh House, 2 Eaton Gate, S.W. 1.

LORD WOOLTON'S LOAF

SIR,—The only question that matters about "Lord Woolton's Loaf" is whether the "85 per cent. wholemeal" does or does not contain the germ of the wheat. The germ is only about 2 per cent. of the wheat. The official instructions to millers leave this vital matter to the millers. The millers may please themselves as to whether they take out all the germ or leave some or all of it in the flour. As most bakers have lost the art of baking bread of flour with the germ in it, most millers will take out the germ and sell it separately, leaving a germless "85 per cent. wholemeal" for bread making. All the play with the words "85 per cent wholemeal' is a typical bureaucratic deception of the public. The words ought to be "wheatmeal containing the whole of the germ." Those who care for real bread will seek out the miller who grinds the whole wheat with stones and who sells what is best called "Whole Wheatmeal," and if possible a stone miller who bakes bread with his own flour. Those who do not care will continue to eat imitation bread. It is most unlikely that a "Lord Woolton's Loaf" will be real bread with the germ in it.—Yours faithfully,

GEOFFREY BOWLES.

25 Catherine Place, S.W. 1

"THE PLIMSOLL LINE"

SIR,—One views with alarm the outcome of a rise in the "Plimsoll," as recorded in your issue of July 18th. I have seen steamers still "down to the mark" on arrival at their port of discharge, and have comforted myself with the reflection that some special circumstance had necessitated a relaxation of the regulation. It would seem, however, that the practice of overloading is becoming general and that a further deadly peril is thereby added to those now endured by our men of the Merchant Navy. Is this a fair war-risk? and will it be accepted without question as another call on the Service? I know of many cases where consideration for those in the Merchant Navy is lacking, and am forced to the conclusion that the printed and spoken eulogies on the gallantry, endurance and willing service of these men are, in the main, merely lip-service.—Yours faithfully,

"Ormesby," Bromborough, Wirral. F. STEVENSON JONES.

"TALK ABOUT THE LAND"

SIR,—In writing a brief reply to Mr. Bates's remarks on my symposium, *England and the Farmer*, I am concerned as editor, not contributor. It is not the first time that Mr. Bates has scoffed at my "sentimental" old-fashionedness: let it pass. But, so far as I can gather from Mr. Bates's covert and ambiguous belittlement of most of the contributors without in a single instance informing the reader what it is they have to say, and, in the case of Mr. Rolf Gardiner, quite shamefully distorting his presentation of a most original set of ideas, he suggests in his evasive manner (1) that the farmer is not represented in it, (2) the small-holder is not, (3) that the book recommends a return to the conditions of 1830, (4) that it is anti-conservative and (5) that it is an attack upon the townsman. There is no substance whatever in any of these innuendos, for that is what they are rather than definite charges. Of the seven authors, three are or have been farmers. Mr. Adrian Bell's essay is specifically concerned with the small-owner. The book advocates certain principles of mixed self-sufficient farming without selecting any particular period. It is in no sense political, and the first essay is by an extremely well-known Conservative. Lastly, it criticises our present economic system in its repercussions upon farming conditions without in any way or in any place "stigmatising" the townsman. I think these instances are sufficient to reveal the disingenuous character of Mr. Bates's review, and it is my business as editor to point them out.—I am, Sir, &c.,

H. J. MASSINGHAM.

THE JOURNEYINGS OF EGGS

SIR,—Mr. Bates in "Country Life" is right. Our rationed eggs now come from Maidstone, and behind Maidstone from America. Heathfield is the leading market for East Sussex poultry. I conjecture the Food Ministry's idea to be as follows. Townsmen are five-sixths of the population and should have five-sixths of the British eggs, countrymen to have the remaining one-sixth and to make up with imported eggs. The transport and the wastage must be horribly expensive. The idea seems to be equality run mad. In other spheres the townsman has advantages over the countryman. But the latter is less clamorous.—Yours faithfully,

F. C. GATES.

Cade House, Heathfield, Sussex.

COUNTRY LIFE

Potato Loss

Kent, though a southern county, has only a comparatively small acreage devoted to early potatoes; Ayrshire, hundreds of miles farther north, produces an earlier and far larger crop. Kent growers alone, however, are complaining of a loss of £60,000 on the season's working. A diminishing scale of price-control, coming into force on May 10th, and lasting until July 27th, had been worked out by producers and Ministry of Food officials. Admirable and fair in itself, it unfortunately took no account of the effect of a late season. It could have occurred to no one that the spring of 1941 might be the coldest and most disastrous for a hundred years. It was almost July, instead of late May, before early potatoes were being lifted; the crop was an average of twenty-five days late. This disastrous state of affairs obviously called for a readjustment of the schedule: a fact that was pointed out to the Ministry in early June. The Ministry rejected the request for an alteration in the scale of prices, so that by the time the first potatoes were being marketed the prices low in the scale were in operation. This official obstinacy has resulted in an enormous loss to growers, and will, as one important Kent agriculturist has pointed out, have a further disastrous effect in the very deep discouragement of the farmers concerned. It is quite clear that we cannot afford idle land; it ought also to be clear that we cannot afford discouraged farmers.

More Fruit

The shortage of fruit has probably set many gardeners speculating on the possibilities of growing more of their own. August is certainly not too early to begin catalogue-dreaming; September not too early to think of preparing the ground. By late autumn, I think, there is just a chance that there may be a run on fruit-nurseries, especially perhaps for the smaller soft fruits. Remember that these can be grown as trained trees, against wire-supports; that magnificent and very early crops of gooseberries can be had from trees on walls. Remember that there are other fruits than the loganberry: the King's Acre Berry, sweeter; the Himalaya Berry, a strong blackberry from the Himalayas; the Laxtonberry, a hybrid of raspberry flavour; the Veitchberry, combining the flavour of a raspberry and a blackberry; the Wine Berry, bright orange, ornamental, distinctly flavoured; the Worcester Berry perhaps the most interesting of all, a cross between a blackcurrant and a gooseberry, with purplish grape-like bunches of fruit that hang into late autumn. Remember that some apples, and many pears, are self-sterile; that cherries, except the morello, cannot flourish in celibacy. Napoleon and Bedford Prolific need each other; as do Early Rivers and Frogmore; Elton and Napoleon, and so on. Remember that Myrobolan plum-stock is cheap and will be the basis of cheap trees; that there are other apples than Cox, which will not flourish everywhere. After Cox (the Yquem of apples), E. A. Bunyard gave Orleans Reinette (the Lafitte), Claygate Pearmain, Gravenstein, Ribston Pippin and Blenheim Orange as the five apples most notable for flavour.

Preserving Beans

Fellow-sufferers of the salted bean have kindly sent many suggestions. Unfortunately few improve on the methods I already knew. The secret for one is very large quantities of salt; for another a jar per day, tied down immediately. But a really practical series of hints comes from Somerset. First, beans should always be picked dry; never in the evening; second, the pickling jars should always stand on wood, never on stone, cement, tiles or slate (a good rule for home-made wines, too); third, great care should be taken to put ample salt between the edges of the layers of beans and at the sides of the pickling jars in order to exclude air. The fact that this correspondent originally had nothing but failures with beans, and now has consistent success, is encouraging. French beans, by the way, seem to be preferred to runners. Unfortunately, the season has been extremely bad for beans of all kinds and for French particularly, and it is worth remembering that it is still not too late to sow both kinds as a gamble for a late crop.

In the Garden

It is a trick of old professional gardeners to display a very large plant, covered with an enormous number of flowers, in a very small pot. The secret is mainly liquid feeding; in a smaller way, top-dressing. It is a sound rule that pots, especially of tomatoes and chrysanthemums, should never be filled up at first. An early August top-dressing of good loam or rotted compost will stimulate surface root-action, with very quick results; another may be given later. Regular tying will stimulate growth; and nothing, in my opinion, has yet superseded raffia for the job. Buy it by the pound and compare the quantity with the sixpenny bundle of the chain-stores. For feeding, a liquorice mixture of sheep-manure and soot is the gardener's heart's delight; bonemeal for the particular. Be very careful of artificials; take no notice of those who advocate a pinch of nitrate of soda on cabbages and onions. Soot, old, never fresh, can hardly be bettered as a dressing and a pest-control combined.

H. E. BATES.

There are authors who, when their books fail to excite a hundred per cent. admiration, immediately accuse reviewers of innuendoes, ambiguity, distortion, unfairness and general lack of conscientiousness and care. Mr. Massingham is one. It may therefore interest him to know that in the process of reviewing *England and the Farmer* I made reference to the following works: *The Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Hammond's *The Village Labourer,* Lord Northbourne's *Look to the Land,* Jocelyn Dunlop's *The Farm Labourer,* Rider Haggard's *Rural England,* Seebohm's *The Evolution of the English Farm,* Rogers' *Six Centuries of Work and Wages,* and through them references to half a dozen other works of a similar kind. It would be uncharitable to say that this was more than Mr. Massingham deserved. I mention it merely to remind him that authors, in their fondness for their offspring, should also cultivate objectivity. Mr. Massingham, who is older than I, should know by now that disagreement, as well as being good medicine, is sometimes the greatest compliment of all.—Yours, &c., H. E. Bates.

The Granary, Little Chart, Ashford, Kent.

HISTORIES OF THE UNITED STATES

Sir,—"Janus" refers to the Board of Education's circular about teaching the history of the United States, and it is to be hoped that books that are more than dry lists of dates and the names of Presidents and battles will be recommended. A new cheap edition of Cecil Chesterton's *History of the United States,* first published twenty-two years ago, would be admirable for schools, supplemented by the more detailed book by Professor Edward Channing, *The United States of America,* 1765-1865. But best of all would be the book that was put into my hands by an American friend when I was returning to England after my first visit to the United States. "It will help to explain our non-stop enthusiasm," he said. It did; moreover it was the best and most vivid history of a country that I have ever read. It was called *The Epic of America*; the author was James Truslow Adams. I should like to see it in the hands of every school-teacher; best of all I should like to see it as a Penguin sixpenny.—Yours, &c.,

3 The Mall, East Sheen, S.W. 14. John Gloag.

[A new edition of Cecil Chesterton's book, edited by Prof. D. W. Brogan, is published in the Everyman Library.—Ed., *The Spectator.*]

NAZI INFLUENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Sir,—In your issue of February 28th you refer to the possibility of Basutoland and Swaziland being transferred from Imperial control to the Union of South Africa. If such transfer is ever effected, a proviso must be inserted in the cession "that in the event of the Union becoming a Republic or breaking away from the British Commonwealth the said territories must *revert* to the Imperial Government." This will not only ensure that the native population will be freed from any persecution from a Dutch Republic—but will also maintain the right of way into the Union for the Crown.

You may think that the chances of a Republican form of government are very remote, but actually the Republican Party have every chance of getting a majority at the next general election. If they do you can imagine what their policy will be. It is difficult for you to fathom the depth of anti-British feeling that has been worked up in this country. The idea is to eliminate entirely anything British and if possible to assist the Nazis. Of course, a civil war would be inevitable, because the English section and a percentage of the Dutch who are loyal would never agree to a change.

I am not an alarmist, but can speak with the experience of over sixty years as an Old Colonist.

Kimberley, South Africa.

DEFENCE AGAINST NIGHT BOMBING

Sir,—According to official announcements, waves of German night-bombers have approached Moscow, but only a few machines have been able to penetrate the defences of that city. It is obvious, therefore, that the Russians must have some effective system of defence of which we are lacking. The Prime Minister has warned the country that we may expect intensified aerial attacks in the near future. I suggest that in view of the fact that Russia is now our Ally it should be possible for our authorities to learn the extraordinary effective system possessed by the Russians and so mitigate further suffering and loss in our vulnerable cities.—I remain, yours truly, W. B. Curell.

Pudners, Poughill, Bude, Cornwall.

THE ETHICS OF BOMBING

Sir,—The German bombing of such cities as Warsaw, Rotterdam, London and Coventry was rightly execrated in this country as foul and barbarous. They then had air-superiority. Now that we are getting air-priority and even local superiority the Prime Minister tells us that we are systematically, scientifically and methodically bombing German cities on a large scale. Is not our bombing foul and barbarous also or do foulness and barbarity become decent when employed on the right side?—Yours, &c., T. H. Ibbelin.

Astley, Dormans Park, Nr. East Grinstead.

[The difference between bombing "systematically, scientifically, and methodically" and bombing indiscriminately perhaps constitutes the answer.—Ed., *The Spectator.*]

COUNTRY LIFE

Rural Workers

How many kinds of rural workers are there? A country railwayman recently pointed out to me the inconsistency of allowing extra cheese only to agricultural workers. This man spent all day in the country, working his section of track, seven or eight miles from home; cheese was a food he needed and missed. This led me to make a rough list of rural workers who are not agricultural workers and whose packed midday meal may often be eaten far from home. How little Government officials sometimes know about country conditions is shown in the assumption that the agricultural worker rarely gets home to a midday meal. In actual fact he is often very near to home all day: home being a cottage on the farm. The following types of worker could all claim to be rural workers, and could all, no doubt, produce a very good case for an extra allowance of cheese: railwaymen, quarry-workers, lorry-drivers, postmen, flax-workers (night and day shifts), telephone-engineers, bus-drivers, blacksmiths, coalmen, chauffeurs, carpenters, garage-mechanics, bricklayers, brickmakers, bakers, butchers, paper-workers; and probably many more. From this it appears obvious that the rural worker becomes harder and harder to classify, for all these types, with the possible exception of quarry-workers, also belong to the town.

Scabious

On roadsides, on the edges of cornfields, in corn and along field-tracks everywhere, there is now in bloom perhaps the loveliest of late summer flowers. Pale mauve scabious are thick in blonde grass and honey-brown corn. The distinguished round heads, neat and soft as the bronzy-scarlet pin-cushions of wild roses, look cool and dignified. There is a gentle tickling scent from them as you stoop down and touch the cream-flecked heads that vary a little in colour, from very pale mauve through flushed lilac to strong half-purple, and on hot afternoons there is always a sleepy rise of brown butterflies and occasional blues as they flitter up from the flowers and hover and settle again, drowsily closing wings that seem to look at you with a steady dark brown eye. This, devil's-bit scabious, is a scabious. Sheep's-bit scabious, much dwarfer, is not. It is of the campanula family and unrelated to devil's-bit, which is of the teazels. They look much alike, but the sheep's-bit never has the grace and distinction of devil's-bit, so much of the charm of which comes from its height, so that it stands well up into the burnt blonde summer grasses, thrown into relief by the neutral cloud of fading stalks.

Drying Beans

"You will do a service to many housewives," says a correspondent, "if you publish that fresh scarlet runner-beans can be kept indefinitely if they are sliced as for the usual cooking procedure, but instead are spread in masses in flat tins and put to dry in the sunshine." This is an interesting change from the salting method—in which, unfortunately, most of the food value of the beans is lost in the washing process in winter. These dried beans can be stored in tins, and "soaked overnight and boiled with plain salt and water will retain all the fresh fragrance and flavour of the newly gathered crop." This correspondent agrees with me that the bean-salt sandwich is often a loathsome mess and never, unhappily, tastes of beans. Another declares it to be old-fashioned anyway, and sends an excellent method of preserving them by a sterilising process in the modern airtight bottles. This is, unfortunately, too long and detailed to give here, and I think the suggestion of another correspondent—that more people should visit their local food-centre and arrange for local demonstrations of sterilising and preserving—is excellent. Preserving vegetables by sterilisation, a process needing considerable care, is obviously better taught by demonstration.

In the Garden

It will shortly be time to sow autumn onions and spring cabbage. Autumn-sown onions, which make large bulbs in the following summer and are generally more free from disease than spring-sown, unfortunately will not keep long. There is, however, a variety among the autumn section—which the countryman always calls "triplos"—that will keep. This is Brown Spanish. It should be in any catalogue, and there are probably improved varieties of it. White Lisbon is also an excellent onion for autumn sowing, and will pull well in spring: pure white, mild, nice to look at. Of spring cabbage it is better to make two sowings. But don't hurry either. Sow the second a fortnight after the first. I said something last week about growing more fruit. Now I see that the current issue of *The Countryman* has a symposium on *How Can We Grow More Fruit?* by nine experts, one of whom, Mr. Raymond Bush, is accused of being "rather rude about research-stations." Nevertheless, East Malling appears to have an invaluable report on frost-damage, which ought to be worth getting, and I should advise anyone who thinks of planting fruit-trees in any quantity to take at least a small dose of expert advice. A table of the compatible varieties of pears, for example, would help to save many barren years.

H. E. Bates.

COUNTRY LIFE

Harvest **Dream**

What is a harvest? A standing crop or a crop safely gathered? It seems to me there is a nice distinction. When the Prime Minister spoke some time ago of our magnificent harvest he was, with the greatest respect to him, counting his chickens. What he meant, no doubt, was that we had a magnificent cereal-crop. But between mid-July and mid-August anything may happen, and unfortunately it has happened. By the time these notes appear it will be no secret that the end of July and the early days of August gave us some of the most disastrous harvest-weather for years. I can say nothing about the weather since; but much corn is still not cut as I write; fields of beans, cutting of which began fifteen days ago, are still not finished; peas, which have had to be turned again and again, will probably be a wretched failure; much flax-pulling has stopped; harvest-hands have turned to spudding thistles; and we must face the fact that there are hay-crops that are not and now never will be gathered in. In the country one of the commonest sayings is, "If we live and have good luck." Born of experience, it is used almost with reverence to qualify any plan, hope or forecast about the future. Politicians should remember it. For when the full story of this August harvest is told it will not, I fear, be a politician's—or a farmer's—dream.

Bright **Hills**

My note on the charm of late summer scabious has prompted a fellow-author to write from Scotland: "Your praise of it is just. It is very common on the riparian pastures of Argyll, but I am curious to know if you share my enthusiasm for the meadow cranesbill." I do; the big mauve-blue geranium, very soft, very delicately wine-veined, is a delight, especially fine on Cotswold roadsides, when the strong purple torches of *Campanula patula* are magnificent in company with it. But in the Cotswolds, as on the Kentish Downs, two other late summer flowers are even more splendid in their prodigal distribution than scabious and cranesbill. On a bright late summer day the downs are flooded with the cloudy pink light of bay willow-beet, tall as corn, and wild marjoram, soft as foam. No other two flowers give such a mass effect of radiance; the hills, seen from a slight distance, have the rosy fire of sunset clouds. Nearer, you see the marjoram, like the scabious, crowded with drowsy flights of butterflies, the very beautiful silver-washed fritillaries, meadow-browns, peacocks, tortoiseshells, marbled whites. And the Greeks, who had the word for so many things, had the words for marjoram. For its botanical name is *Origanum vulgare—oros*, a hill; *ganos*, brightness: brightness in hilly places.

Egg-**Bound**

Lord Woolton's recent statement about the egg-scheme seems to me one of the most astounding ever made by a Minister, and I imagine he can have no notion of the effect it had in the country. Apply it to an engineer in an aircraft-factory, and you get something like this: "I'm awfully sorry about the Spitfire. I never said it would fly, and I never expected it would fly. It has minor faults, and possibly major faults." Unfortunately it is not possible to authenticate the scores of strange egg-stories one hears, but such a Ministerial confession of failure goes a long way to confirm the general truth of them. A Heathfield correspondent—Heathfield being in the heart of the Sussex poultry-district—sends me a diagram, for example, showing how his eggs, laid six miles from his home, make a journey to Maidstone, twenty miles away, and then come back, having done fifty-six miles by road. He is, of course, lucky not to have eggs from the far-off prairies. My local supplier goes one better. She tells how eggs piled up at a neighbouring farm, how they were ordered to Sevenoaks, and how, when they reached Sevenoaks, thirty-five miles away, they were sent to Maidstone, fourteen miles from their original starting-point, from where it is quite likely they reached my correspondent at Heathfield. Meanwhile my own eggs still come from America, and taste mildly of a memory of the school laboratory. The whole scheme is fantastic and inefficient enough in itself; to have its author admit its inefficiency, and then still persist in it is the most fantastic touch of all.

In the **Garden**

Gardeners, like farmers, are in despair. The coldest spring for a hundred years, a terrific midsummer heat-wave, Christmas in July, and finally January in August, have together destroyed many of their hopes. Bees are not working. Beans have never given such stingy crops; late peas are hopeless; indoor and outdoor tomatoes, which promised so splendidly, ripen very slowly; there are no sleepy crowds of butterflies on the buddleias. Yet there have been a few surprising compensations. Peaches (Early Alexander) were ripe, cheeks almost black, as soon as Early Rivers plums; yuccas, with their high cream towers of scentless bells, gave the garden a tropical touch for weeks; bignonias, with soft orange-scarlet trumpets, were as glorious as in the hottest summer. These, however, were tiny touches of consolation. Altogether it has been a very trying year. A word of hope for tomato-growers, however, comes from a correspondent, who says that tomatoes may be satisfactorily kept throughout the winter, that is in a fresh natural state, in a preparation of spagnum-moss peat. I am making inquiries about this, which sounds like the answer to my gardener's prayer. Meanwhile, I should be extremely glad to hear from anyone who has successfully kept tomatoes in this way.

H. E. Bates.

THE CINEMA

"A Day in Soviet Russia." At the London Pavilion.

A Day in Soviet Russia is a poignant film, not simply because it was photographed a year ago to celebrate the Russian achievement of peace and progress alongside a continent at war, but because its Soviet cameramen were unwittingly assembling for millions of Russians the first complete picture of the cause for which they so soon were to fight and die. For this film is the picture of a cause rather than a country. It is barefaced propaganda, it is shapeless, it is often crude; but it is informed with a spirit which says, "Here we are, we citizens of the Soviet Union, from the Baltic to the Pacific, from the Arctic to Turkestan; look at us; we are building a new world."

In Russia they called it *A Day in the Life of a New World* and it was composed from a selection of everyday scenes which had been specially photographed for the purpose by ninety-seven cameramen working throughout the U.S.S.R. on August 24th, 1940. Some of the material was planned in a preliminary scenario, the rest was left to the choice of cameramen breaking off for the day from normal duties. The result is a cross-section of Russian life in every part of the Union—home-life, work, recreation; birth, marriage, death. All this is presented against a background of the growth of new knowledge, new communications, new cities; and all these things, the film says, belong to the people who are building them.

The English version, which has been prepared by Mr. Herbert Marshall and Mr. Sidney Cole, is introduced by Mr. Quentin Reynolds (most unflatteringly photographed) who speaks a cautious commentary. This does not lack enthusiasm, but for English-speaking audiences it has apparently been thought expedient to lay stress upon the similarities between life in Russia and in the countries of her British and American allies rather than to probe into economic and sociological differences. Yet although one hopes that in future the exchange of information by film between the allies is not to be restricted to friendly superficialities, *A Day in Soviet Russia* does represent an important addition to our scanty knowledge of that country. The scenes range widely both in location and character, from an Ukrainian wedding which might have come out of *Petrouchka* to a performance by the Moscow ballet on the quarter-deck of the Soviet warship 'Paris Commune.' President Kalinin, reading the newspaper at breakfast, takes his place in the film with Soviet citizens variously celebrated for operating five workshop-machines simultaneously or for Arctic exploration or for the butterfly breast-stroke. There are fierce-looking Georgian shepherds playing their wild music and office-workers on the Moscow Underground; there are meteorologists at billiards high in the Urals and an army of collective farmers tearing out of the solid rock a mountain road to Stalinabad. The impact of science appears to be curiously uneven—in many directions ahead of the rest of the world, in others behind it. Aeroplanes are used to find the sardine-shoals for Pacific fishermen and to direct convoys to the safest channels through Arctic ice; yet collective reindeer-farmers in the north apparently depend for news of the world on messenger and word of mouth.

The most impressive scenes in *A Day in Soviet Russia* are of the magnificent rest-centres on the Black Sea, and the least convincing are those which seek to dramatise with marching music the matutinal joy which every Soviet worker feels at the prospect of a day's record-breaking work. It is hard to believe that even in Soviet Russia they never throw a boot at the alarm-clock.

Edgar Anstey.

COUNTRY LIFE

Tobacco Power

Looking up some old reports of the Royal Commission on Agriculture I see that the depression of 1893 was even more severe than that of 1879-80, and that most of the evils of today (now variously attributed to cinemas, town education, jazz, radio, motor-cars and so on) were just as common. The drift to the towns, the indifference of young farm-labourers (they are by now the ancient stalwarts), the craving for pleasure—it all reads like a report of today. Much land was also derelict, out of cultivation or in bad heart; prices were appalling; farmers were the victims of railway-charges, tithes, foreign competition, taxes. Various remedies were suggested in the reports, but one, put forward for the Maidstone district of Kent, is no longer heard of—the growing of tobacco. Apparently tobacco had been tried some years before 1893, had failed because of high licence-charges and duty, and was being advocated again by hop-growers, who proposed using oast-houses for drying. I imagine there will never be a tobacco-growing revival in England, even though tobacco now occupies a position of economic power only equalled perhaps by one other plant, corn. Incidentally, no one as far as I know has yet commented on one of the most incredible situations of the war: that tobacco, which is not a food or a munition or even a fundamental necessity of living, should have made necessary a special commission to the United States, so that its supply could eventually become part of the Lease and Lend Act.

Fifty Years Back

We are probably too apt to regard the deterioration of farming and the drift from the land as contemporary problems, or at any rate as problems of the dislocated period between the wars. But here again the reports of 1892-93 read as if they were reports of today. The arguments and complaints are exactly the same. First, of course, nobody could work like the boys of the old brigade. "Four men in my time would do as much work as six now; the more money you give them the less they do; you can't trust them to work as they used to," &c. (report on Somerset). Secondly, the old crafts and tasks were dying out. "The younger ones won't learn hedging and ditching," or "there appears to be a real difficulty in getting the younger ones to learn special crafts" (Somerset). Then, of course, the men were more independent than they used to be. "They head the farmers all they can" (Essex). Emigration to industrial areas was common. "Country lads, on account of their superior physical training, have no difficulty in finding work in the large manufacturing towns of the Midlands" (Worcestershire). Relations between farmers and labourers were "not so friendly as in former days," though "I heard of no strikes or unions, and there do not appear to have been any since Mr. Arch visited the district" (Sussex). Mr. Arch, of course, had horns on his head. He had undoubtedly noticed that wages were ten shillings a week, that the state of cottages was "shocking," and that "there is no system of ventilation as a rule," and that men, as now, "are not as easily satisfied as they were formerly."

Hard Fruit

Apples are going to be scarce and dear, and as usual the townsman, quite naturally, will probably wonder why. By this time he presumably knows all about the late spring frosts and the disaster to fruit blossom, but he probably knows little or nothing about what is happening at the country fruit-sales. Soft-fruit sales, mainly of plums and cherries, are held earlier in the summer; hard-fruit sales, meaning mostly apples, are almost over by early August. The townsman will no longer wonder why his apples are expensive when he reads the following prices. Orchards are bought as they stand, and these prices for Kent and Sussex orchards were recorded although, in many cases, crops were short. At Tenterden—surely in the first six most charming small towns of England, by the way—3 acres brought £400; not far away, 20 acres brought £2,075; farther across the Weald, towards Sussex, 5 acres brought £610. At a sale in Sussex the prices per acre were almost doubled. Two acres of apples made £400; 7 acres made £1,175; and finally five acres made £1,275, or an average of £255 an acre. The day's total at this sale alone was £13,000, and even among the lighter crops the average was over £100 an acre.

In the Garden

A rather troubled correspondent asks how he can grow winter lettuces—thinking, perhaps, that now is the time to begin. "I've heard of lettuce standing through into the spring, but have never met anyone who did it or knew a man who did it either." His troubles are quite simply solved. If he has a frame he can sow lettuce under the glass in late October, prick out the seedlings towards the end of the year and cut tolerably good lettuces in March. If he hasn't a frame he can sow outdoors in early October, prick out the seedlings into a sheltered bed when large enough and perhaps cut lettuces in late April. My tip, however, is not to prick out outdoor seedlings until late winter or early spring. If sown fairly thick and left to stand in rows I find that they will survive thirty degrees of frost without trouble. The copper-tinted winter varieties are generally recommended, but I prefer a variety like All the Year Round, which will be found in most catalogues. The point is not to hurry sowing: certainly not to sow now. Coddling and slugs, rather than frost and snow, are the most likely causes of failure. H. E. BATES.

THE CINEMA

"Jeannie." At the Leicester Square Theatre.——**"Cottage to Let."** At the Gaumont.——**"One Night in Lisbon."** At the Carlton.

Jeannie is from Aimée Stuart's play of the same name—a simple little piece which in manuscript must have looked much like any other example of the kind of British comedy which is designed to appeal to the organisers of annual outings and to cautious aunts wishing to provide their nephews with a healthy holiday treat. When it materialised on the stage, however, *Jeannie* drew a larger public than these seekers after unsophistication and now the film version proves equally catholic in its appeal. The reason in each case is that *Jeannie* is simple-hearted rather than simple-minded. It employs a shrewd but kindly observation of people closer to life than our conventions of light entertainment normally allow, and the narrative keeps its feet nearer the ground than is customary in the familiar story of the working girl who decides to spend a small legacy in an orgy of innocent Continental fun. (In this current version she is mildly deceived by an impoverished count who mistakes her for an heiress, and she happily marries an aggressively English washing-machine inventor when her fortnight of luxury is over.) The warm human quality of *Jeannie* is not primarily due, however, to the attempt it makes to infuse elements of realism into the traditional fairy tale. The heroine labours most convincingly in a very real cottage-kitchen and the scenes on the Vienna train are accurately enough observed to be painfully reminiscent of happier European days; but it is Barbara Mullen's conception of the name-part which lifts this film into its special category. In the play Miss Mullen made a theatrical reputation overnight and in the film she brings a fresh mind to an old problem of screen-characterisation. Should the ordinary little country Cinderella change character completely when she finds herself miraculously apparelled in an expensive evening gown, with the wine flowing and the Blue Danube, both audible in the restaurant, and visible beyond the moonlit balcony? Miss Mullen, assisted by director Harold French, believes not. So Jeannie remains a practical little Scotswoman, turning a bright excited eye on each new wonder and keeping a firm mouth and obstinate chin ready for the trouble round the corner when the money runs out. She behaves, in fact, like a woman rather than a film-star and the great army of ordinary people who rarely see their species on the screen as well as in the auditorium will find Barbara Mullen a new and exciting experience. Michael Redgrave has been following the same intelligent approach in a number of recent roles and in this film his splendidly insular Yorkshire washing-machine peddler is a magnificent master of any and every embarrassing situation. Kay Hammond and Albert Lieven also contribute excellent character studies.

Anthony Asquith's *Cottage to Let* is no more than competent. It is a spy melodrama, with Jeanne de Casalis dithering delightfully for comic relief and Alastair Sim taking time off from the fun to be most unconvincingly sinister. The film is chiefly remarkable for the performance of a youngster named George Cole and for the skill with which the excitements are maintained.

One Night in Lisbon is Hollywood's answer to *London Can Take It*. A Hollywood contingent headed by Fred MacMurray finds itself in London during the air-raids, is very amusing, very brave, stands to attention whenever the band plays "There'll Always Be An England," and leaves for Lisbon and home as soon as possible. The triple-bedroom farce in Lisbon is the only sane sequence in the picture. EDGAR ANSTEY.

COUNTRY LIFE

Compost-Systems—

A north-country farmer asks if "any definite conclusion has been reached on the question of artificial and non-artificial fertilisers following unprejudiced scientific investigation ?" The result is that I have a pile of pamphlets on my desk and only two paragraphs into which to condense some thousands of words on bio-dynamics, soil-composting by the Indore and other processes, together with some necessary remarks by heretics. What I have to say, therefore, is a mere indication to my correspondent the farmer (and I imagine hundreds like him) who is faced with a mass of evidence for and against various methods of conserving soil-fertility without being able to decide which is right and which is wrong. First, bio-dynamics; the famous system, based on the principles of Rudolf Steiner, is far too complicated to set down here, but the main idea is that "the process is not a factory but a living organism, or entity, which must be kept alive in all its organisms." The exact processes of the Steiner method are partly secret ; the literature on it undoubtedly invites scepticism ; but I have personally seen results of the Steiner method that were magnificent. (Information from Bio-dynamic Association, Crockham Hill, Edenbridge, Kent.) An offshoot of the Steiner method, but much simpler, not secret and entirely unhampered by lunar mysticism, is the quick-return method by Miss E. Bruce, which I should certainly recommend to small gardeners (leaflets, &c., from Hillhouse, Sapperton, Cirencester). Close to this are the books and a pamphlet *Peace with the Soil* (Maclehose, University Press, Glasgow, free) by the late C. Alma Baker. Finally the Indore process, described by Sir Albert Howard (*The Manufacture of Humus by the Indore Process*, &c.)—a method which, since it involves considerable use of farmyard-manure, is most practicable on large estates and farms. All these are against artificials.

—And Sceptics

Also on my desk lies a letter from a man who is perhaps the greatest authority on agricultural research in the country. "I am tired of these soil-mystics," he says. Side by side with it lies an article by Sir Daniel Hall (*Countryman*, January, 1940) which enlarges on this scepticism. He is in line with Prof. Sir George Stapledon in advocating "the inclusion of grass in the rotation" as a means of improving soil-fertility, and is extremely scornful of "extra-terrestrial rhythms, camomile water, &c" I must confess to a certain sympathy with this scepticism. The frequent charge that artificials turn potatoes black and deprive vegetables of vitamins and flavour is, I think, rather big talk. My poor farmer-correspondent will probably by this time be wondering where he stands, and will be still more bewildered when he hears of my own ridiculous system. This is a system known as "the dump." Into it you throw every scrap of refuse from lawn, garden and house. It remains half-unattended, unturned, certainly unblessed. Yet in due course it yields a sweet, dark, vigorous compost. For example Miss Bruce refers to tomatoes bearing, under her composting, up to 30 fruit per plant. But when I go to look at my tomatoes, composted from "the dump," I find up to 30 fruit per truss, with four trusses per plant. Chrysanthemum, celery, and brussel sprouts, notably rich feeders, have responded similarly well. This still leaves me with an open mind. It also leaves composters still hating advocates of artificials, and *vice versa*. On the whole the composters have the better case, but the artificial-users a reasonable ground for scepticism Finally the composters have not failed to note that some advertisements for artificials have ceased giving the name of the advertiser ; a fact which, they claim, misleads the public into a belief that such advertisements are officially issued.

New Cheese

England, by giving refuge to victims of persecution abroad, has several times enriched her rural industries. On the Continent, cheese from sheep's milk is a common thing. The English, on the other hand, are probably the most conservative cheese-eaters in the world. It is very interesting to know, therefore, that sheep's-milk cheese is now being made in England, and especially interesting to me because it is being made on the Northamptonshire pastures where I was born. Thanks to the enterprise of a Rumanian, a Czech, an Englishwoman and an English farmer, sheep's-milk cheese of excellent quality is now being produced in a county that never before, I think, produced a regional cheese of its own. I have tasted this cheese, and I like it; it is mild but positive in flavour, and recalls the excellent but uncelebrated rural cheeses of the Continent ; it lies somewhere between cream and hard cheese, and is in colour, texture and taste not very unlike a new Wensleydale. It is being produced from ewes which lambed four or five months ago, and these ewes—something like 300 of them—are giving enough milk to yield from one to two pounds of cheese per ewe per week. They are unselected ewes, of different breeds, and probably if their lambs had been weaned earlier and the ewes milked more regularly the yield would have been much higher. Here, then, is a potential industry of considerable importance. For there are something like 8 million ewes in England and Wales alone, and there are 40 million people who would like an extra bite of cheese.

H. E. BATES.

that that life, in all its infinite variety, is available, and to ensure that the right child enjoys it.—Yours truly, M. L. JACKS.

University of Oxford:
Department of Education, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford.

ADVANCE IN INDIA

SIR,—I am grateful to "Nemo" for his views. The writer of this letter is well aware of the Nazi menace to India and has no more sympathy for the negative policies of the Indian parties than "Nemo" has. Neither can I sympathise with those who would say, "We cannot go beyond the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935, unless and until all India comes to us with single voice and unanimous will." The transfer of the control of finance to Indian hands would not only enable India to tackle the problem of increasing the productivity and improving the living standards of her vast population—a problem which will have to be faced sooner or later—but would, I venture to hope, have a sobering effect on the extreme claims of the parties and reassure Indian opinion generally.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, MODALE C. PHILIP.

49 Manor Road, Rugby.

COOK'S TO THE RESCUE

SIR,—For close on two years your paper has contained articles and letters complaining of the planning and carrying out of the evacuation scheme. Now Mrs. Williams-Ellis praises the group-colonisation scheme as carried out by the Friends' War Victims Relief Committee, and urges that their work should be extended. The week before, your issue of July 4th contained an article celebrating the centenary of Thomas Cook's institution, and showing what varied travels and transport his company became responsible for.

Isn't that the solution for the evacuation scheme? Place it in the hands of Thomas Cook and Son! Their London office must be doing much less work, and could surely develop many new and useful ideas to contribute to the comfort and happiness of the evacuees.

As a celebration in these times of a century of useful service, a new departure such as this could not be bettered.—I am, yours faithfully,

HELEN HAGUE.

Rotherwood Cottage, Meris Beach, P. Quebec.

"I LIKED THE LIFE I LIVED"

SIR,—In your issue of August 29th, the anonymous reviewer of my book *I Liked the Life I Lived* expresses the opinion that I seem unresponsive to literary values and considers that as I published the novels of Charles Garvice it might have been a "handicap." Also, he states that I issued *With the Prussians in Peace and War* and *Memories of the Months*, and from this deduces, with the obvious inference, that I was fond of publishing the works of titled people. In addition, he concludes that I must have kept a careful diary, for many of my reminiscences record the names of fellow-guests at dinner-parties and country houses.

In reply, I have to inform your reviewer that I did not issue *any* of the works of Charles Garvice, never published *With the Prussians in Peace and War*, nor Sir Herbert Maxwell's *Memories of the Months*; nor have I ever kept a diary of any kind. I have no knowledge of your reviewer's criterion of literary values, but as I published several of Rudyard Kipling's stories, including some of the *Puck of Pook's Hill* tales, before they were issued in volume-form; books by Joseph Conrad, Cunninghame Graham and W. H. Hudson; editions of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson and Jane Austen (the latter with introductions by John Bailey), and also library-reprints of copyright novels by Thomas Hardy, Conan Doyle, George Gissing, Anthony Hope, Rider Haggard, Seton Merriman, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Robert Hichens, A. E. W. Mason, W. W. Jacobs, H. A. Vachell, W. B. Maxwell, Edith Wharton, Mary Cholmondeley and many other famous authors, perhaps I was not, during my time as a publisher, so unresponsive to good work as your reviewer seeks to infer. Further, I am amused at your reviewer's comment on my interview with Henry James, for he seems unable to appreciate that many of us can tell a joke against ourselves and yet be conscious of the fact.—Yours faithfully,

EVELEIGH NASH.

Travellers' Club, Pall Mall, S.W. 1.

[Our reviewer writes: "I am sorry. On a second reading I find that Mr. Nash arranged the publication of Charles Garvice's works and did not publish them himself, and I mistook a letter he wrote to *The Times* in praise of Sir Herbert Maxwell's book on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday for a publisher's tribute. *With the Prussians in Peace and War* should have read *With the Russians in Peace and War*—not a very important slip. An irresponsiveness to literary values is indicated in Mr. Nash's letter with its magnificently assorted list, and the real humour of the Henry James anecdote seems lost to him: that a literary adviser (later to distinguish himself as the discoverer of Charles Garvice and the publisher of *The Sheik*) should have the audacity to suggest to James what kind of a novel he was to write."]

COUNTRY LIFE

Keeping Tomatoes Fresh

As I hoped, the possibility of keeping tomatoes fresh during the winter by means other than bottling and pulping has been worth examining. Bottling needs considerable care, and a bushel of tomatoes a considerable number of bottles, so I am glad to pass on two first-class practical suggestions. One comes from a doctor who is also a keen gardener. Faced with the problem of providing a diabetic patient with winter fruit—the patient having "a strange taste-complex as to imported ones"—he eventually hit on the following method. Tomatoes should be picked green, packed in biscuit-tins, and covered with dry sawdust; no one fruit should touch another, and the last layer of fruit should be covered with sawdust. In this way "ripe fruit in very good condition will be eaten up to the end of February." I think the simplicity, cheapness and success of this excellent method need no comment from me. The other method comes from a lady who lived for some years in Teneriffe. Most conveniently, she has a Spanish maid, who most conveniently once worked as a tomato-packer. According to the maid, the correct Teneriffe method—tons of tomatoes must be packed by it annually—is exactly the same as the method recommended by the doctor, except that dry peat replaces sawdust. I imagine that in both cases good boxes could replace tins; and a good, warm cupboard would be the ideal place for storage.

Fair is Fair

Figures, we are often told, can be used to prove anything. The announcement that only 2 per cent. of home-produced eggs, and less than 12 per cent. of imported eggs, sold under the new egg-scheme, were bad is an excellent example of how figures can mislead. For this innocent-looking "less than 12 per cent." actually meant, in eight weeks, no fewer than 17,000,000 eggs. One of the saving virtues of the scheme, according to the Ministry of Food, is that it brought eggs to people who had been for some time deprived of eggs. The number of people thus benefited is not stated; but if it were 17,000,000 (almost half the population) that figure would justify the scheme. But 17,000,000 bad eggs means another 17,000,000 deprived of eggs; so we cancel out and are back again in *Through the Looking-Glass.* However, fair is fair, and the scheme shows decided signs of improvement in my district. Our eggs—it appeared quite likely at one time that they had just failed individually to fly the Atlantic—are now local and not American, and perhaps widespread criticism and the demand for more regionalism in the scheme has had its reward.

Food and the Child

A recent B.B.C. discussion between the scientific adviser to the Ministry of Food and an intelligent, troubled and rather sceptical middle-class mother struck me as being a rather extraordinary affair. Before it began I was warned by my wife—faced also with the problems not so much of food-quantity as food-quality and food-attraction—that the value of the discussion would probably be ruined by a Ministerial attempt to justify all war-time substitutes, scientifically, as being "just as good as" the real thing. So it proved. For some years the public has been strenuously educated to eat more fresh fruit, particularly apples. Now, of course, it doesn't matter. Apples essential—all my eye. Don't you know that raw carrots are just as, &c., &c. For some years we have made considerable efforts to produce fresh milk of high quality; we have pasteurised it, made it tuberculin-tested, delivered it in bottles, have set up a Milk-Marketing Board, and in every way made fresh milk a keystone in national health. But now, if you please, there is not, after all, much virtue in it. Tinned milk and dried milk are just as good. (Oh, are they? said the mother.) Similarly with eggs. Something specially good about a fresh egg? Nonsense. Quite an old-fashioned idea. No doubt every official word in this discussion was scientifically true. But public memory is not always short; a few of us take a fairly educated interest in the diet of our children; and it seems a little pointless to deprecate the value of essential foods because they are not obtainable, and to praise unattractive substitutes because they are.

In the Garden

What to do with the greenhouse after the tomatoes are harvested is a problem that worries a Westmorland correspondent. The answer, of course, depends on the size of the greenhouse and whether it is going to be heated or not. A greenhouse used to mean a greenhouse, but now, in thousands of gardens, it simply means a small, low-spanned, unheated box of glass. It carries three crops—spring seeds, summer tomatoes, autumn chrysanthemums. It can also, of course, carry spring bulbs in pans and boxes after the chrysanthemums are finished. It can also be used as an alpine house. But I feel fairly sure that my correspondent is wondering if it cannot carry a crop of vegetables. The answer is that the management of winter vegetables under glass is a fairly expert business. Dampness and irregularity of temperature are great difficulties; the private greenhouse is too often hopelessly small; the cloche and the frame will probably do just as much as, if not more than, the little greenhouse that looks too often like a collection of picture-frames. This is only general advice, and is, I am aware, pretty frigid. But, then, so is a little greenhouse in January.

H. E. BATES.

THE CINEMA

"The Reluctant Dragon." At the Gaumont and the Marble Arch Pavilion.——**German Newsreels.** General release.

It is with some relief that we watch the safe descent of Walt Disney from Mount Olympus with only a few scratches to mark his recent highbrow excursion. After *Fantasia* comes *The Reluctant Dragon* and Beethoven gives way to Benchley. The new arrangement is not only more homey but, surprisingly, gives rise to more novelty and technical experiment than was to be found in *Fantasia*. And yet in basic idea *The Reluctant Dragon* is simply an old-fashioned advertising film for Walt Disney's cartoon-making factory, with Robert Benchley as the visitor who has to be there to provide the advertiser with an excuse for explaining his machinery. That is the basic idea, but it is so ingeniously carried out that for many people this will be Disney's most entertaining film. They will find in its cartoon-sequences a maturity of theme and a range of style which was largely missing in *Fantasia*. In the course of his travels through the vast Disney plant Benchley is shown four complete cartoons and three of them represent an important departure from the simple nursery-style story on which Disney has built his reputation. One of them—*Baby Weems*—is a satire on the machinery of modern sensation-mongering with a commentary in the style of *March of Time*; another is a burlesque of an instructional film on how to ride a horse, and the third might have come straight from the repertoire of Douglas Byng. This last gives the film its name, and the Dragon's reluctance to fight is due to a taste for poetry. Fortunately Sir Giles, the Dragon's elderly opponent, has a similar preference, and instead of a combat there is a poetry-tea with Sir Giles' "Raddish so Red" capped by the Dragon's rendering of "Pretty Little Upside-down Cake." For the sake of convention and to gratify the expectations of the mediaeval countryside a battle is, however, arranged. After many abortive attempts, the Dragon is stimulated into breathing fire and smoke by the accusation of being nothing but a "punk poet," and there is a spectacular duel, most of which is concealed from the populace by a smoke-screen behind which Dragon and Knight waltz or take more tea. *How to Ride a Horse* is remarkable for the lack of co-operation between a pompous commentator and the horse. Goofy is the pupil and remains a picture of immaculate gentility in spite of a series of acrobatic misadventures. Baby Weems is an infant prodigy who is a sage at birth and whose parents are never allowed into his distinguished presence until he falls ill and becomes normal. The story is told in a continuity of crayon drawings which are not animated. This visual technique has a certain old-world charm and, since there is no need for the sharp definition of outline which Disney's animation demands, it is possible to employ a softer style and a more complete range of tones. The sacrifice of animation, however, can be but nothing more than a passing novelty. The main importance of this item lies in its topical social satire and in its use of a narrative-commentary. *Baby Weems* may be the first step towards the animated political cartoon which has always been a screen possibility.

The expositional sections of *The Reluctant Dragon* give a great deal of information on the processes and the planning which go into the making of animated cartoons. Benchley's comedy is superb as ever, and a great deal of care has been taken to ensure that the explanation of methods of animation will not spoil the illusion of future Disney films. When Benchley is a little obtuse in understanding how a series of pictures of Donald Duck can give an appearance of movement it is Donald himself who suddenly comes alive in the drawings and angrily demonstrates the process which enables him to walk and run.

The Ministry of Information is releasing to the newsreels batches of official German war-film photographed on the Russian front. This material is horrifying in the extreme. Whole Russian towns are shown in flames, while there are many pictures of actual combat. We see a row of Russian planes methodically set on fire by tracer shells which we can watch from the moment they leave the cameraman's aircraft until they find their billet. The material is being used here to emphasise the need to speed up production of the weapons of war, and it would have been better for the Ministry to have made their own version rather than to leave some of the newsreels to show embarrassment in their commentaries for fear the film may present too depressing a picture of German military might. The decision to release the film was a wise one. It is important that the public should know what the Russians are up against now and what we will face later if their resistance breaks.

EDGAR ANSTEY.

COUNTRY LIFE

Education and the Farmer

The number of books devoted to the land, the farmer and the general regeneration of the countryside shows no sign of lessening. Sometimes one wonders what audience is being addressed by them. We have pleas for almost every kind of revolution, from land-nationalisation to wholemeal-bread. So far I have seen no suggestion that there is room for a pretty wide post-war education scheme for farmers. For it seems to me that we often tolerate in the farming industry sloppy conditions that no other industry would tolerate for a week. For example, I recently talked to a farm-labourer who, when the rate of 34s. was in force, was asked by his employer to do Sunday overtime; he agreed, but when the time came for over-time pay he was met by the astonishing reply of "Oh! that's all in!" No other industry would tolerate such conditions.

To Be a Farmer

A sign that someone else thinks there is room for educating farmers, or rather potential farmers, is the appearance of an admirably practical little book, *To Be a Farmer*, by J. Gunston (Methuen, 7s. 6d.). I fancy that it is only the exceptional farmer who has much use for books. Yet before me lies a letter from one of the biggest farmers in Lincolnshire, who, thinking of starting a library of agricultural works, would welcome my suggestions. Though he is a farmer on a large, successful and experimental scale, he has learned a profound lesson. "The land has made me humble," he says. He has none of the prejudice which holds that a farmer has nothing to learn from books, and he will be interested in *To Be a Farmer*. For the creed behind the book is that "farming" is not a hit-or-miss occupation; it requires trained men and women. Accordingly, it deals with farming as a practical career in which there is no room for fools. It deals with farm-institutes, agricultural colleges, finance, literature, crop-rotations, labour-requirement, choice of land, family farms, diplomas, degrees, legal agreements, composting, scholarships, and many other things. Is it generally known, for example, that the Ministry of Agriculture offers annual scholarships to the sons and daughters of agricultural workers and of eight other grades of rural worker? Anyone who has a son anxious to take up farming, or a daughter in the Land Army, should in fact get this book. And there are some farmers too, I think, who might invest seven and sixpence with worse results.

Harvest (Almost) Home

The countryside has been grateful for two pieces of red-tape cutting. The first made it possible for schoolboy harvest-camps to be continued after the original closing date had expired; the second released troops for the harvest-field. The harvest-situation has undoubtedly been desperate. In many cases corn in the shock began to grow again, and in the south, by the end of August, scarcely a sheaf had been carried. To farmers already short of hands, the arrival of lorry-loads of soldiers was a godsend. To the soldiers it was often a case of "Well, it's good to have done *some* good at last." After harvest, thatching will be another problem. The craft has long been dying out, and in the south-east, where domestic thatching never seems to have been very popular, there is an acute shortage of good craftsmen. It would be a great mistake, by the way, to assume that this year's harvest has been a glorious wholesale success. It is difficult to recall a year in which there were so many appalling crops of oats. Again and again one saw fields of oats in which it was hard to decide if the crop were oats ruined by thistles or a crop of thistles decorated with oats. In almost all cases where it was possible to check up, these crops turned out to be on land newly and hastily ploughed. One recalls now the good sense of the argument that ploughing-up should have been, generally, a two-year rather than a one-year policy.

In the Garden

Spring-sown onions should be up and harvested. Days of sun-baking, until skins are crisp as charred paper, are essential. Big onions keep prettily in ropes; small onions keep better and longer in sacks or boxes. Many outdoor tomatoes are showing disease, but it is too late now for spraying. Better to gather fruit at the first sign of colour. Pears have cracked as if split down by sabres; many potatoes, riddled by slugs, are as light as sponges. There is consolation in some excellent crops of winter greens. Late chrysanthemums are also rich with promise. A new grower may find himself confused by instructions as to "taking" buds. He cannot go far wrong when buds are finally formed, but earlier it is very easy to mistake a break-bud for a crown-bud. A break-bud, which is small and appears singly, acts exactly as if the plant were stopped by hand; it is the sign that the plant is about to produce new flowering shoots. A crown-bud is the final flowering bud It appears as the largest of a cluster, and disbudding is simply the process of thinning out this cluster to the central bud. Chrysanthemums are generally fairly fool-proof, but the exhibitionists' practice of stopping and thinning buds has, I think, frightened many ordinary growers into believing that they are flowers only for the expert. Which is wrong, and a pity.

H. E. BATES.

THE CINEMA

"Shepherd of the Hills." At the Carlton.——**"Tall, Dark and Handsome."** At the Regal.

THERE is a sequence in *Shepherd of the Hills* when a whole tortured community believes that its hope of deliverance from evil depends upon the outcome of an attempt to restore sight to a blind woman. The people gather for the miracle in a clearing in the densely wooded Missouri hills. They sit stiffly waiting in their Sunday-best clothes, separated into dour groups by the inbred memories of old feuds and by the blood which has been shed between them. The sun lights up the rich brown forest and sparkles back from the barrels of rifles without which these wary neighbours never leave home. One man sings an old Ozark mountain song, full of grotesque imagery. Meanwhile the Technicolor camera moves unobtrusively amongst the assembly of thirty or forty people observing with a casual emphasis how a woman is wearing specially for the ceremony an ancient flowered hat, a generation overdue from Kansas City, or recording the apprehension of an idiot-child; yet never allowing quite out of sight the isolated wicker-chair which awaits the blind woman.

She is led up from the village by her daughter. The bandages are unwrapped. She goes on staring in front of her, then, lifting her arms, slowly, puts a finger-tip to her daughter's eyelids. She lowers her hand again and looks down. "A human tear," she says. "A mighty pleasant sight for first seeing." She bends and grasps a handful of soil, shouting, "My eyes are blessed with the sight of God's good dirt." Then she walks from group to group of the gathering, and with her fresh vision she is the first to see clearly and to reveal the nature of the misery which broods over her village. Immediately the latent feud breaks out again in full fury, mother struggles fatally with son and son turns his gun upon father.

Shepherd of the Hills, you will gather, is an unusual and ambitious film. It is from a novel by Harold Bell Wright, and is directed with remarkable observation by Henry Hathaway. The picture is full of beautifully composed scenes, colour is used imaginatively, and the camera-angles utilise brilliantly both the oppressive confinement of log-cabin and forest and the freedom of the wide mountain-vistas. By careful understatement, by odd unemphasised lines of dialogue and a feeling for the significance of commonplace visual details, the film bravely tackles a story of simple emotions forced in upon themselves and rotted by superstition. Unfortunately, the courage of the producers is not always equal to their task, and the film is sometimes precious and sentimental. To the logical ending of the story has been added an incongruous happy-ever-after.

An excellent cast is headed by Harry Carey, John Wayne, Betty Field and Beulah Bondi, and the performance of the two women is most sensitive and moving. The movement of a muscle, the creak of a chair, this is the sort of raw material from which the film creates its psychological pattern. Behind it is the broader picture of Ozark village life—the tiny street overhung by the forest, the butcher, the storekeeper and the man who makes chairs all going about their small business. Higher up the mountainside the moonshiners are busy distilling their illicit spirit. "The making and the drinking of good corn-liquor is blessed by the Lord," says the poor tortured woman who has become the evil genius of the place. The dialogue of this remote community has a biblical simplicity and employs many words in their Elizabethan rather than their modern sense.

Tall, Dark and Handsome has subtlety of a different order. Cesar Romero is a gay gangster, Charlotte Greenwood is the boss of his night-club cabaret and Virginia Gilmore is a supposedly unsophisticated shop-assistant for whose benefit the gangster invents a happy family life complete with tree-dressing on Christmas Eve. Charlotte cannot stand the strain, and sneaks off back to the club and her cabaret-girls. "I've some dolls to unwrap for Christmas," she pleads in excuse. The dialogue is always gay and often scintillating, and it is a pity that we learn too early that Cesar Romero maintains all the rival gun-men he is reputed to have "rubbed out" in a luxurious cellar. This proves a comforting discovery to "Pretty Willie," the rival big-shot, who is delighted to discover that he is opposed not by a killer but a philanthropist. As a result the film produces some genuine gun-play for a climax. There are so many excellent comedy-situations in this picture that it deserved better shaping. And Sheldon Leonard is so sinister as "Pretty Willie" that he must be promoted in his next picture into real gangsterdom. Those big popping eyes and little twisted mouth were not intended to be mocked by crazy-comedy fans.

EDGAR ANSTEY.

COUNTRY LIFE

Two Centuries Young

Two hundred years ago this month was born the man who has been called "the first of English agricultural writers." Arthur Young, born in London, was the younger son of a Suffolk rector. Before he was nineteen he had written four novels and a couple of political pamphlets. Before he died he had surveyed 7,000 miles of British soil, a good deal of France and Ireland and had written between 200 and 250 volumes. "He was the soul and inspiration of the progressive movement," Lord Ernle has said. "To him, more than any other individual, were due the dissemination of new ideas on farming, the diffusion of the latest results of observation and experiment, the creation of new agencies for the interchange of experiences, the establishment of farmers' clubs, ploughing-matches and agricultural societies and shows." His time, dislocated by revolution both here and in France, has a parallel in our own. Young, too, saw a widespread "inability to put the land to its best use," and wrote about it with appropriate indignation. France made him, according to one of his translators, an adopted child; George III, who delighted in calling himself "Farmer George," carried Young's *Annals* about with him and declared himself to be more indebted to him than any man in his dominions; Napoleon is said to have read him on St. Helena. We, too, can read Young today with a good deal of profit; and at least one writer wishes there were time, as in Young's day, for an outspoken six months' tour of agricultural England.

The Labourer's Hire

It is not pleasant to reflect that perhaps the greatest work on the history of the English farm-labourer was written by a German—Hasbach. Yet it seems hardly surprising when we consider the deal that the farm-labourer is now getting at official hands. On one side he is told that his value in the conflict is as high as any man's, and that wars are won as much behind the plough as behind the tank; on the other he is still offered a general wage of 48s. and told that on no account must he transfer to employment where he could double or treble that amount. In a few counties the wage is raised, but generally the whole subject of higher agricultural wages must wait, he is told, till after harvest. The harvest, unfortunately, happens to be very late, and a rather sanctimonious sort of appeal has now been made to the farm-labourer to work on Sundays. Has officialdom any idea of what it means? I take the case of a tractor-driver, who I know well, as being typical. He works from early morning to dark every day of the week, his wife with him. He is also a sergeant in the Home Guard—I serve under him as corporal—and at nine o'clock on one evening he must attend an N.C.O.'s conference and on another he must deliver his section-orders. On Saturday evening he will be up till past midnight on manoeuvres; on Sunday morning he will be expected at firing-practice. What he thinks when he opens his local paper and finds the appeal for higher wages rejected with the old die-hard indignation I don't know, but I could guess. It is only fair to say, of course, that there are farmers who voluntarily pay a higher rate than the county-rate and that many enlightened employers—Mr. A. G. Street, for example—have publicly stated that they want a still higher wage. But if we can't raise the national rate to a decent level let us at least have done with that cynical soft soap which values the labourer very high in works but very low in cash.

In the Garden

Michaelmas daisies and lilies have been the high-light of September. Among the first, *Aster Thomsonii,* huge, almost blue, in flower for weeks, has been the finest of the species; among lilies there was no doubt of the glory of *L. Tigrinum Fortunei*—a royal, black-stemmed tiger blooming later than the type. Both should be noted by anyone who has not yet grown them. A mauve bergamot, taller than the red, has been charming and unrivalled for a long time; eryngiums shone blue and silver for weeks. All these seemed enough to justify a decision, taken as soon as war broke out, that flowers were not going to be sacrificed for vegetables. Two correspondents, by the way, have asked for some method of ripening and keeping the nuts of flowering almonds. My experience is that they are about as easy as flints to use before Christmas; but that if stored until late winter they crack easily and are really excellent.

H. E. BATES.

Congress itself is as democratic as any British political party and a good deal more democratic that some. But if Mr. Rawlinson were correct (which he is not) in stating that there are no parties as we understand them (what else are Congress and the Moderate party?) and no body of opinion reacting against extravagant movements (what of Congress Left, Centre and Right, the Moderates and the Princes, to name a few?) but only numerous minorities suspicious of one another, then Sir George Schuster's solution of a small group of first-class men of all parties to work out a new constitutional plan is no solution at all. For, if they are party men, they are, *ipso facto* (according to Mr. Rawlinson), incapable of agreement, and if they are not party men, they have no mass support and will not reflect the wishes of the people.

The one thing that will work in India is the one thing that we refuse to try—democracy. More and better education would give democracy a finer basis, but education would be most effective if applied first at the top—the British Cabinet—as education in the principles of democracy and world citizenship.—Yours faithfully,

F. R. GRIFFIN.

138 Holystone Crescent, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 7.

[In *The Times* of July 31st it was stated that the membership of Congress before the war was over 4,500,000, in 1939-40 under 3,000,000 and in 1941 a little over 1,500,000.—ED., *The Spectator*.]

BOMBING POLICY

SIR,—Your correspondent "Target" would persuade us that Britain is to blame for the horrors of night-bombing. This is bad enough. It is almost incredible that anyone can be so childish as to suppose that a "no bombing" compact with Hitler, made either before the war or since, could have been of the smallest value to anyone in the world—except, of course, Hitler and his country.

Luckily for us we did not make any such pact, for we should have kept it; and we should have received just what we deserved for such folly, and should now be powerless to give Germany the only answer she can or could understand.—I am, yours truly,

Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. E. W. E. KEMPSON.

RHEUMATISM AND INDUSTRY

SIR,—The article by your Medical Correspondent, September 12th, on sickness in relation to "absenteeism" in industry deserves wide attention. Probably right attention to health and other welfare conditions would solve almost wholly this problem of the workshops. The normal man or woman finds idleness a burden. Rheumatic disease is the greatest single cause of absenteeism in industry. A Ministry of Health estimate (1924) was that three million weeks of work per year were lost through it among the insured population alone. It specially afflicts the mining, the mechanical transport and the textile industries. Yet, with prompt and proper attention to the early stages of the disease, a very large proportion of sufferers—some estimates are as high as 50 per cent. or 60 per cent.—would be saved from lapsing into disability. Unfortunately, there are at present available the right means of treatment for not more than 10 per cent. of sufferers. The remainder have to drift on to become incapable of work; firstly at intervals, finally permanently. It is the one serious gap in our otherwise excellent Public Health services. True, the sufferer can consult a doctor, but the doctor cannot, in the great majority of cases, order the proper treatment, since there are no means for its application. The matter was succinctly reviewed this year in a booklet by Lord Horder, in collaboration with the Empire Rheumatism Council, *Rheumatism—A Plan for National Action*.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

FRANK FOX.

Empire Rheumatism Council,
Temporary Office: 326 Finchley Road, London, N.W. 3.

EWE MILK

SIR,—How true is the saying that half the world knows not how the other half lives. There is nothing new in using ewe milk. The milk, and the cheese made from it, form the staple food of many a Balkan peasant. I have drunk much ewe milk. It has a flavour different from that of cow milk, but is very good. A white cheese is made from it which is stored for winter use. When I lived in Scutari-Albania at the house of my old guide Marko, he kept a couple of ewes in a small olive garden at the back of his house, where there was plenty of grass. They were in milk from the end of March till well into October and ran to the back door morning and evening to be milked. There is no reason why any owner of an orchard or small field should not thus run a couple of ewes and supply his family with milk for half the year at next to no cost. The lambs and wool would find ready sale. Ewe milk is used also in Italy for cheese making. A tasty cheese called Shepziger which we imported in pre-war days was of ewe milk. The ewe is not mischievous as is the goat, and will not gnaw the bark of orchard trees nor climb fences. Moreover, it manures the ground. Till fairly recent times ewe milk was used in Scotland. I have been told that ewe cheese was called "kebbuck." Does not Burns mention the milking of ewes? I have not a "Complete Works." Perhaps someone can look this up.—Yours,

M. E. DURHAM.

COUNTRY LIFE

Research

There are people who are rude about research-stations; and there are research-stations, I daresay, which would like to be rude about people. In some quarters agriculture and science are still very much at war. But the finest orchards near me, possibly the finest in all Kent, are the property of a man who is in constant and close touch with the research station at East Malling. This week I spent a day at East Malling—almost the only visitor of the day. Before the war there was a daily stream of visitors there; now there are very few. Is the average gardener shy of research-stations? Yet obviously research-stations exist for the people. It is possible that the small grower thinks his problems too small for a research-station to handle. But take fruit-storage. The large-scale method of storage by gas is expensive, out of reach of the man with a couple of dozen trees. But East Malling has just given a demonstration of a method of apple-storage by dipping in a simple dilute oil-solution—so that the life of an apple is prolonged for four or six weeks—which will obviously be a godsend to the ordinary grower, especially in a glut year. I was given a demonstration also of framework grafting—that very simple method by which the scion of a new variety is whipped on to the lateral of the old tree, and by which grafts begin to bear in two or three years. This method can now be used for pears, plums and cherries as well as apples—extremely simple and effective, ideal for the small grower who is growing old uneconomic varieties and wants a quick change to a new variety.

Leaf-Injection

But the experiment in leaf-injection seem to me among the most interesting things going on at East Malling now. "By injecting minerals one or more at a time . . . into a selected part of a plant as small as a single intravenal area or as large as a main branch or whole tree . . mineral deficiencies can be diagnosed extremely rapidly." For example, a Kentish cherry-orchard (cherry land is of very high value) had been a problem for years. A clear line of demarcation went through it, showing healthy trees in full bearing on one side, sickly and non-bearing trees on the other. Leaf-injection analyses showed what had never been shown before—a deficiency of manganese in the sickly trees. Injection of manganese revealed encouraging results, the trees putting out dark, healthy growth, and later injections on a curative scale have solved the problem of that orchard for many years. There must be scores of similar cases waiting to be tackled and solved. I ought to say, perhaps, that leaf-injection is not an amateur's business, and that injecting your decaying apple trees with a hypodermic syringe filled from the children's chemistry set will not yield the correct results. If you have a problem in chlorosis send it to the research-station.

Quack Advertisements

The quarter's issue of *The Countryman* is, I fancy, slightly better than usual. "Remember the time old Winston joined the Bricklayers' Union?" is the opening sentence of one of those anonymous unprofessional reminiscences that are part of *The Countryman's* secret of success. The Future of the Land is discussed, following Sir Daniel Hall's proposals in a recent issue, by Dr. Orwin, the Duke of Montrose, A. G. Street, and others, and there is an excellent suggestion—long overdue—that it is time a commission here examined the claims put forward by advertisements. The United States Federal Trade Commission has recently been examining advertisements of "food, drugs and cosmetics" generally, and testing the products. In twelve months it examined 300,700 advertisements and ordered nearly 300 firms to "cease and desist" for misrepresentation. One's impression is that here, with the rationing of more essential foods, the war on nerves, the need for various forms of protection, there has been an increase in the sale and advertisement of what country people call "mullocks." The recent report of a firm being fined for selling bottles of synthetically coloured water labelled as containing "the juice of 16 oranges" suggests a case in point. Some time ago I picked up a copy of the B.M.A. booklet *Secret Remedies*, issued some years back. Its revelations on popular brands of food and drugs were even then staggering.

In the Garden

Surplus produce still seems to be many peoples' problems. Nobody wants the beans, the cabbages and the vegetable marrows they themselves can't eat. Many people, urged for the first time in their lives to grow more food, are slightly embarrassed by the food they have grown. I recently visited a garden where the two owners had been prodigal in their achievements. They had grown enough carrots, potatoes, beans, turnips and the rest to feed ten or more people, and now do not know what to do with them. Yet in March, April and May of next year it is highly probable they will be short of fresh vegetables. If the garden doesn't show now, in September, a succession of growing crops for *the next eight months* then its planning has been inadequate. One of the solutions for surplus is planning, because with good planning there is no surplus. It has been suggested, however, that the countryside is self-supporting in the matter of vegetables, and that organisation of town-supplies ought to take account of this.

H. E. BATES.