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really 57, hours, and on night-shifts had to pay the night watchman to wake them up in the morning because they had nothing to do. From two other shipyarders I have heard the same tale of long hours, high pay and lack of work; one man was told to work six hours overtime and spent them reading, as he was given nothing to do. The decent men are seething with discontent. They blame two things: the complete inefficiency and lack of experience in the management and the system by which the management is paid a percentage on the men's wages so that slow working and overtime is to their advantage.

Possibly things have improved in the shipyards, as they have done at the aeroplane-repair place where the chauffeur I have mentioned works, since the Parliamentary debate; my information was earlier. But your letter from "A Factory Hand" does not suggest this. Are the men responsible for this state of things members of the Fifth Column or merely its unconscious allies because of their selfishness or inefficiency?—Yours, &c.,

R. URSULA SOMERVELL.

Broom Close, Kendal.

CLOTHES-RATIONING

SIR.—As the winter of my discontent has not yet been made glorious summer by the sun of York, or any other sun, I should like to beg the hospitality of your columns for the further instalment of my dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the Government's attempt to deal with a difficult situation created by the war.

It seems probable that, in order to secure the even distribution of food, the rationing of our food was necessary, but I do not feel at all confident that rationing of clothes is necessary or is in the national interest. No doubt it causes the Government additional expenses in procuring expert advice on rationing of clothes. In addition to that, the Government will lose very largely in income-tax on the incomes of the smaller tailoring shops, and both income-tax and surtax collectable from the multiple tailors' shops, such as "The Tailor of Taste" and "The Fifty Shilling Tailor." In any case, it seems clear to me that rationing should not be established without a full enquiry to see whether the nation loses or gains by it. This would involve the making of a profit and loss account, which no doubt the Treasury could undertake without any additional expense. I am not at all sure that the difficulties of distribution might not be met by the fixing of prices and the subsidising of the small tailoring establishments throughout the country, nor am I satisfied that this course would cost the Government more than they lose by rationing.

Thanking you for the hospitality of your columns, which I find from week to week are open to a variety of views, whether you agree with them or not, I am, your obedient servant,

FAIRFIELD.

Fairfield House, Caldby, Cheshire.

A SOLUTION FOR INDIA?

SIR.—Mr. Griffin forgets that in 1935 we gave India provincial autonomy. In 1937, Congress obtained majorities in seven provinces out of the eleven, but they were bare majorities. In the Bombay elections, the number of votes cast for Congress was 1,483,189 out of a total of 2,536,698. All over India, Congress only won 715 seats out of 1,585. Any chance of practising democratic government in these provinces was squashed by the ukase of the Congress High Command two years later, which robbed 200 million voters of their rights. Thereupon Dr. Satyapal, President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, resigned. He told the Press, "Mr. Gandhi's dictatorial edicts give me no alternative. . . . Congress has converted itself into a rigid dictatorship." The Liberal leaders in their manifesto stated that "Congress believes in annihilating all parties and making Congress the only party in the land, as is the case in the Fascist and Nazi régimes—a result which would be a death-blow to democracy. If Congress really believed in democracy, it would not slight other parties or insist upon their dissolution."

As long ago as 1919, no less an authority than Mr. Srinivasa Sastri strongly opposed setting up parliaments on the English model, as unwanted to India, and begged Lord Chelmsford to drop the idea. Our best prospect of finding a solution is to get together a small committee of representative men of the various great religious and national groups, and let them hammer out a workable scheme which will satisfy moderate people of all classes. Nearly everyone is tired of the rival pretensions of the Congress and the Moslem League, and would welcome any reasonable suggestions put forward.—Yours, &c.,

H. G. RAWLSON.

THE SAMPLING METHOD

SIR.—In reply to Mr. Silvey's letter in your issue of September 26th, I should like to state that I was not misled by Mr. Rowntree's own figures, but by those of "Janus." I made it clear in my original letter that I had not then read *Poverty and Progress*. Had I had that opportunity my argument would have been the same as Mr. Silvey's. As I was largely the pioneer of the sampling method in this country, I am grateful to Mr. Silvey for defending so convincingly this method of securing information.—Yours faithfully,

H. G. LYALL.

The Hazels, Mount Pleasant Lane,
Bricket Wood, via Watford, Herts.

COUNTRY LIFE

Summer's Lease

The meadows are very green and where the flax was laid out in spring broad lines of lighter green have sprung up and are now blue lines of flower. On the hedges the holly-berries are bright yellow, in thick clusters, and then after some days of sun turn a warm flushed orange. Honeysuckle is now paler than the light bushy straw that is caught up on tall twigs and branches, wherever woadsweat has passed, and is much the colour of stray plumes of meadowsweet at the dykes. The hop-fields are empty. When rain comes it is soft and straight and the oaks are black in the dark air, but the lustrous brightness of fallen willow-leaves on the light green grass is more vivid than it was on days of sun. The first sound of robin song over the soft fall of windless rain is very sharp and pure, but the swallows have not gone and it is only in the early morning and again in the evening when the pheasants are croaking down to rest in the woods where the first small olive sweet chestnuts are beginning to fall, that it seems like the end of summer.

Country Education

A well-known writer has been saying that country education should be designed to fit the country child for a country life. This seems to be such a general idea among certain rural reformers that it may sound heresy to call it nonsense. If we are to have a separate standard and curriculum of rural education, designed to produce nothing but country citizens, then it is not unfair to argue that we should have a correspondingly separate form of urban education, designed to produce nothing but town citizens. Mr Ritchie Calder must have horrified many rural die-hards recently when he spoke of the necessity of bringing the town and the country nearer together; yet the idea has in it the very gumption that rural reform needs. To offer country children a form of education designed solely to fit them for country life is equivalent to saying to a town child "Fields and farming are not your business. You are being educated to a life of machines." For clearly a country boy may show great gifts as a chemist, an engineer or a printer, just as a town boy may show a great desire to become a farmer, a stock-breeder or a fruit-grower.

Mr. Ritchie Calder's idea of bringing the town and the country into closer collaboration, especially in education, is therefore sound. For town and country in England perhaps more than anywhere, are essentially complementary forces in the national life, and in any post-war regeneration of rural life there must be an end of the idea that they are perpetually trying to take something away from each other.

Country Prayer

The Church is often accused of taking little more than a mild abstract interest in the education and general affairs of the countryside; but does the countryside take any more interest in the affairs of the Church? The more I live in the country the more I feel sorry for country clergymen. They have often been painted viciously and it is often said that there are too many of them. (There are at least 350 of them in the Diocese of Canterbury alone, accounting for only half of Kent.) But the apathy, vindictiveness, bickering and bigotry that most of them face reaches, I imagine, a fairly high general level. A canon in a neighbouring village preaches to a congregation that is often not more than five; another parson, at harvest festival, looks round in vain for a single member of the four farming households in his parish; another endures life in the ugliest of rectories, where the enormous cavernous rooms never get warm and where you could put a bus in the entrance hall and where four servants would just ensure moderate comfort—small wonder he longs for a cosy semi-detached in a town. But there is something more heart-breaking than damp rooms in cavernous, ugly rectories; and when I hear him say "Ironical, isn't it, that my only friends in the village are among the unbelievers?" I can guess what it is.

In the Garden

It is always rather puzzling that pears are not more grown in England. In France there has always been a much finer appreciation of their aristocratic virtues. There are few rites in gastronomy that surpass the pear-eating ritual: the careful, delicate peeling, the scoop of the core, the buttery slice, the juice running down the chin. One should they be eaten in solitary solemnance, as very old country folk used to eat them—scooped out, slowly and sleepily, with a bone spoon. Most failures in growing pears could probably be traced to wrong planting. Nearly all pears are self-sterile, and to plant *Doyenne du Comice* in solitary confinement is simply to ask for barren years. Pears do very well as cordons, and I have consequently asked Earl Malling Research Station if they could give a list of the best cordon-compatible varieties for planting as cordons and for use as dessert. Their list is: Laxton's Superb (August), Williams' Bon Chretien (Triumph de Vienne and Buerré Superfin (September); Thompson's Buerré Hardy, Conference and Louise Bonne de Jersey (October); Doyenne du Comice (November); Glou Morceau and Winter Nelis (December); Josephine de Malines (January onwards). To this should only be added Marie Louise—glorious in flavour, and perhaps even more glorious in fragrance, with its scent of an old perpetual rose.

H. E. BATES.

publications, using huge quantities in comparison with yours, might well be further curtailed with more justification, and no real loss to the community.

I may add that after reading my *Spectator* it is posted to a member of the Air Force, and then by him to a friend in the Forces overseas.—Yours faithfully, "NORTHERNER."

A SOLUTION FOR INDIA?

SIR.—Mr. Rawlinson's letter shows how ridiculous his position is. He admits that Congress obtained a majority in 7 out of 11 provinces, winning 715 out of a total of 1,585 seats, of which only 657 were open to general competition. Many of the others, such as the European seats, were not open to Congress candidates, and Congress only contested 58 out of 480 Moslem seats, winning 26. Mr. Rawlinson gets rid of his awkward majority by explaining that, like the servant's baby, it was only a little one, and, since Indians have had the bad taste to elect the wrong people, democracy must be scrapped and a small Committee of representative men got together. How are these to be selected? Evidently not by the Indian people, for they might choose as they chose in 1937. Perhaps a sound man like the Viceroy could be persuaded to act. Then we could concentrate once more on fighting for political liberty and democracy for peoples enslaved in empires not our own. Can't Mr. Rawlinson catch up to the idea that democracy is a technique for reaching agreement in a community where there are differences in opinion? Such differences exist in Britain, but that is no excuse for scrapping the political parties here. Congress is only one party in India, but by general consent it is the largest one, and it's no good trying to by-pass it.—Yours, &c., F. R. GRIFFIN.

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

RHEUMATISM AND INDUSTRY

SIR.—In your issue of September 25th appeared a letter from Sir Frank Fox, of the Empire Rheumatism Council, in which attention is called to the lack of means of treating rheumatism, from which the general practitioner suffers. In support of this statement he refers to Lord Horder's booklet, *Rheumatism—A Plan for National Action*. But attention was called to this deficiency in our medical service in an article from my pen entitled *Treatment Centres*, published in *The Spectator* as long ago as 1921, at a time when I, wholeheartedly supported by that gracious lady H.R.H. Princess Louise, persuaded the progressive Kensington Division of the B.R.C.S. (County of London) to open a physical treatment centre, which under the capable administration of the Hon. Mrs. Anthony Orpen, has been so developed as to serve as a model for similar centres in these isles and elsewhere. Many more are undoubtedly needed.

Lord Horder is a very able and popular physician, but the habit of waiting for the pronouncement of the elect has during recent years led to much regrettable delay and, if much further developed, may lead to such regard for their pronouncements as in the cases of Aristotle, Galen and Avicenna resulted in the stagnation of medical research characteristic of mediaeval times.

Means of early diagnosis and treatment, not only of rheumatism but of all diseases especially, nevertheless of cancer and consumption, should be available to every member of the community. The expense entailed would in the long run prove a most economical investment.—Yours faithfully, HAROLD H. SANGUINETTI.

35 *Holland Street, Kensington, W. 8.*

TELLING AMERICA

SIR.—In your issue of October 3rd an American journalist objects that news from this country is not of a kind to inspire other peoples to join in the war, "the real complaint is not that the British situation is not fully explained, but that it is not understood by American people in such a way as to lead to speedier and more effective action on their part."

Is this lack of understanding due to the present lull in the West or to doubts about our war effort? But there is also a larger aspect, as Mr. A. A. Milne pointed out in a letter to *The Times* of September 5th. This island is an oasis whose sufferings, at worst, have been a trifle compared with the agony of enslaved Europe. Have the sufferings of the conquered countries been depicted sufficiently vividly to the American public? There is no lack of material and if it can be suitably presented to the workers it would surely bring the realisation that only by 100 per cent. industrial effort can the day of deliverance be hastened, and the added horror of pestilence and famine be averted.—Yours faithfully, ANNE R. CATON.

81 *Cliffords Inn Flats, Fetter Lane, E.C. 4.*

IRAN AND EIRE

SIR.—Now that your correspondents have raised the question "Iran or Persia?" perhaps you could find room in your columns for the discussion of the parallel question "Eire or Irish Free State?" I do not believe that there is any more justification for the use of "Eire" than there is for the use of "Iran."—Yours faithfully,

The Athenaeum, Pall Mall, S.W. 1.

F. DARWIN FOX.

COUNTRY LIFE

Santos to Akureyri

It is interesting to find that something about English country life is read as far away and at places as far apart as Santos, Brazil, and Akureyri, on the north coast of Iceland. But to get a recipe for an English wholemeal loaf from Santos and, among other things, a note on Icelandic grapes from Akureyri is fairly astonishing. The bread of North Brazil is apparently of poor quality, and the Santos correspondent offers the tip of one ounce of lard to four pounds of flour, as one which will give a loaf that "kept well for several days, even in the very hot, moist climate of the Amazon." It can also, apparently, be warm in Iceland (note that the post-mark is "Island"), and "the variety of flowers that can be grown in these latitudes is surprising to many foreigners, our summers being much warmer than is generally believed." Our greenhouses also can grow a great variety of plants not natural to our latitude, because of the unlimited supply of natural hot water from the numerous hot springs. Recently the British Prime Minister visited an Icelandic greenhouse establishment and tasted ripe grapes, which are grown here in considerable quantities." This picture of Mr. Churchill chewing on grapes instead of cigars is a refreshing one which might do something to dispel the idea, still common here, that Icelanders, Greenlanders and Laplanders are all Eskimos living exclusively on seal-meat and blubber.

Winter Land-Girl

As October comes, many of the newer land-girls look forward to winter with misgiving. Many of them came into the country in summer, to find the days of hay-time and harvest long but pleasant. The isolation of winter is their great dread. In many villages they see no evidence of communal life except the public-house. They want friends, and friends in the country are hard to make. To be isolated, friendless and cut off from sympathetic activities, in the heart of winter, can be a painful thing. Yet in many villages there are not enough land-girls to form their own clubs, and one wonders if there is any solution to their problems except the simple solution of neighbourliness. In addition to these problems of environment and isolation, it seems to me that the land-girl has genuine grievances. Arriving late at night at a railway-station, for example, tired out and hungry, she finds that the ordinary Services' buffet cannot serve her. Her is not recognised, apparently, as an auxiliary service, and so she is denied these simple Service privileges. If this is true, and I am assured by a very intelligent land-girl that it is, then it is a wrong that very quickly needs righting.

Elderberries

The elderberry crop, like the blackberry crop, has been magnificent, but there is apparently nothing the English want to do with it except make wine or catch roach. Why do we eat the blackberry, which in some continental countries is viewed with pious horror, and neglect a fruit which is as handsome as the grape? The probable answer, I should say, is that the elderberry stinks a little. The fruit has a faint touch of the acrid and unpleasant odour of the wood, which in turn recalls its only use, the pea-shooter. But Americans, I understand, regard the elderberry rather highly, and there are one or two interesting elderberry-sauces made in the Midlands. One of these, Pontack sauce, has behind it an interesting history. Pontack's was a famous London eating-house of Stuart times, and Mr. Maurice Healy has told how it was at this house that Peppy first drank Haut Brion (which he called Ho Bryan . . .). After the Great Fire, Monsieur de Pontac, who owned the "Château Haut Brion," set up the eating-house that became known as Pontacks, where one of the specialities was a hot wine sauce served with roasted ortolans.

In the Garden

It is not easy to recall a year when there were better October gardens. Michaelmas daisies, from the stiff dwarfs to the cool misty giants, have been splendid. They depend very much on light for effect. Sunlight filters through them, giving an effect of foam, and in the evenings, when the sun has gone, the blue of deeper shades becomes intensified. Similarly a late phlox is bright pink by day but quite blue in the evenings, out of the sun. There has been a very good late shrub, *Cleodendron foetidum*, with grey straight branches like those of an ash-plant, huge dark leaves and frothing wine-pink heads of flower. Like hardy fuchsias it gets cut back in winter, but always flowers and is always rich and charming until late October. It seems to increase by suckers, which can be pulled up and rammed in hard after flowering. It is six feet tall and needs elbow-room, but it is too good and too late to miss. As it flowers, always the latest of shrubs, the earliest and the best of winter shrubs shows its first touch of bloom—the first pearl-pink of *Viburnum fragrans*, which will be a consistent joy and comfort until March. Both are from China.

H. E. BATES.

man invasion of us would do them more harm than our invasion of them would do us. But there is nothing but harm for overseas invaders in either case.

We ought not to risk certain defeat by the German hordes by invading Europe with the comparatively few soldiers we could send there. Invading Europe would withdraw many of our few precious ships from our vital Atlantic food ferry. Continentalism for us is all wrong from beginning to end. We must keep out of Europe and win the war by our Sea Power which destroys armies indirectly in one way or another, as by causing them to fight to exhaustion for supplies denied them by our sea-siege, commonly called blockade.

The 4,000,000 soldiers now collected in England can only be for the invasion of Europe. Defeating a German invasion of England would not need such huge numbers. Most of these men would be better employed in strengthening our Sea Power, such as in ship-building and coal-mining and trading and exporting and farming. Instead of ruining ourselves unnecessarily in pursuing a false Continentalist strategy, we ought to get back as near as possible to normal. We could then outlast Germany, and continue the war, if necessary, for years almost without feeling it, until the death produced in Europe by our blockade exhausts Germany to the point of surrender on our terms. That is the true strategy of a sea Power.—Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY BOWLES.

25 Catherine Place, S.W. 1.

QUACK ADVERTISEMENTS

SIR.—In your "Country Life" column of September 26th Mr. Bates supports the view that a Commission should examine the claims put forward by the above. This was done many years ago in the case of quack remedies by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, which in 1914 issued a report, from which I quote: "For all practical purposes British law is powerless to prevent any person from procuring any drug, or making any mixture, whether potent or without any therapeutical activity whatever (as long as it does not contain a scheduled poison), advertising it in any decent terms as a cure for any disease or ailment, recommending it by bogus testimonials and the invented opinions and facsimile signatures of fictitious physicians, and selling it under any name he chooses, on the payment of a small stamp duty, for any price he can persuade a credulous public to pay." The report concluded: "That this is an intolerable state of things and that new legislation to deal with it, rather than merely the amendment of existing laws, is urgently needed in the public interest."

The same conditions hold today, except that the stamp duty has been abolished and advertisers must not claim cures for cancer, diabetes, consumption and V.D. The new Pharmacy Act only tinkers with the subject, and will probably improve the position of patent medicine manufacturers at the expense of the chemists. Those interested should read a 1938 pamphlet, *Patent Medicines*, by the late Professor A. J. Clark, which is a devastating exposure of the vast sums spent in quack remedies (£20,000,000 a year), of the enormous profits earned, of the unscrupulous methods employed, and of the disastrous consequences of this traffic.—I am, Sir, N. I. SPRIGGS.
156 London Road, Leicester.

"IRAN AND PERSIA"

SIR.—Excuse me please, but by not printing my letter on the vexed question of whether the term Iran or Persia should be used, you are displaying both ignorance and prejudice of a very bad kind. Why display such a profound contempt for *Truth*? You only make yourself and the paper you edit ridiculous by doing so. I have already pointed out to you that the term Persia, derived from the classical Persis, which at one time signified only the province of Parsa, now Fars, is never used by the Iranians or by the inhabitants of neighbouring countries. The people of this country are *Iranis* and their country Iran. The word Persia is utterly foreign to them and they could not even pronounce it correctly. *This word is only employed by foreigners.* I notice that *The Times* newspaper has not yet displayed the prejudice and ignorance which you are showing. You can ignore history, you can ignore the opinions of people who should know, you can ignore the wishes of the people of Iran, but not even *The Spectator* will succeed in foisting a word on to them that is utterly meaningless to them and never appears in any of their ancient sacred writings. Iran means something to these people; Persia means nothing to them. But please carry on, Sir, with the good work of keeping the English public in ignorance and darkness.—Thanking you, I am, Sir, yours, &c., F. R. HAYES.

5 Durand Gardens, S.W. 9.

[We shall—in company with the Prime Minister.—ED., *The Spectator*.]

NANSEN ON RUSSIA

SIR.—You may be interested in this quotation from *Russia and Peace*, by Fridtjof Nansen (George Allen and Unwin, 1923):

It appears probable to me that not only will Russia some day, and at a date not far distant, save Europe in things material, but that the sorely needed spiritual renewal will also come from there.

—Yours optimistically,
Churchgates, Blockley, Glos.

G. D. TURNER.

COUNTRY LIFE

Irish Country Life

It is not often that Irish country life comes into the picture; and reading through *Such As I Have*, by Barney Heron (Murray, 8s. 6d.), which is another of those autobiographies about a greenhorn taking a farm, but this time an Irish farm, I am struck by the fact that Irish agriculture has much the same problems as our own. I am struck by the following passage: "Contagious abortion costs Ireland and the British Isles millions of pounds every year, and yet it is left to private enterprise, and patent medicines to combat it. It is not a notifiable disease; if one of your cows 'slips calf' you do not have to report the occurrence to the police. The cow is a potential carrier of the disease for the rest of her life. Actually it is illegal for a cow to be exposed for sale in an open market within two months after it has aborted; but I've never heard of the law being enforced, and I never knew a farmer who paid any heed to it. . . . Contagious abortion is a contributory cause of dear milk, and the milk from an infected cow is the cause of Undulant Fever in human beings." This is just one piece of sound comment from a book that is meant to be more entertaining than educational. I quote it not only to show how easily we tolerate a dangerous large-scale scandal; but also as fair warning to those who, faced with milk shortage, are toying with the idea of keeping a cow. Let them take advice from Mr. Heron, and keep as far removed as possible from what he calls "the dairy farmers' nightmare."

Children's Gardens

Looking back over the summer, I find that one of the pleasantest things in it has been the children's garden. Children who watch when you are not looking, acquire an amazing early aptitude for hard-riding seeds and soil, and the child who sees gardening-jobs being done at an early age will never grow up into a bad gardener. In some way the efforts of children are nearly always mysteriously blessed. The radishes you yourself put in are wrecked by flea; but your small son, aged four, raises superlative radishes on a gravel path. Your peas are devoured by jays; but your small daughters raid the kitchen, get a handful of dried peas from a packet and raise a luscious crop. You throw away your diseased tomato-plants, only to find that the children retrieve them, coddle them and finally nurse them into fruiting earlier than your own. Your boxes of unwanted seedlings are saved and, tenderly pricked out, blossom with a profusion that makes you slightly jealous. The child that has no garden is missing a precious part of its education. And in the child's apparently lucky success with seeds and seedlings there is, of course, a lesson for the grown-up. A child is light on the earth; its fingers are delicate. Green fingers are, in fact, either gentle or small.

Hogarth Hoppers

This year hoppers were rather light in weight; but never in the whole curious history of hop-picking was picking done so fast. Pickers even grumbled that there were more pickers than hops. Wherever you went there was the same answer: "Gone hopping" Mrs. Soandso could no longer do the cleaning; Mr. Soandso could no longer mow the lawn; the young Soandso's were no longer in mischief. All the greengrocer's there was no trade—"All the customers," said the assistant, "have gone hopping." At a teashop there was a notice in the window: "Closed for the hop-season." But the most amazing sight, as always, was the country pub on Saturday night. There are pubs which bar hop-pickers. But anyone who wishes to see the English inn at its strangest—hot, uncomfortable, crowded as a cupboard—might do worse than choose a Kentish pub that admits the Saturday night hop-pickers' free-for-all. Everybody is there from dusty old dears out of Belcher drawings down to high-heeled, high-lipsticked girls and little children. The dimmed lights of the black-out take away the gaiety of pre-war days. Instead you get the impression of a twentieth-century Hogarth. Only now the sound-effects are added. The siren wails over the black countryside; ack-ack thumps up in the far distance; a Canadian soldier begins to sing a song with seventy-two verses; the Home Guard clank awkwardly in and out for a spell of duty; and a beery voice from the Mile End Road tells under the glow of oil-lamps the old, old story of a bomb.

In the Garden

Several spring crops can be sown in late October or early November, and are worth the gamble. Try early peas, for example, choosing a variety like *Pilot*, and sowing rather more thickly than in spring. Try sweet peas in the same way, and, of course, broad beans. All will be earlier, harder and more vigorous than spring-sown crops, and will not suffer except in very severe winters. The quality of sweet peas from an autumn sowing is often astonishing. Hardy annuals too may be sown again fairly thickly, and again with a fair chance of early and vigorous results. Take rose-cuttings—eighteen-inch shoots or half-ripe growth—heeling them in in batches. Ramblers, wicourians and hybrid perennials will strike well. And if you are planting new roses, try a dozen species. H. E. BATES.

A SOLUTION FOR INDIA

SIR.—In your issue of October 10th, Mr. Griffin asserts that the panacea for India's ills is democracy, by which he apparently means Government by the Indian National Congress. People often inquire what precisely is the form of government which Congress would set up if it found itself in control. Mr. Subhas Bose, ex-President of Congress, in his book *The Indian Struggle*, supplies the answer. He defines it as "a strong central Government with dictatorial powers—a Government by a strong party bound together by military discipline, as the only means of holding India together when Indians are free and are thrown entirely on their own resources." If this is what Mr. Griffin means by democracy, I can merely reply that we speak a different language.—Yours faithfully,
H. G. RAWLINSOON.

ROAD DEATHS

SIR.—The pedestrians and the pedal-cyclists cannot share the admiration of the Report of the Lords' Committee on Road Accidents which is expressed on behalf of the motor-cyclists by Mr. S. A. Davis. The main aim of that Committee was to make conditions easy for the driving of motor-vehicles at high speeds, however incautiously, and there are striking examples of incorrect quotation of statistics and of illogical inference from statistics, which were produced by that attitude. They argue, for instance, that speed-limits are useless, because more accidents occurred in the speed-limited areas (estimated at 60,000 miles) than in the remaining 120,000 miles; whereas, if proportion to road-users is considered, as it ought to be, the speed-limited areas show some advantage for all accidents and a conspicuous advantage for fatal accidents. The Report contains some useful suggestions, but the spirit of the Report is such that the chairman could hardly be trusted to select some of its recommendations for immediate application. I enclose a copy of a pamphlet which comments on the Report in some detail.—Yours faithfully,
F. C. GATES.
Cade House, Heathfield, Sussex.

SAVING POWER

SIR.—It lies within the power of nearly everybody in this country to save electric light for ten to fifteen minutes every day. If everybody switched off their lights when the nine o'clock news began and kept them off till it was finished, the saving would be considerable. I am told upon competent authority that it is possible to knit in the dark, so that there would be no hardship at all in listening to the news without the lights.—Yours faithfully,
JOHN GLOAG.
3 The Mall, East Sheen, S.W. 14.

OURSELVES AND RELIGION

SIR.—"Russia has some way to go towards religious freedom yet" (last page of *The Spectator* of October 10th, 1941). The Christian religion has been for far more than a thousand years maintained by persecution of dissentients, by "wars of religion," hangings, disembowellings and burnings. According to some body of Christians or another has had the upper hand, the faith has been "kept pure" by these means. No one acquainted with the facts of Christian history can possibly deny this. It has had another accomplice—obscurantism. Not only that of ignorance (even as lately as some forty years ago, I think, only sixteen in a hundred people in Spain could read and write), but that which consisted in deliberately circumventing the invention of printing by an *index expurgatorius*, so that even educated people today seriously tell us, "I may read so and so" and "I may not read so and so."

Russia has proposed to itself to let people believe and worship as they like, but to keep propaganda in its own hands. It does not propose to keep enlightenment away, it proposes to supply enlightenment. (The question is not as to whether the enlightenment is "darkness"; the question always is, or should be, whether obscurantism is enlightenment.) Now President Roosevelt has most emphatically said—and all the reconstructionists copy his words—that there must be "freedom of thought and freedom of expression"—but since all thought is free, it is the latter only which States have to secure for us. Will you help to show that there is some goodwill among us to this end by letting your readers *audire alteram partem*? There is a call now to religion, especially "to go back" to religion; people like myself might be very interested to know which religious age we are invited to return to—with, of course, the social, educational, and economic conditions that are seen to have been compatible with it.

As a secular review of the highest possible reputation, will you help to prove that freedom, like peace, is indivisible by publishing my criticism? For I believe that this sort of freedom, freedom of expression in religious matters through the national vehicles of publicity, has not in fact any existence at all.—Yours, &c.,
M. A. R. TUKER.

[According to the Soviet Constitution, as quoted by M. Maisky in a speech in London on September 26th, Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution reads: "Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognised for all citizens.—Ed., *The Spectator*.]

COUNTRY LIFE

Tomato Subjects

The whole subject of tomatoes, particularly the ripening and keeping of them and their failure from disease, has produced a large correspondence, which, for reasons that appear in another paragraph, I have not been able to answer. The most general complaint is that this year's tomatoes, in spite of many interesting tips for storing them in peat and so on, will not keep. This is, of course, not the fault of any method of preservation, but is simply due to a disastrously wet August, followed by an appalling September spell of disease. This disease attacked fruit in dark blotches, which hardened, spread and finally ruined it. Its progress was rampant, and gardeners found their whole crop ruined in a few days. The remedy was bordeaux mixture—so called because of its accidental discovery by a Bordeaux wine-grower—which should have been sprayed on the plants in summer as a preventive measure. However, September was too late to talk about that, with the result that hundreds of growers found that their stored fruit, after a few days, was ripe and rotten. The remedy can, however, be noted for next year. Meanwhile, there is no reason to suppose that the method of storing in tins in dried peat—the lid on or off the tin not greatly mattering, I think—is anything but a good one.

Autumn Colours

Bracken is fox-red in the stem, still green on the upper fronds. Elderberries show clusters of red stripped fingers when the berries have gone. Beech nuts, not often so fat and sweet as this year, make coffee-brown drifts on the rain-washed roads. Slowly the distances begin to open up; the stubbles change colour, fawn to brown; the new yellow stacks light up the dark earth. Quinces are golden on still green trees, and the doll-sheaves of flax still stand, not more than two feet high, as if children were playing at farming. The feeling of half-season, still summer, not yet winter, is charming. In the sun the bees are furious in the ivy blossom, and soon ivy, so often despised as a parasitical and repellent thing, will be the most beautiful of winter plants, miniature hands clutching the frosted wall, polished leaves so softly grey-veined, berries black and luscious through the heart of winter.

In the Garden

The vegetable garden is now, for the moment, more important than the flower garden. Put in the last batches of spring cabbage; dig up beetroot, carrots, early-sown turnips, the last potatoes, storing the first three in sand, or clamp them all. Earth celery for the last time or last time but one. Earth leeks; leave parsnips where they stand. Get the place reasonably ship-shape, so that in wet and frosty weather there will be no need, in that excellent Midland expression, "to mortar on." The season for lifting commercial sugar-beet is November; but don't forget the inland revenue snag if you propose to make a little home-made beet-sugar. In the flower garden there are two simple choices: tidiness or untidiness. There is much to be said for the second: the fawn, bronze and tobacco browns of the dying michaelmas daisies, the scraps of late colour, the tits and finches trapezing on the wands of silver seed. The tidy gardener misses them all. The untidy gardener can always retire to the greenhouse and see, in the chrysanthemums, the solid returns of a little summer investment—perhaps the loveliest flower-harvest of the year.

So Long

A writer who tries to look at country life in an anti-sentimental way, and writes accordingly, makes more friends than you might suppose. For that reason alone it is hard for me to give up this column. But even writers must join up. Perhaps the most satisfying thing about "Country Life" is that it invokes correspondence, as I pointed out a week or two ago, from as far north as the Arctic Circle to south of the equator. Undeterred by the fact that *The Spectator* reaches them many weeks late, correspondents write from New York, the Middle-West, Vancouver, Kenya, South Africa, New Zealand, and a good many other places where you might well suppose an interest in English country life was not flourishing. These correspondents, and scores of others nearer home, have written to me for advice on almost everything, from storing tomatoes to the best way to set up a chicken-farm; they have corrected my grammar and pointed out mistakes of botany; they have sent seeds, plants, cuttings, Press-clippings, books, pamphlets, patent gardening tools, gadgets for slicing vegetables, poems, peppermint candy, buns, recipes, brick-bats and bouquets. Letters from professors, parsons ("only the toad under this particular harrow knows how hard it is..."), M.P.s, soldiers, dukes, labourers, reformers, nurserymen, farmers and countless others have proved again and again how wide the modern interest in country life is. To many of these correspondents I have been able to reply; to some I have not yet been able to do so. If they will accept this note as one of thanks and apology I shall, therefore, be grateful. To the rest, as they say, so long.
H. E. BATES.

[Mr. Bates having now joined the Royal Air Force, Sir William Beach Thomas has agreed to resume charge of the column with which his name was so long associated.—Ed., *The Spectator*.]