

H. E. Bates has always been interested in the study of the varying stages of ripeness in women. Ripeness is all in the Bates's world—either just coming on, or *à point* as the French say of peaches, or beginning to be oozy-floozy. The title-story here, about a cake-making tea-shop owner and her three daughters, all in turn dazzling the inexperienced young narrator, admirably displays his sureness of touch and the smooth voluptuousness of his flesh-colours. He is the Renoir of the typewriter.

In the other three stories he is well below his best form, though there is raw pathos in "The Simple Life." "The White Wind," about steamy, seedy degeneracy in the South Seas, has its pungency but isn't more than a competent, professional, magazine job.