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Meetings will be arranged, which members of the party will be invited to address, and there will be excursions, with guides, to scientific institutions of interest to members. It is suggested that groups shall consist of about 10 in number to facilitate arrangements. Parties may be arranged to leave London at a later date if there is a demand. The latest date for receiving applications for the party leaving London on July 1st is June 15th. All inquiries should be addressed to the Secretary of S.C.R., 1, Montague Street, London, W.C.1.

(Signed) JULIAN HUXLEY.

C. MANSSELL-MOULLIN, C.B.E., D.M., F.R.C.S.  
JOHN MARRACK, M.D., D.Sc., M.C.

The Society for Cultural Relations,  
1 Montague Street, W.C.1.

### MILITARY DISPLAYS

SIR,—I have recently received through the post two folders urging me to go to (a) the Hendon Flying Display; (b) the Aldershot Tattoo.

I don't know if the sending of such stuff comes under "Using the Post for Obscene Purposes" regulations, but if it doesn't it ought to. Can nothing be done to stop these repulsive displays?

PHILIP JORDAN

### WAR AND THE CHURCH

SIR,—Railwaymen and other Trade Unionists have pledged themselves to prevent war by hindering transport of men and munitions. It has been stated that ministers of religion who are in earnest can do nothing effective. Yet there are quite a number of things which could be done. Here are a few.

The clergy could begin now by discouraging recruiting. At street corners as well as in pulpits now is the time to proclaim that soldiering for capitalistic States is a rotten and immoral job. The Communists are jailed for stating this wholesome truth. A few imprisonments of clergymen would do a power of good.

Most of my Liberal and Tory friends believe that Britain has set a good example in the reduction of armaments. An active ministerial crusade could correct this and other falsehoods of the war-mongers. My point is that ministers do not need to go very far to do something dangerous for peace.

RICHARD LEE

Great Meeting House,  
Coventry.

### PACIFISM

SIR,—Your correspondent, Kenneth G. Robinson, in his letter raises a very pertinent question to be answered by all who believe themselves to be pacifists. If in the near future, as seems possible, we are faced with the question of taking up arms in defence of what we believe to be the essentials of sound government, what will our answer be?

It will depend on the reason which has led each individual to adopt the pacifist view. If he considers that wars are the outcome of the Capitalist system, which he dislikes, he will, not illogically, be prepared to fight for the Socialist system against the Capitalist or the Fascist. If, however, his pacifism is founded on religious grounds, and he believes that all wars are contrary to the Supreme Law of Love, there will be no hesitation in his answer to the question, and he "will trust with a fanatical faith in the triumph of his principles."

NOEL VINTER

57 Southwell Road, Kingswood, Bristol.

### GERMAN REFUGEES

SIR,—It has been found that persons connected with the Peace and Socialist Movements are continually being asked to help German refugees. The position is becoming too involved for individual efforts and the German Refugees Hospitality Committee has been formed, under the Presidency of Colonel Wedgwood, to help deal with the situation. Its terms of reference are:

To establish an office, where refugees of whatever creed, race or politics can apply, preferably in writing, for help and advice. To act as a kind of clearing house, by referring those for whom appropriate organisations already exist, to these bodies. And to concern itself with those for whom such organisations do not exist, being careful in every way not to overlap or interfere with what is already being done.

The Jewish Refugees Committee takes excellent care of all Jewish refugees, but something definitely is needed for the others.

We are working in close co-operation with the Society of Friends, the War Resisters' International and the Federation of Progressive Societies.

We are badly needing offers of hospitality. The major part of the refugees are young people. They are not allowed to take up work here—apart from specialised occupations which could not be followed by anyone else—and are only allowed to enter the country, or to remain here, on that condition. Hospitality means merely board and lodging, for a limited period. It is not suggested that the hosts should be responsible for their guests in any way at all, and during the day time, in London at any rate, they would be out, and not expect constant companionship or entertainment. Offers of temporary hospitality for a few nights would also be welcome.

It is felt that many who sympathise with these victims of Fascism might be willing to offer this kind of hospitality. And we should be deeply grateful if all who could do so would write to us, at this address.

HELEN BENTWICH  
WINIFRED HORRABIN  
German Refugees Hospitality Committee,  
28-30 Little Russell Street, W.C.1.  
Hon. Secretaries

## Miscellany

### THE BIRD

PASSING, men are sorry for the birds in cages  
And for constricted nature hedged and lined;  
But what do they say to your pleasant bird  
Physical delight, since years tamed?

Behind centuries, behind the continual hill,  
The wood you felled, your clothes, the slums you built,  
Only love knows where that bird dips his head;  
Only the sun, soaked in memory, flashes on his neck.

Dance, will you? And sing? Yet pray he is dead.  
Invent politics to hide him and lawsuits and suits:  
Now he's impossible and quite destroyed like grass  
Where the fields are covered with your more living houses.

I never hear you are happy but I wonder  
Whether it was at a shiny bazaar,  
At a brittle dance or a party, that you could create  
Procrastination of nature, for your talk and laughter are  
Only a glass that flashes back the light  
And that covers only hate.

Will you not forgive him? I have signed his release,  
Alarming and gentle like the blood's throb,  
And his fountain of joy wakes the solitary stag  
From his cherished sleep.

But if you still bar your pretty bird, remember  
Revenge and despair are prisoned in your bowels.  
Life cannot pardon the ideal without scruple,  
The enemy of flesh, the angel and destroyer,  
Creator of a martyrdom serene, but horrible.

STEPHEN SPENDER

## CRIME BY BLOSSOMS

As I came away from the Royal Hospital Gardens at Chelsea, carrying the usual bunch of wicked catalogues of flowers and fruit and trees and seeds, I came to the conclusion that the English were after all the most remarkable people in the world and that the most fitting punishment for the professional nurserymen who are tormenting them this week at Chelsea would be that they should be condemned to grow nothing more rare or startling than field daisies for the rest of their lives. For the proceedings at Chelsea Flower Show are criminal, and the English are the most remarkable people in the world in that they suffer this crime, and suffer it jubilantly, not only once in a life-time, but every spring. They even pray to suffer it. Being English myself I pray and suffer gladly,

too. For crime by flowers is the only crime I know in which it is sweet to be the victim and in which one's suffering is heavenly.

I imagine there is nothing quite like the crime at Chelsea in the whole world, not even in Japan, while the Carnival of Flowers at Nice is, of course, something really wicked. The wickedness at Chelsea is quite different. It is angelic, the crime is exquisite, the criminals are darlings. And this year it seemed more lovely than ever. The delphiniums were larger and finer, their slender blue and lilac and purple steeples reaching far above the pointing parasols of those dim and dear old ladies who seem to emerge from their obscurity only once a year, for Chelsea. The fox-tail lilies, pink as delicate apple-blossom, grew even taller. Lupins, hydrangeas, peonies, tulips, poppies, stocks, sweet-peas, dahlias, they all seemed more wickedly vivid and gigantic than I ever remember. The lupin spikes seemed to have been dipped in wine of all colours from darkest Burgundy to champagne. The sweet-peas had the freshness and delicacy of early primroses, the carnations and roses went beyond me into an almost artificial perfection of colour and shape, and the auriculas, the little dusty recklesses of my grandmother's garden, had such passion and versatility that I hardly knew them. And as one walked round, the criminals, the stiff-collared, country-looking nurserymen, smiled benignly while masculine-looking ladies buttonholed them and bombarded them with the fiercest horticultural catechisms. "But is it hardy? I don't want it, my dear man, if it isn't hardy. My gardener says they're tender. Now, do you think they're tender? You are, I take it, the specialist in these things? Well, now, tell me now, what soil do they like? My gardener says they hate lime. Now, do you think they hate lime? And if I plant them now will they flower for Whitsun? You think it doubtful? Well, now, tell me now, I once had a Clematis Ville de Lyon, but it perished . . ."

This masculine lady is indeed one of the real criminals of Chelsea. She ranks with those other criminals, the bedding-out gardener and the hybridist. The first is thankfully less common than he was, but the hybridist increases like his crimes, the worst of which, this year, is his sport with the rhododendron. He has striven for years to produce in the rhododendron every colour from shell-pink to orange-scarlet, and this year he appears to have done it. The shriek of rhododendron hybrids along the main avenue is a shriek of pure agony.

Yet the hybridist has his virtues and rewards. We have to thank him for *Dianthus Winteri*, a new race of most delicate pinks in a great many colours, for the soft apricot and wine colours of *primula puleverlenta*, both of which were very striking this year. What he cannot touch with anything like his gaudy rhododendron success are the alpinines—the little *primulus* and *potentillas*, the fairy *geraniums*, the blue-trumpeted *midget pentstemons*, and that little rose, *Rosa Rouletti*, which grows no higher than a baby's ankle. The alpinines, to which both criminals and victims are devoting more and more time each year, are above and beyond him.

I don't suppose he can have much fun either with vegetables, of which there were two amazing exhibitions by the defendants Sutton and Fogwill, who had performed incredible wickedness with everything from tomatoes to celery. These gentlemen, together with the defendant Laxton of Bedford, ought to be condemned to growing nothing but common cabbages and sour blackberries for the rest of their lives. The defendant Laxton committed crime by strawberries. I stood watching them until I, too, nearly committed a crime for which the punishment might not have been so sweet.

H. E. BATES

## "A BOOTLESS BENE"

I AM afraid it is not much use my saying, "Go at once and see *The Late Christopher Bean*." You are likely to find some difficulty in getting a seat—and no wonder; it is a most

amusing comedy, full of point and character and admirably acted. It is an adaptation from a play by M. Emile Fauchois *Prenez Garde à la Peinture*, not a translation. Mr. Emlyn Williams has created his own atmosphere and drained it of French colouring. It is true that little bourgeois families in all countries resemble each other, and that French authors have made such a complete study of bourgeois habits, hearts, minds, pathetic and detestable meanness, Philistinism, hypocrisy, amiability and absurdities that writers of any country have, so to speak, the ground plan of the subject in their hands. An enormous portion of French fiction has dealt with the "petits bourgeois." Balzac and Flaubert were at their very best when they wrote about them; modern humorists, like Courteline and Tristan Bernard, have made fun of them, Huysmans and Maupassant have scarified them, Daudet and Coppée have wept over them. French fiction and drama have brought out the characteristics of the small bourgeoisie in every country, characteristics which are the inevitable results of being true to the kindred points of money and home. Nothing is more fruitful of comedy than their desperate cupidity, their transparent self-deceptions and their blank ignorance of art. M. Emile Fauchois hit upon an idea which, like a stone thrown in a stagnant pond, produces dancing ripples covering the whole surface. Mr. Emlyn Williams, all honour to him, has seen to it that it shall be for us a thoroughly familiar English pond. There is not a line which suggests that Dr. Haggett (what a character Mr. Cedric Hardwicke achieves in that part!) was ever a French provincial doctor, not a word to suggest that Gwenny was anything but a Welsh maid, not a nagging snap from Mrs. Haggett, not a whine from Ada that suggests a foreign origin. And the art dealers? Well, they are, of course, universal types. *The Late Christopher Bean* is an example of perfect adaptation to a new environment.

The play proves, too, a principle of dramatic art. In writing for the stage it is safest to get hold first of a plot—to use an old-fashioned word which modern practice has tried in vain to discredit—naturally and inevitably creating situations which in their turn display character. The novelist may start from character, but a playwright will be wise to start from situations. And for a simple reason. The playwright has less space and less time in which to expound character; all he can do is to show some characteristic aspects so vividly that the imagination of the spectator supplies the whole man—just a few disconnected touches in addition his form may allow him, no more. His characters must live in virtue of their contact with a very limited number of situations, and those situations will lack the highest degree of interest possible unless they are linked logically together: in other words, he must have a plot. *The Late Christopher Bean* has a precise and perfectly satisfactory one. All the fun—and it never flags—proceeds from the plot; and, as is proved by the acting at the St. James' Theatre, character is shown in every reaction of the people implicated in it. The actors knew exactly what was required of them, so well indeed that they were able to add delightful touches to their parts. They understood the sort of people they were meant to be, and there was not a gesture or a pause, an expression or an attitude, which did not show that they were at home in their impersonations. In a comedy which provokes continual laughter there was not one laugh which was provoked by irrelevant by-play, or one joke which did not owe its humour to rising straight out of the situation; and that is significant both from the point of view of future box-office receipts and the playwright's craft. If you want to find out whether a comedy is going to draw and whether the author knows his business, notice the passages at which an audience laughs. They may be brilliant and quotable jokes, but if they are not funny because a particular character utters them at a particular moment, the appreciation with which they are met is no guarantee that the comedy will, or for that matter ought to, hold the public. There is not a line in this play which would be quotable as wit, and hardly one which does not provoke a feasting smile or laughter.