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ld Nicholson, for
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ested me most was
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r. Murray's book
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. Murray's travels
ondon, as I should
n this country ex-

pressed as intelligently and as pungently
as those he has given us of Russia and
Australia. No one could have resented
them, and they would probably have
done us good, but as he has not, I
recommend his book to all those who
are interested in travel, in meeting
strange people in far-off places, and in a
brilliant commentary on politics and life
in general. His chance acquaintances
are as cosmopolitan as one could wish,
and his journey leads one across Asia to
Japan, from Shanghai, Hong Kong and
Manilla to Australia, and thence on a
long sea journey back to London. I
envy him his journey, but congratulate
him on his book.

A note on 'Charlotte's Row'¹

by David Garnett

MANY of Bates' stories are perfect;
to me they are poetry just as Virginia
Woolf's writing is, at its best, but I
think that *Charlotte's Row* is the most
encouraging thing that Bates has yet
written. But although I never doubted
his talents I sometimes wondered
whether he would be ambitious enough.
I was afraid he would write stories
which would come to depend more and
more on their charm.

But in *Charlotte's Row* he sets off
well like Gorki, describing the lives of
poor people living in a poor street on the
edge of one of the Northamptonshire
boot-making towns. The coarseness
and sordidness of their lives, the way in
which they sponge on one another and
quarrel is described so directly that the

¹ *Charlotte's Row*, a novel by H. E. Bates.
(Crown 8vo. 7s. 6d. net)

effect is almost violent. One is planted
in the midst of them: the pages reek of
leather and airless rooms of dirty bodies
and stale food.

Bates establishes his character and
atmosphere with the realism and
strength of Gorki or Zola and then a
change comes over the book. The
reader is told to lift his head as it were
and perceive that this foul little street
is almost the last street in the town.
Turn your back on the canal and the
railway bridge and you are looking at
hillsides yellow with corn. There are
only allotments between you and the
real country with woods full of bluebells
in spring and honeysuckle in autumn.

Beauty is there round the corner;
beauty is here for the girl in character
of the Masher, an inarticulate Charlie
Chaplin who cannot express himself
and is not in the least comic but who
has all Charlie's sensibility, all his
pathos and all his delicacy of feeling.

The squalor and dirt and beastliness
of poverty, and the consolation, lifting
your head and seeing the sun chasing
the cloud-shadows over the cornfields,
that for me is the essence of the book.
It has a great deal in common with the
early Lawrence novels and in particular
with *Sons and Lovers*. It has the same
setting of factory or mine in the
English Midlands and of brutality and
refinement forced to exist side by side.
But Bates is far more detached than
Lawrence. He is not distracted by his
own problems. *Charlotte's Row* is a
most lovely book, most exciting, most
full of promise.

Notes

THERE is a pleasant debatable land lying
along the frontiers of the historical
novel and the romantic biography. In it

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