

# FLOWERS AND FACES

By H. E. Bates

It is no surprise to receive a book on gardening from Mr. H. E. Bates, for no one at all intimate with his writing can have failed to recognize his passionate interest in flowers, both wild and cultivated: nor can it be any surprise to find the book as good as is this one, for Mr. Bates, as a writer about the countryside, has surely no equal among his contemporaries; and indeed few superiors among his predecessors. His interest in flowers and gardens has been inherited from his ancestors: most of them, he tells us, were "extremely humble and half-literate people of the country working class," who, though they may not have been precisely gardeners, were all of them "open-air men, men of the earth and the countryside . . . restless men who were forever mooching about the countryside for flowers or birds or moths or for nothing at all but the sheer joy of roaming about in freedom under the open sky." By way of introduction to his own endeavours he sketches his father and his great-grandmother in their small Midland gardens—a couple of delightful and characteristic portraits. His own gardening has been on a more ambitious scale than theirs. He bought and restored an old granary in Kent, and from the neglected land around it has made what from his description seems a gardener's paradise, complete with a rock-garden and a formal garden with a lily pool. His description of the progressive stages of its creation is charming and vivid—and concise, for though the book is only fifty pages long, there is more to the point in them than in most volumes five times its length. The book is printed by the Golden Cockerel Press in an extremely elegant edition, limited to 325 copies, with title-page and four engravings by Mr. John Nash, and priced at £2 2s.