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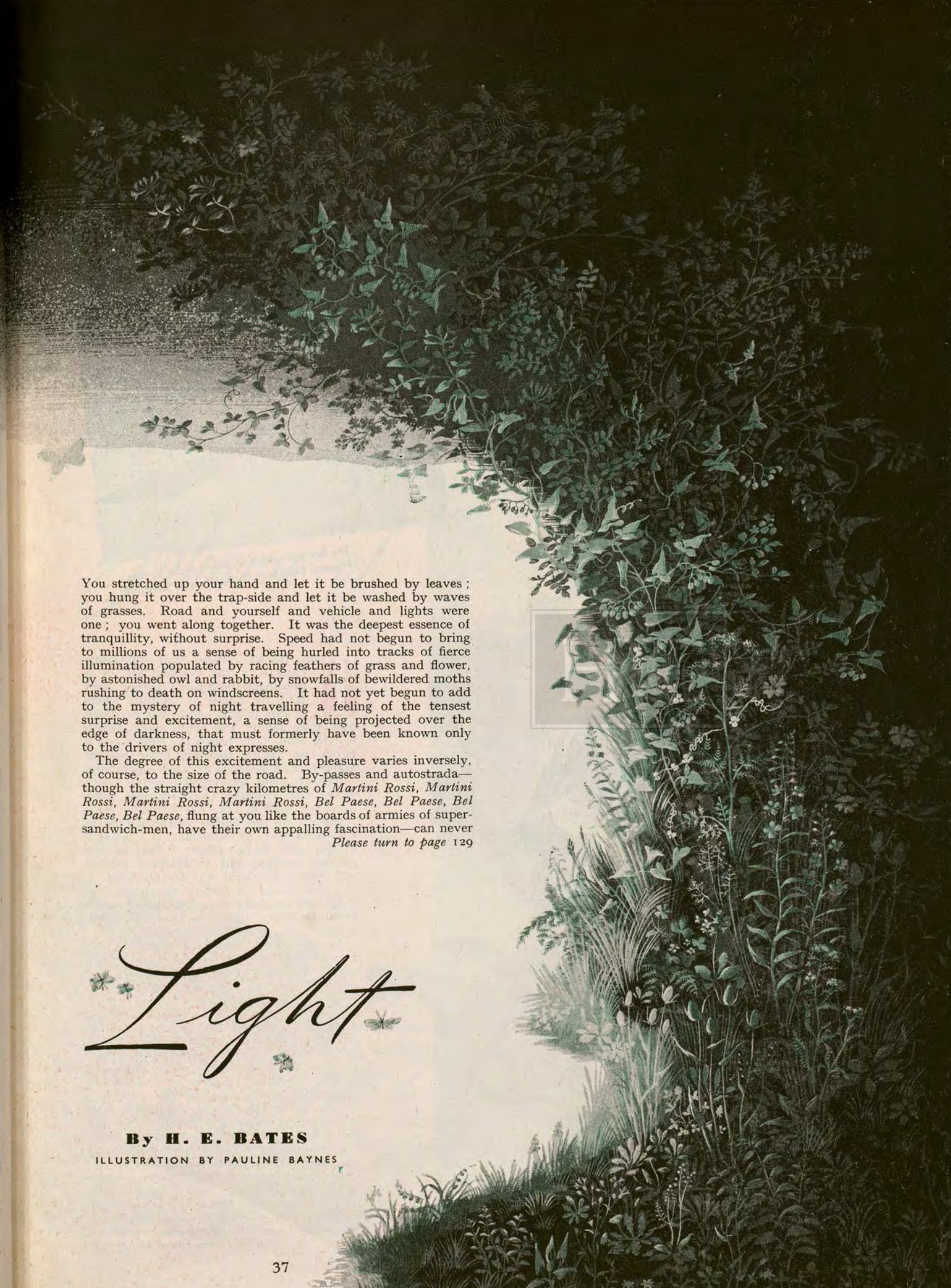
**W**HEN we were very small there was hardly any travelling on roads by night. Sometimes on feast days we went off into what seemed to me a far, strange, sweet country. Dust and dew lay together on miles of pink briar roses; a cream abundance of meadowsweet smothered lush roads by river meadows. I used to catch enchanting glimpses of lakes under the shadow of great houses and of rivers of white water-lilies floating placidly away to even farther, stranger, deeper country that could never be explored. From these journeys we came back, sometimes in summer darkness, and before we started, or perhaps after we had started, the carriage lamps of the little trap would be lighted and would continue with us, in a moth-haunted, flower-ghost world, like jolly running flames.

Now, when all of us travel on roads by night there are times when I think the progression by beamed white car light, through country lanes in summertime, has even greater enchantment than the night journeys of childhood by candle-flame. I am not at all sure it is not the greatest single joy of motoring. In the days of trap and horse you were as much a part of the world through which you travelled as the air blowing past you.

# Night

. . . a world of fleeting, flowery ghosts,  
mysterious, magical, moth-enchanted . . .





You stretched up your hand and let it be brushed by leaves ; you hung it over the trap-side and let it be washed by waves of grasses. Road and yourself and vehicle and lights were one ; you went along together. It was the deepest essence of tranquillity, without surprise. Speed had not begun to bring to millions of us a sense of being hurled into tracks of fierce illumination populated by racing feathers of grass and flower, by astonished owl and rabbit, by snowfalls of bewildered moths rushing to death on windscreens. It had not yet begun to add to the mystery of night travelling a feeling of the tensest surprise and excitement, a sense of being projected over the edge of darkness, that must formerly have been known only to the drivers of night expresses.

The degree of this excitement and pleasure varies inversely, of course, to the size of the road. By-passes and autostrada—though the straight crazy kilometres of *Martini Rossi, Martini Rossi, Martini Rossi, Martini Rossi, Bel Paese, Bel Paese, Bel Paese, Bel Paese*, flung at you like the boards of armies of super-sandwich-men, have their own appalling fascination—can never

*Please turn to page 129*

# Light

By H. E. BATES

ILLUSTRATION BY PAULINE BAYNES



## CASUAL FOR COUNTRY — FORMAL FOR TOWN

Details of the London readymades shown on pages 50 and 51

**Chesro** dress "Canasta" in cotton Luxora, blue, light navy, cocoa or pink, with white piqué; sizes 37 to 44 inch hips; price approximately £6 15s. From Debenham & Freebody, Wigmore Street, London. For your nearest provincial stockist, write to Chesro Ltd., 90 Great Bridge-water Street, Manchester, 1.

**Londonus** shorts "Bandol" from the "Calixte" model range, in black, coffee, or blue linen; sizes 25 to 32 inch waist; price approximately £4 10s. Sleeveless shirt "Olympic" in rayon, many attractive colours; sizes 32 to 40 inch bust; price approximately £1 10s. Shirt and shorts from Harrods, Knightsbridge, London. Shorts from Marshall & Snelgrove, Birmingham. Beach jacket "Yamba," hip length, with the back gathered from a shoulder yoke, in blue and white striped toweling; sizes 32 to 40 inch bust; price approximately £5 10s. From Lillywhites, Piccadilly, London; Lillywhites Shop, in Allens, Bournemouth; Kendal Milne, Manchester.

**Eskra Lake** dress No. E 590, in striped Moygashel, white with maroon, red, brown, dark green, navy or sky; sizes 42 to 50 inch hips; price from approximately £3 14s. to £4 5s. according to size. For names of stockists, write to Strelitz Ltd., 222 Regent Street, London.

**Susan Small** dress No. 715 in fine wool; mauve, black, dark or light grey, navy, pale blue, green or gold; sizes 38 and inch 39½ hips; price approximately £8 14s. From Fenwick, New Bond Street, London; Griffin & Spalding, Nottingham.

**Dorville** dress No. C 655 in striped cotton; black with blue, brown, dark green or slate; white with slate or donkey; sizes 37 to 40 inch hips; price approximately £3 11s. From Dickens & Jones, Regent Street, London; Teen and Twenty Shop, Western Road, Brighton.

**Horrockses** dress No. 190, in blue or red cotton with a black tracery design; sizes 36 to 40 inch hips; price approximately £3 11s. From Hunts, New Bond Street, London; Whitfields, Wolverhampton.

*These details, including colours, are correct at the time of going to press*

## Night Light *Continued from page 37*

have the beauty of little roads, where the sickle is always a little slow in its attack on grass and daisy and keck, so that in early June nights the car lights seem to be pouring down on a world of lace, of mysteriously lovely creamy-green entanglements of flower from which night moths are blown as if they were torn petals.

This first phase of early summer, when keck and grass and cow-parsley and campion and rose and daisy flaunt up in hedgerows to first full lush riot of flower, gives the most haunting loveliness to journeys on little roads by night. Much earlier, even before the end of winter, streaming pennants of hazel catkins dart out of woodland. Primroses wink unexpectedly from steep roadside banks. On chalk hills the first new leaves of whitebeam have the flaming purity of magnolias. The chalk itself has the beauty of running dead-white flame.

By April and May all the foamy ghosts of blackthorn and hawthorn go streaming past: to be reincarnated months and months later, in the ghostlier foam of traveller's joy. By the end of June darkening leaf has smothered all tree-flower. Small apple-green chestnuts hang in clustered sprays like pendent lanterns. Grasses grow gradually taller and whiter, more corn-like, more dusty: the car is sprayed with seed.

A new phase begins, the loveliest of all: the stars of countless moon-daisies; spikes of meadowsweet shot with poppy, and fluffy splendour of cream and scarlet racing out of the darkness; and then mistier, softer, more dissolving, masses of mauve scabious and wild marjoram and willow-herb, all individual colour bleached out of them by light. Now, if you drive with windows open or in open cars, scent streams in: that almost too exotic night-odour of honeysuckle and hay and first tobacco plant staring over the fences of cottage gardens.

The later at night you travel, in summer especially, the more heady and mysterious and fascinating it grows. Not only flowers and trees and grasses now—but people. Odd lights on dark villages, stray lovers saying goodnight, bicycles snaking shakily down remote lanes, ducking figures in parked cars, policemen waiting at scarlet call-boxes: who are they? What are their lives? What goes on? Headlights pour with the merciless ferocity of searchlights telescoping on worlds unexplored, dramas the novelist longs to unravel, play with and piece together again. There is a gasp at the beauty of rose-covered walls streaming past in the dead of night that recalls earlier beauties already forgotten: whole orchards of cherry and apple folding and unfolding in spring darkness.

Towards the end of the war I used to drive, every day and almost every night, out of the heart of Calcutta to the perimeter of native suburbs up the Hooghli. It is perhaps the most repellent slum journey in the world. Towards the end of it there was a little street cut through native huts between the crumbling stucco walls of two great houses. Scarlet hibiscus and purple-salmon bougain-villaeas flamed in the lights of the jeep; over the garden walls there would be a vivid tender flash of dusty banana leaves and the scarlet claws of a silk cotton.

## Starch reduced\*

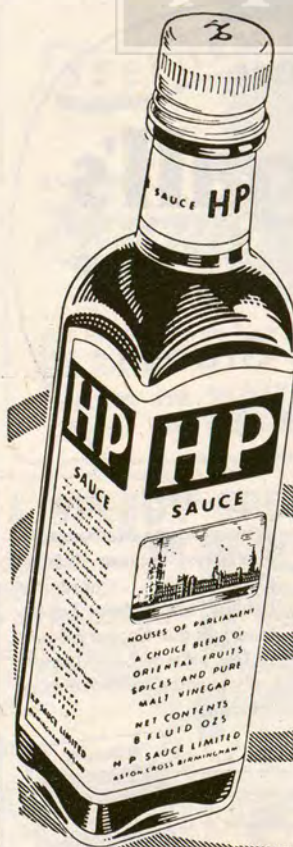


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The last mile to the Hooghli began by an opium shop. In a few seconds the dusty, deserted floweriness of the little short cut was gone. Jeep lights poured down on streets of sleeping Indian figures. A face or two turned and hid itself with dark hands from the brilliance of light; dark feet curled and stirred. The rows of charpoys had a curiously stunted bludgeoned look; the white dhotis lying on them, in doorways, on pavements and in gutters had the look of shrouds. The fierce white headlights swept over them as prison searchlights sweep over restless prisoners planning to escape in American jail films, leaving the exhausted and anonymous bodies just as securely imprisoned, and to all intents and purposes just as doomed.

Now I hardly ever travel through English summer lanes, by night, without thinking of it. The haunting, fascinating ugliness of one heightens and deepens the beauty of the other. As summer goes on and the heat rises and corn ripens there has only to be in the air, for one moment, the faintest breath of heat or fire before the bougainvillaeas, the hibiscus, the scarlet silk cottons and the rows and rows of abandoned bodies, undisturbed even by the march of cockroaches as large as mice, are flashing at me out of tropical darkness: to make me glad, for the thousandth time, that I need know nothing more medieval than a church spire, that I can go home and swing the car lights between the tubs of scarlet and white geraniums, to startle the last rabbits into the grass and perhaps a white owl beating low like a trailed shroud itself over the common. And to be gladdened above all, as well as exhilarated and enriched, by the spectacular and yet private beauty of a night-world, full of lighted ghosts, that only we of our century know.

### ANSWERS TO DO YOU KNOW? Page 132

1. The "gods" are so called because patrons sit on high—near the heavens!—and because theatre ceilings and upper walls used to be decorated with carvings and paintings of the deities.

2. When Australia won the Test in 1882 at the Oval, an epitaph appeared in the Sporting Times "... in affectionate remembrance of British cricket," concluding "... the body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia." The "battle" for the Ashes takes place every fourth year.

3 The Chelsea Arts Ball at the Royal Albert Hall, London. The first of the yearly balls was held in February 1891, but for the past thirty years it has been held on New Year's Eve.

4. For those who like it! Haggis consists mainly of the heart, lungs and liver of a sheep, boiled in the maw with suet, oatmeal and various other ingredients.

5. The Marble Arch—designed by Nash—was erected in 1828 at the main entrance to Buckingham Palace. It was moved to its present position at Hyde Park in 1851, as Queen Victoria considered it unsuitable.

6. Canada's famous Calgary Stampede—watched last year by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

7. The Veteran Car—or Old Cocks!—run, organized by the R.A.C. The course, from London to Brighton.

8. Prince Charles' Strait, formerly an uncharted channel between Elephant and Cornwallis Islands, in the South Shetlands, South Atlantic.

9. The Garrick Club—founded after the death of David Garrick.

10. Fiddler's Green is the sailors' "heaven"—an Elysium supposedly flowing with rum and lime juice, where there is perpetual dancing and merrymaking!

11. Winchester—county town of Hampshire, once the seat of Saxon Kings and capital of England. It is the "Wintoncester" of Hardy's "Wessex."

12. Hodge, Dr. Johnson's favourite, and Simon, ship's cat, who shared with the crew of H.M.S. Amethyst the running of the blockade down the Yangtse river.

13. We hope not! In France he would be a seller of rubbish and his shop would be filled with rusty nails, old screws and suchlike!

14. Tangle is the popular name for a brown sea-weed.

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

**Across.** 1, Corrupt; 4, Mallard; 9, Materialist; 11, Reed; 12, Trap; 13, Biltong; 15, Crisis; 16, Gannet; 17, Reg; 19, Hoodoo; 20, Enmity; 22, Tom; 25, Amiens; 27, Anchor; 28, Gilbert; 29, Nous; 31, Flaw; 32, Sensational; 33, Gradual; 34, Grating. **Down.** 1, Correct; 2, Road; 3, Precis; 5, Ailing; 6, Last; 7, Dispute; 8, Virtue; 9, Meritorious; 10, Trinity Hall; 13, Biddings; 14, Garment; 17, Rot; 18, Gem; 21, Manning; 23, Orbits; 24, Drawing; 26, Siesta; 27, Armour; 30, Seed; 31, Fast.