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an age and value test be applied to a horse, so that the legitimate trade in working animals may be encouraged, and the miserable business of exporting horses, which have already served their country well, may be stopped.

Why I Live in the Country—5

by H. E. Bates*

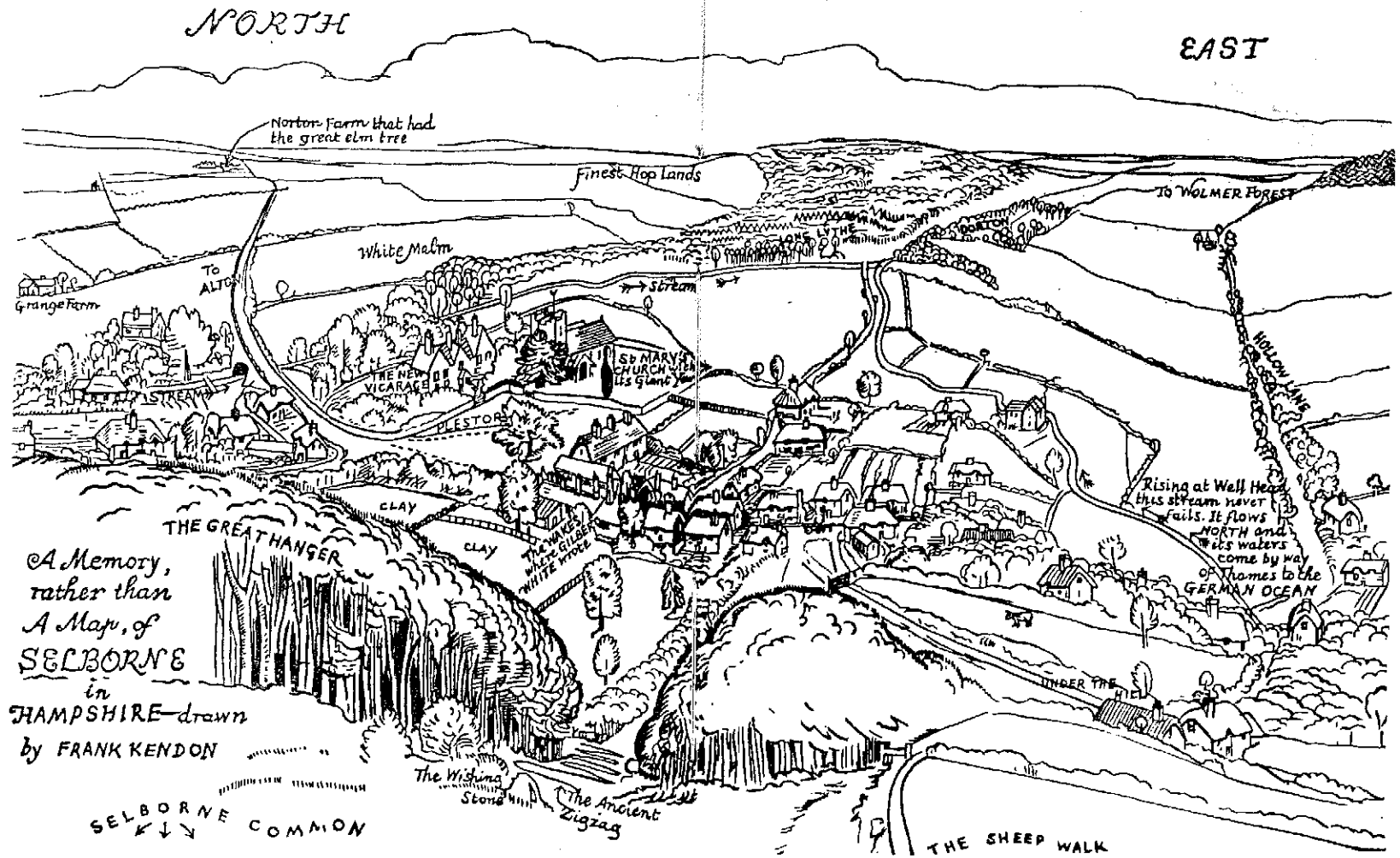
I HAVE only to think of the house in which I was born to know at once and without any doubt why I now live in the country. It was one of those regimental houses which line the streets of all industrial districts and the Midlands especially, those red-brick, blue-slatted uniform houses which stand side by side with each other like the soldiers of a correct but spiritless army. We lived in the end house of a row; ours, so to speak, was the end soldier. End houses are often privileged; the gardens are larger, their back-doors are private, the rent is sometimes more. And we also had a privilege. Our walls were built flush against the walls of a boot factory, and all day long, for twelve hours, with a respite of silence at noon, we heard the monotonous moan and whine and thunder of machinery. It may very well have been the first sound I ever heard. As I write I can hear from somewhere across the fields the sound of a threshing machine, that constant rhythmical beat, a sound of soothing monotony, utterly unlike the shrieking and thunderous mono-

* 1 - By Basil de Sélincourt. 2 - By J. A. Spender. 3 - By St. John Ervine. 4 - By Sir William Beach Thomas. 5 - By E. V. Lucas

tone of the boot stitchers and pressers, which shook the walls of our house all day and left it so strangely silent at nights and on Sundays and holidays and for the fixed hour at noon.

And it was that sound, and perhaps also that painful silence from which as time went on I wanted to escape. There is a popular belief that the mind, impinged upon by some regular and horrible sound, will at length cease to notice that sound's existence. How true it is I have no idea, but I know that my mind never ceased to be aware of the existence of that regular and gloomy sound coming from the other side of our walls. That sound became in fact a symbol: it came to represent for me the progress of industrial life, the ascendancy of ugliness over beauty, the assimilation by the town of the countryside. It was, though no one seemed to notice it, a sound of despair. It was not, as it seemed, the sound of a machine, but the cry of humanity itself in servitude to the machine. It was a cry I heard for twenty-five years without ever getting used to it or indifferent to it: the sound in fact which drove me at last to forsake the town for the country.

I had almost written, without thinking, 'to forsake the old life for the new'. Whereas in fact it was a forsaking of the new life for the old. For though I had been born in a town and though my mother and father had lived in a town for so long, we were in fact country people. On my mother's side a line of solid if not sober peasantry; on my father's side a by no means solid and a very doubtfully sober line of good-for-nothing fishermen and bird-lovers and field-moochers, who were never happy unless they



*A Memory,
rather than
A Map, of
SELBORNE
in
HAMPSHIRE—drawn
by FRANK KENDON*

WHERE GILBERT WHITE LIVED AND STUDIED
From the edition of 'The Natural History of Selborne' by W. T. Williams and G. H. Vallins (Methuen)

had their feet on grass and their hands on other people's preserves. From the very earliest I had seen and heard the thin veneer of town civilization scratched and broken by the acts and words of these incorrigible countrymen. Surrounded by thousands of shoemakers, I never learnt even the most elementary thing about making a shoe; yet somehow I learnt to set a snare. And though my trousers' seat was dutifully worn by the attentive years at school desks, it hurt me to sit still. I also was happy with my feet on grass, and, though I never put my hands on other people's preserves, there is something even in my innocence which never lets me part with a keeper without a quarrel. I do not say I have never eaten pheasants' eggs: I do not say I have never tasted partridges for which I have not paid. I will only say that the blood of my immediate forefathers seems to flow as warmly and wildly through my veins as it did through theirs.



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H. E. B. ON A NORTHANTS FARM 25 YEARS AGO

And having their blood, I like to think that I have their heart also. For they were not only fishermen and bird-lovers, and even bird-stealers when they got the chance, but flower-lovers. And if it was the sound of the machines mournfully thundering behind the jerry-built walls which drove me from my native town, it was flowers and my inherited love of flowers which drove me for ever into the country.

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Bird Watching by Car and Telescope, by Dr. F. S. Crowther Smith

UNTIL I owned a small astronomical telescope I had not been able to watch birds as I wished. My telescope has a three-inch aperture, and, in addition to the astronomical eye-pieces, has a pancratic one for terrestrial purposes, giving a simple sliding movement powers of from 30 X to 65 X. The astro eye-pieces give from 100 X to 150 X, but owing to the small field obtainable and the inversion of the image — one's curlew looks odd upside down — they are not suitable for things on the earth. The amount of light admitted by the three-inch aperture (about seven times that of my field-glass) and the high magnification give wonderful results. The instrument could hardly be called portable, but the makers divided the main tube and inserted a sleeve into one end over which the other half slides, thus making it possible to house the instrument in a light wooden box the size of a small suitcase.

With a little local knowledge and inquiry it is often possible to drive within range of perfect spots. The windscreen of the car is raised, and the lower half of the gap receives a board fixed by wing-nuts to the windscreen pillars, the upper edge of the board having a row of semi-circular cut-outs covered with soft leather on which the telescope rests. These vary in height to give positions as required. In the car I sit with