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BORN in 1905, on the borders of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire, the country that is now the scene of much of his work ; worked without any distinction at all as a junior reporter on a Northampton newspaper at the age of seventeen ; left the newspaper—graduated to a warehouse dealing in nails, linen-thread, eyelets, stiffeners, calico-linings, leather, hessian, buckram, rivets, sprigs, heels, tapes, besides Heaven knows how many other things that are used in the making of a boot. Managed to find time to write (in the warehouse's time, not his own) scores of stories, poems, some one-act plays, and two novels. Rewrote one of these novels : *The Two Sisters* ; submitted it without success to nine publishers, and saw it accepted by the tenth and subsequent publisher, with a preface by Edward Garnett. He (i.e. the author) was then twenty. Under Garnett's influence, turned his attention to the short story, and wrote prolifically, destroying nightly fifty per cent of all he wrote. Owed everything to Garnett, who read, criticized, praised, damned, and advised on all he wrote at that time. Married in 1931 ; went to live in Kent, and proceeded to assist maternity in the creation of two daughters and a son. In the country, became more interested in the country he had left, and began to write books about the country. In these books, delivered attacks on the current fashion of sentimentalizing the country, on gamekeepers, blood-sports, and local squirearchies, all of which did not prevent his becoming, in 1937, chairman of the parish council. This fact, in turn, did not prevent his being captain of the local football team, a member of the local cricket team, or hundred yards champion, in his socks, of the local sports. Would almost rather, in fact, have been an athlete than a writer. Has now written, besides novels, something like a hundred and fifty short stories, which are collected mainly

in seven volumes : *Day's End*, *Seven Tales and Alexander*, *The Black Boxer*, *The Woman who had Imagination*, *Thirty Tales*, *Cut and Come Again*, and *Something Short and Sweet*. Has been anthologized in something like fifty English and American anthologies, and holds the record for appearances in *The Best Short Stories* with ten stories, technically eleven, since he is apparently the only writer to have two stories chosen, by a mistake, in one year. Has nearly finished a play, *Carrie and Cleopatra*, in four acts, and is now at work on a novel. Writes generally very quickly, and out of doors (all the year round).

H. E. BATES.

THE MACHINE

EVERY evening, up at the farm, we saw the same men go past, out towards the villages, at the same time. They were coming home from the factories down in the valley ; men escaping from the machine.

And though we got to know them well by sight, first the young chaps, racing hard, with flying mufflers, then the old stagers, the old tough shoe-finishers still wearing polish blackened aprons, then the man with the black cork-leg and only one pedal to his bicycle, there was one we knew really well. His name was Simmons. We called him Waddo.

When Waddo went past we lifted hands from hoes or rakes, or even waved a cabbage that we might be cutting, and hailed him. "Way up !" we called.

"Waddo !" he shouted, and sailed on.

But three times a year, at hay-time, harvest, and threshing, when we needed extra hands, he stopped to help us. He rode his pink-tyred semi-racing bike into the stack yard, unstrapped his dinner-basket, rolled up his sleeves, and looked round at us, as we stood stacking corn or unloading hay, with a look of tolerant contempt. As though to say : "You poor miserable devils. Bin here since morning and all you done is stack up three ha'porth o' hay. Well, spit on me big toe, spit on it. If you ain't a bleedin' limit." It was the look of a giant for a degenerate collection of pitch-fork pigmies. Waddo himself stood five feet three.

But when he came into that yard we were transformed. He flung himself to work with an almost daemonic fury of strength. The muscles of his small arms were tight as clock-work springs under the white factory-blanching flesh. His little head, with thin wire-brush hair worn bald at the