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its kind, and is weighed down with a Teutonic heaviness which allows the reader no relaxation from beginning to end. And it is infinitely irritating in that the Baroness has no name, and is constantly referred to—on almost every page—as Frau Baronin, printed in italics. Nothing is so disturbing to the eye and therefore to the attention.

Ernst Wiechert is a dull writer, but he knows what he is writing about—the countryside in all its moods, man's inevitable return to it after war and hardship have taken him away, and the peace that it can bring to a tired heart.

PHILIP JORDAN

GOD WOT

The Modern Garden. By G. C. TAYLOR. *Country Life*. 15s.

When I Make a Garden. By RALPH HANCOCK. *Foulis*. 6s.

Gentians. By DAVID WILKIE. *Country Life*. 12s. 6d.

The Identification of Trees and Shrubs. By F. K. MAKINS. *Dent*. 15s.

The Small Garden. By SIR EDWARD ANSON. *Bell*. 3s. 6d.

All of these books are good; one is superb. If it were not that its virtues were so obvious and its whole purpose supremely successful I should be tempted to apply to it that classic remark of James I, *re*, I think, *The Advancement of Learning*: "It is like the peace of God: it passeth all understanding." *The Modern Garden* is, indeed, a swell book. It does in pictures what other people have tried and have failed so often to do in words. In its 224 pages there are, I suppose, not more than 10 pages of print: no learned disquisitions, no sentimentality or swanking or sloppiness about this flower or that, no tiresome arguments. The book sets out to show, by photographs instead of words, what the modern garden is and what it can be. Mr. Taylor says in his introduction:

It has often occurred to me that the method of presentation by means of illustrations supplemented by short critical notes might be reasonably used for the purposes of a contemporary study of the modern garden. It is a form of presentation that has much to commend it with such closely allied branches of gardening art as design and planting, for it has the advantage, generally lacking in the text

method, of enabling the inexpert, not equipped with a knowledge of plants or of the few fundamental principles underlying garden design, to visualise the future pictures he is creating.

It goes on to say that since the vision of the camera is limited the book "as a study and guide can only be suggestive, not complete." To look at it, in fact, is to suck lemons—the lemons of envy, jealousy, ambition and all those ugly vices which the gardens of other people arouse in the dissatisfied horticulturist. For how can one hope to compete? even to imitate? In this book gardens are not measured by plots but by acres, flowers not by half dozens but by legions. It is the grand scale. If there were any doubt about Shaw's dictum that money is the most powerful thing in the world, even in gardens, it is dispelled here. Money, indeed, not only talks. It flowers. It flowers into the formal gardens, the herbaceous gardens, the wild and woodland gardens, the rock-gardens, the rose gardens, the water gardens of Mr. Taylor's book. Only money can do it. How surprisingly well it can do it *The Modern Garden*, with its 350 photographs, shows. It is a gorgeous book.

So gorgeous, indeed, that it would be a very good book that could stand up to it. *When I Make a Garden* would seem very good if one had never seen Mr. Taylor's book. It remains, as it is, simply good. Its purpose is identical—to show to the aspiring gardener what can be done by skill and cash—but it is inevitably restricted by being the work of one man. *The Modern Garden* is a creamy anthology of scores of experts. Mr. Hancock, like ourselves in turn, can never hope to compete with that. Nor do his photographs do him justice. Also, he can deviate into absurdity. Witness "the old post-and-rail fence, taken from a remote farm in New England and re-erected exact in every detail." Preserved in a careful state of decay and collapse, that fence looks just as false and silly as a "ye olde petrole pumpe," and must have been, I fancy, the cause of some remote New England farmer laughing up a sleeve.

Of Gentians there are some 800 species: a vast bewildering race of beauties and weeds. "Take it all in all," said Farrer, "perhaps Gentiana offers the rock-garden more glory than any other race, and more persistently denies it." It is a race that, extending over almost the whole world and flowering for more than half the year, has baffled and charmed gardeners of all climates. In recent years it has, like the lily, received a new prominence, with the same result. Interest has created a demand for something which, as with the lily, did not exist—namely, an authoritative single book on the species. Now that it has come it could hardly have been more admirable. It is both expert and human; its 91 illustrations are impeccable; it avoids the gush of sentimentalists on the one hand and the gabble of botanists on the other. Farrer, who could devote only 30 pages to the genus, could surely have welcomed it. It is in every way worthy, in fact, of the genus he adored.

Lastly, two books of extreme practical value. With its 2,500 diagrams, its descriptions of 1,732 species, its easy key, *The Identification of Trees and Shrubs* is, if inevitably a little dry, invaluable. It is not to be read. It is a book that one needs, perhaps, a dozen times a year, more or less, and then needs badly. It should be in all schools and—seriously—on the desks of all nurserymen. Its decorations are clear and accurate, and incidentally a real delight.

The Small Garden is for those beginning. It is neither exhaustive nor ambitious. Ranging from hyacinths to cabbages, it aims at being a guide to those who do not know but would like to know. It succeeds.

H. E. BATES



Travellers Cheques

The seasoned traveller does not carry much paper money: he knows it is not worth the risk. Yet there are many occasions abroad when, for some reason or other, one would not choose to go to a bank to draw foreign cash for, say, the paying of a hotel bill. It is then that the smaller amounts of the Westmin-