

them in their greaseproof paper. Over the way children dance behind the barbed wire of a concentration camp, a second hand car dealer's yard, God and mammon are juxtaposed, the chapel board prays "God Bless Our Queen" against the hotel's gusty "Here's a Health Unto Her Majesty." Then it's as if the bow is suddenly bent, the waxed string taut and quivering. Swifter than the pard, the Prime Minister runs the zantlet in his black limousine getting an ironic thrust or two. (No matter who he is, he will always provide a release for self-consciousness: for who does not feel just a little foolish gathered here to yell approvingly at someone? Now if it were at Lancaster Park . . .). Then cheering sudden and fierce. Tiny children are hoisted, hats removed, flags unfurled. A yell goes off in your ear like a bomb. A car bearing a well-known picture floats by, paradoxically in a flash, an exposure at a twenty-fifth of a second. But the picture was moving with those stylised gestures that are the only sensible way to ration charm. Everyone has shouted at her or him. A personal shout, an instinctive movement to establish a link. Did eyes meet? Perhaps. The noise goes rolling up the street, the roar of an avalanche falling away. We turn for home, for tea, with something other than ourselves to talk about. "Isn't she beautiful, really lovely, eh?" "I say, he's a little bit of all right." The welcome has been magnificent. In fact, so pleased are we that everybody seems pleased with us that we keep on trying to do better.

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IT is difficult not to join the crowd which gathers about the garlanded hotel that evening. The Royal Musical Society has massed its choir outside on the scented river-bank to sing "Who Comes This Way? The May Queen comes. Let her path be spread with roses white, and roses red." And when the Queen and the Duke appear on the balcony there is one tremendous roar and a swoop of pale colour blurred by dusk as almost a hundred choristers pick up their long skirts and run to a vantage point, a choreographer's dream. The crowd lingers, grows. Will they come out again? Children perch in embrasures. A man says thoughtfully, "You know, it really looks just like a prison. Matter of fact, that's about what it is. We can't get in and she can't get out." Much cheering and clapping, songs like "Every Nice Girl Loves a Sailor." But the few attempts to chant "We want the Queen" are quickly shushed: we are on our best behaviour. The patience of it all! Thousands wear the warm night on their brows, talking quietly. And when *They* appear for the last time, there is a transfiguration of face quite startling, an urgency to touch and hold something for which I can find no name. Police grinning, happier than I've ever seen them—never underestimate the power of a woman.

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THE day of the great drive through the city is for us a picnic. It is wonderfully fine and so we go to Har-

per Avenue, which runs clean through park, rolling and tree-flanked where 16,000 school children are gathered on one side of the road. For hours they ferment behind a hedge, bubbling with soft drink and high spirits, a headily innocent combination. Their "comfort stations," pitched like Bedouin tents and visible above the hedgerow, are advertised, not disguised, by a long scream of bunting. We camp on the other side under the trees, thousands of us, a crowd sunburnt and ripe with good humour. As the hour draws near we find a position presided over by a man as dark as a gipsy and with a tribe of women and children. They are all seated, under threat of having their heads bashed in if they stand up. "Siddown!" He has managed to get others to co-operate for several yards along. He is very cheerful in a sinister sort of way. And I am very grateful for anyone who organises with good humour. Here the children are the show, their enthusiasm as keen as a knife in the heart. And, thrown in, a clown to take their pictures. The bunting should look well spread out by Cinema-Scope.

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AND so it goes. Sun to burn, as it were. Days of washed brilliance. To the Hospital where children receive them in a purity of silence. To our sinewy Gothic Cathedral made splendid by fanfares and trebles soaring. With worshippers of another kind to "the trots" at Addington. To a factory where great webs turn into nylons. (Here an onlooker found a use for that empty car piloted by a grinning chauffeur. "She'll have her nylons in that," as the cavalcade passed). To a garden party to nibble strawberries, and meet, well, some of the people.

As I write they are still here, enjoying a night at the movies on the eve of their going. As you read, they will have gone from the country altogether. In Christchurch I believe they got the welcome



"A night at the movies on the eve of their going"

B.P.S. photo-graph

they deserved, spontaneous, overwhelming, but tactful. Their youthful charm ensured the spontaneity, the Queen's dignity verging on shyness coupled with the Duke's smiling vigour and sincerity gained from the crowds the respect breeds a complementary dignity in enthusiasm. There was no fleck of ill-humour. Some people realised, perhaps for the first time, the warmth that can

lie in an abstraction when you meet the human beings from whom it is drawn like breath. And so, having come to us with grace, perhaps they will remember us as having received them with the grace, sincere if a little unpolished, of those who work long in gardens, sit under trees and think our children wonderful.

—Jim Walshe