

Lovable lemons

There's a lemon shortage. The cheerful canary-coloured fruits are still available in the market for ready money, but never has so much money chased so few lemons. The wrong kind of rains have fallen in Argentina and black spot is rife in South Africa. For Britain, this does not mean the loss of a staple, for the lemon's calling in life is as 3. That has its importance. In *Eminent Victorians*, Lytton Strachey pretended that the ascetical Cardinal Manning was criticised for eating lobster salad in Lent. But lobster salad without lemon is lenten fare indeed. A Gin & Tonic too lacks zest without it, and smoked salmon cries out for a squeeze – or it's like a boiled egg without salt, Pimm's without borage. Whoever invented the slang "lemon" for a disappointment sorely underestimated its mouthwatering attractions.



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