

English Countryside



At the End of an English Sylvan Path.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

IF ANYONE wants to know the English countryside, let him go house hunting. On such a quest he will discover Nature's cozy corners that casuals never find. They are everywhere, but are ingeniously concealed as a bird's nest. There may even be a sign which says, "Dangerous narrow road. Enter at your own risk." But that is just the kind of place to insist upon penetrating.

Enter on foot if you are afraid, but the car can squeeze in. You find yourself in one of those incomparable roads like tunnels of living green. Earthen banks of ivy and wild flowers rise ten feet high to be topped by tall trees sprung from the original hedge planted a hundred years ago. The road keeps you guessing by making such curves that there is no penetrating the secret of what lies ahead.

All at once a gate. Within, a bit of woodland, flower-brightened; beyond that, a sunny garden, moldy mossy walls, lattice windows, creepers all abloom and reaching to the roof tiles, which are toned from dull red to gentle green by two centuries of soft rains and sun.

Who would not penetrate the wood to gaze closer—especially when armed with a handful of permits from a real estate firm? You pass through the bit of flowered woodland gay with yellow primrose patches and massed bluebells. But on emerging from the screening trees and seeing the open garden lying in the sun and the house forming a part of it, you gasp and halt.

This is the house of your dreams.

A servant appears and explains that the house is to-be-let and is at your service; the lease is for sixty-five years! Exclamation marks rattle about in your head.

Peculiar Rental Customs.

You select another house which you consider a perfect gem, only to be told that it is not available for "instant possession." The present tenant has the place for four years longer.

These, and other interesting rental customs you may learn in English real-estate offices. Mayfair is full of fascinating real-estate offices, most of them seeming like private homes, with their open fires, Chippendale chairs, and bookcase desks.

"Mr. Upperton and Partners" is the diverting and reticent sign over the door of one of these. Lovely way of expressing it; Upperton, Stoggs,

Chair and Jones is outdone by the dignity of "and Partners."

Any of these gentlemen can teach the eager American client new uses of English words and phrases in real-estate jargon, whether or not he offers the ideal ancient house and romantic garden. And it is here that you learn that the rent of unfurnished houses is denoted in pounds sterling, while the furnished house smartly demands guineas—an extra shilling on each pound.

You also learn that company's water "laid on" merely means that domestic water flows from taps instead of being pumped up from well or cistern. Indeed, one must not visibly shudder to learn that for 200 years houses have been occupied by gentry, modern smart people among them, who have had no running water, no lights except kerosene lamps, no telephones. Incredible! Without the tireless English servant, the English gentry must have died out for lack of comforts.

One of the Partners may ask you strange-sounding questions.

"Are you prepared to pay dilapidations?"

That is disconcerting.

"But I don't want a house that is actually in a state of decay."

The Partner patiently explains that any sort of damage or breakage must be restored by the tenant. Your bill for dilapidations may be only four shillings, about one dollar, for a flower holder. But it often happens that one must assume the dilapidations of the previous tenant, which may include repairs and decorations of importance. So it is a word to excite suspicion.

Rent days are not the prosaic first of the month. They come four times a year. Their names are full of suggestion: Lady day, Midsummer, Michaelmas, Christmas. It makes a romantic pleasure of paying rent.

What the American adventurous spirit asks of England for the summer is a smallish house, even a cottage. But it must be under a style name like Tudor, or more romantically Elizabethan, or perhaps, Queen Anne and the Georgian, either late or early.

Hunting a Country House.

The hunt for the ideal takes on the aspect of a tour. It is possible to get about by commodious omnibuses. They set you down on the main roads, where local motor cars with drivers can be hired.

Gradually you come to know the districts not too far from London

where certain types of the ideal house have sprung from the soil. It is a requisite of the ideal English small house that it should look as if it had pushed itself up from Nature's laboratory of the earth, just as the shrubs, flowers, and trees have done. They are close kin.

Districts not too far from London contain an entrancing variety of old styles. The house of carved interiors and scrolled gables is a specialty of Kent; the thatched roof hides beside the roads of Hampshire's New Forest; the cottage of light-gray stone makes glad the villages of the Cotswolds; and the Georgian, or rather Eighteenth century houses, scatter their elegant lines in all parts of the land. Timber and plaster houses tempt one almost everywhere with their Tudor charm.

West of Southampton lies the witching wood of the New Forest, where fine leafage piles delicately up and up against the sky, and where the road slips softly into mossy turf of green, sun-spangled. Out in the sunny tangle of open lands the wild forest ponies roam free amid gorse and broom and heather. Farther along, where the road strikes the edge of the wood, stand ideal cottages with thatched roofs. The windows of the second story are veritable eyes which kindly contemplate. The casement of one is thrown back and the rosy face of a girl laughs with pretty boldness.

This is a country of thatch. More cottages watch by the roadside. Some are inns, but are so elegantly kept that only a lover of the picturesque, a potential artist, would be living there.

You come to one of the richest of all districts for those who hunt the ideal house when you arrive at the hills of the Cotswolds. Gradually its little stone houses catch you in the spell of their beauty. They spread themselves beside the road, taking on almost human qualities. They lift their gables with dignity; they spread their mullioned windows with frankness. Their symmetry seems of the highest art, yet it is said these lovely houses were built by simple artisans. They took the warm, light stone of the land, and even the roof tiles are made of it. All seems a pearly gray, and on this ideal color climb the bright flowers of the garden.

Many Enticing Places.

You linger long and drift from road to lane, from village to farm, drinking in every detail of these houses—the Tudor ornament over the leaded windows, the lovely flat arch of the front door, the beauties of the back of the house, the flowers and a cunning use of shrubs and creepers piling one thrilling beauty upon another against the light-gray stone.

In Sussex and Kent, hunt out the old farms and the ancient houses of villages. They have a beauty all their own, with their bricks turned to pink and softened brown. Many have an end gable of stone fashioned in the grand curves which fascinatingly recall the Walloons who brought with them their own traditions of art when driven to England by religious persecutions. Those curvilinear gables have, too, a Spanish flavor, a late Renaissance caper of free-draw curves. Fascinating interiors those Walloon cloth weavers constructed to make the homes of their exiles resemble those they had left.

In Kent is found that enticing structure, the house of timber and plaster, or timber and brick ingeniously laid. It is eternally lovely, bewilderingly fantastic. How did modest man fancy such a house easy to build, and practical? The beams, black and exposed, seem to represent superhuman effort in the interest of beauty. The curved ones, the purely ornamental ones, fascinate the eye. The overhanging second story is a fantastic denial of architecture's law of the large base.

Where a King Married

Still standing in Limassol, Cyprus, is the old castle visited by King Richard I of England and Berengaria, princess of Navarre, just before they were married there in the Twelfth century.

Through A WOMAN'S EYES

by
JEAN NEWTON

THAT POISONOUS MOTHER LOVE

"MOTHER love causes child crime!"

This time it is a child psychologist who says that before an authoritative gathering of people interested in child guidance.

It seems to be the fashion now to take a whack at mother love. Editorial writers, novelists, playwrights and motion picture artists have done it.

Is the sun harmful? Can the rain poison us? Is God's good earth a quicksand of slime? Then mother love is harmful. And not until then.

Of course, take away nature's usual provision of trees and breeze and water, give the sun nothing on which to lavish its benign rays but desert sand, and it becomes angry and blisters. Gather good fresh rain into a swamp and it will become stagnant and rank. And inflict narrowness, weakness, stupidity upon a woman who happens to be a mother and these qualities may so affect her that in spite of her love for her children she may become a harmful influence upon them. But then don't say mother love is harmful.

For a woman to think every-

thing her child does is right is vanity, not mother love. To fail to grapple with his problems is laziness or stupidity—not mother love. To lack the courage to correct him is weakness, not mother love. Those qualities may exist in a woman in spite of the mother love which is natural to her if she has children. The effect of mother love is such as to make a weak woman strong for her child, a small woman big for her child, a selfish woman generous for her child. But it cannot make a stupid woman wise, nor can it give a dull woman a sense of humor. Therefore if a woman thinks that the way to prepare her child for life is to give him everything he wants, it is her stupidity which is harmful, not her mother love. If a woman thinks that her child can do no wrong and that therefore a world to which he cannot adjust himself is a wrong world, it is her foolishness and her vanity that are harmful, not her mother love.

I take issue with the man who says that "mother love causes crime"—and explains his statement with the words "too much love, of course,"—when what he should say is that not enough mother love—mother love that brings wisdom and strength and honor—is the trouble!

© Bell Syndicate.—WNU Service.

BEDTIME STORY

By THORNTON W. BURGESS

BILLY MINK WARNS BOBBY COON

FOR a long time Billy Mink and Bobby Coon sat gossiping on the edge of the Laughing Brook. Then Bobby having finished what he had to eat, decided that he would go down the Laughing Brook to see what he could find. There's nothing Bobby Coon enjoys more than wandering along the Laughing Brook, watching for a little fish to carelessly come within reach, or just simply playing in the water. Bobby has almost as much curiosity as has Peter Rabbit. He simply



"I Wonder How This Little Fence Happens to Be Here."

has to examine everything which appears strange. A shiny pebble in the water of a shell will catch his eyes and he will stop to play with it.

Billy Mink watched Bobby start along down the Laughing Brook. "I wonder what he'll do when he comes to that little fence?" thought Billy. So, to find out what Bobby would do, he followed him. When Bobby came to the little fence he sat down and stared at it in the funniest way. Then he began to talk to himself. "That's a funny thing," he said. "I wonder how that little fence happens to be here. I wonder what it's for. Nobody had any business to build a fence like that. The only way I can get around it is to climb up that bank,

and I don't want to do that." You know Bobby is rather lazy.

So he sat and looked at the fence, which was made of sticks stuck down in the ground, and the more he looked the more determined he became that he wouldn't be stopped and that he wouldn't climb that bank. Of course it didn't take him long to discover that right in the middle of that fence was an opening, a sort of gateway. But it was a very narrow opening. You see, it had been made just wide enough for Billy Mink, and Bobby Coon is a great deal bigger than Billy Mink.

Bobby went a little nearer and once more sat down, his head cocked on one side as he studied that little opening. "It's too narrow for me, but if I try hard enough perhaps I can push those sticks aside and make it wider. That would be easier than climbing that steep bank," he said.

So Bobby walked a few steps nearer and again sat down. Somehow, he had an uncomfortable feeling that something was wrong. He didn't know why he had that feeling, but he had it. Now, whenever one of the little people of the Green Forest has that feeling he becomes very cautious. Bobby was tempted to try once more to push his way through that little opening, but because of that feeling that something was wrong he hesitated. Then very carefully he examined that little fence from the bottom of the steep bank clear to the edge of the water. He smelled of each separate stick of that fence, but he could smell nothing else. Finally, he made up his mind that there couldn't be anything really wrong in the least trying to go through that little opening. He reached forward with one foot to place it right in the middle of that opening.

"Stop!" cried Billy Mink.

© T. W. Burgess.—WNU Service.

A Warm Day for Kitty

The Dalles, Ore.—A frightened cat, surprised by a dog while sunning itself in a third-story window, jumped to the street, arose unhurt and fled from another dog.