

## COME SUMMER-TIME.

"Come Summer-Time" when I was young it was a delightful custom to spend long days away from home with relations and friends. Great annual treats. Quite early the capacious waggonette was drawn up at the front gate, and the whole family in great good spirits were packed in, and off we went at a gentle pace for a ten-miles' drive to Southwell over Trent, or elsewhere, to be welcomed by a bevy of aunts, beautiful dutiful people, and by young cousins with shrieks of delight, hugs and kisses.

Halcyon summer days!

What a stimulating change of scene. Where in the world more lovely vistas? Such magnificent trees, oak, elm, and ash? And such intoxicating scents! Whiffs of bean-bloom, wild rose and meadow sweet, of hay in the cock, and golden corn in the stook. Village gardens crammed with old-fashioned flowers—birds, bees, butterflies, how we danced up and down, and longed to chase them over hedge and ditch, and were never reproved by indulgent parents, who believed in the free growth of the young.

Southwell we loved, such feasts and fun, and the grand Minster and solemn music, and once in prehistoric times we were permitted to call on the villain of "our village" in durance vile, whom we found disporting himself on the treadmill to our huge delight. Up went shouts of friendly greeting to the trapper of unconsidered trifles, such as bunnies and game birds—to be acknowledged by the widest of grins!

But the greatest of delights was a visit to Belvoir Castle, superbly placed upon a hill, which commands three counties, where there were few restrictions in those days—all open and free—lordly terraces, gardens, woods and lawns. Once I came face to face with the owner of this Paradise, Cecil, sixth Duke of Rutland. How my heart went pit-a-pat. Rumour had it that as he could not marry his true love, he would never marry at all, and indeed, from the glimpse of his sad, sad face no doubt the rumour was true. A broken heart!—High romance. Just thrilling to a little maid in her teens. Long, long ago this picturesque peer was gathered to his forebears, and let us hope his lady-love came tripping through the asphodel to greet him in Elysium's fields!

A greater reigned at Belvoir in his stead, that Lord John Manners of "Young England" fame, intimate of Dizzy—exquisites both—type for ever past in these material times.

But I did not set out to chat with you of carriages and castles, of dead days and dukes, but of cottages and cabbages and the charm of flashing cars.

We all know the hunger for a little bit of England—just an acre or so of our very own, and of late years I have

listened to colleagues with thirty to forty years' strenuous professional work to their credit, discussing where will be found the ideal country retreat of their dreams. A real cottage, with oak rafters, lattice windows, ingle-nook, water-butts, crazy pavement, and dovecot. A garden where sweet-scented old-fashioned flowers grow—and orchards bloom—where fruit and veg will fill the pot, and, of course, a garage.

Where indeed?

But such delights really do exist, hidden away in lovely old-world villages less than fifty miles from town!

I don't feel like saying another word. Already the demon builder is steering his dusty car down narrow leafy lanes, taking stock of sites and possibilities, and ravaging our lovely land in all directions. In Buckingham, county of beechen groves, we would plead for mercy, for here the ancient village of Speen is a jewel, and in it are still to be found dignity and repose. Moreover, the rose-red Manor of Hughenden, a place for ever sacred to those who love England, is within its confines, and here the dust of

the immortal Disraeli adds its quota to England's earth in the churchyard near by.

"Come Summer," it was a promise to visit Speen, and make a pilgrimage to Hughenden, and thanks to Miss Bushby, I renewed the joys of my youth by "spending the day" in a joy ride through Bucks towards the Cotswolds, our destination the real old cottage at Speen, half hidden in foliage and flowers, where



MIDMEAD, SPEEN, BUCKS.  
An Ideal English Cottage of the Olden Time.

from time to time she enjoys the simple life with all its amenities. The cottage, as you can see from its picture, has all the architectural attributes required, and if you could peep inside you would find it full of charm, and fitted in character and comfort.

No sooner arrived than a *cordon bleu* from the village paid court to our "inner man," and who will deny that good food and wine are the gifts of the gods? Not only refreshed but replete, I was shown the charming little demesne. The annexe, tool house, garage, a wealth of flowers and fruits. Rural delights, far, far away from turmoil and pens, ink and paper!

Then we gathered a posy of perfumed blush roses and sweet peas (primroses and violets were sleeping till Spring) and sped away on our pilgrimage to Hughenden (incidentally, when ardently in love with "Mary Ann" her dear Dizzy sent her sweet peas from Bradenham). Arrived at the Park, we came presently to the little Church set in a garden as it appeared with wide spreading park lands around. Here we found the simple grave of the Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G. (whose aristocratic spirit flowered in the purple) and beside

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)