

Democracy Hanches.

CENSORED

AN ENGLISH VILLAGE TODAY

SIGNATURE *Line 5/10*

B.B.C. CENSORSHIP DEPARTMENT

*20/1 March, Dorothy H. Clarke.*

17/4/51  
8.45  
Our Irish villages seem beautiful only to an artist or a lover. The white cottages that straggle over bog-land and mountain-side are too bare; but the typical old English village, I had been told, would charm any heart. Every corner in the village had it. I've searched and found features of it - bits, here and there: <sup>AN</sup> here, the old stone church with a lych-gate, elsewhere, the half-timbered inn; now, the mill-stream with its rustic bridge, again, the old cottage whose little windows peer through bowers of honeysuckle from under the ancient thatch - but I have never found ~~them~~ <sup>these</sup> all at once. ~~the village~~ Maybe the village of yesterday is no more, and, maybe, life in it was narrow and stagnant and sticky with class distinctions. Let it go! I have found something else.

Incredibly, within one hour's drive of London I found it - a true village, folded in pasture and plough land, at the foot of the Chiltern hills.

*I would pick what village this might be.*  
~~It was a little village, as I had heard of it.~~  
I chanced on it, one Spring day, and stopped the car. I liked the common, wide and grassy, merging into woods, and the old church beyond, among trees, and the comfortable, two-storied cottages, and the inn. There is no "ye olde" nonsense about The Two Brewers. It stands low, wide and solid, facing the common. In its trim strip of garden were rows of crocuses and small tables and chairs. The walls were cream-washed then; they are a sad grey-green, for <sup>u</sup>camouflage, now. Though its lounges are oaken and sombre,

the white bedrooms have shining taps. *Now, I thought, if I could only have the Commandant's room, the twelve ~~beds~~ in the distance, & pleasant little inn. Love this all at the one time - but that is an artist's dream.*

I found a room in Chipperfield. I was lucky. Bombs began falling on London, night and day. Every corner in the village had its guest - war-workers needing sleep. Londoners slept in cars and buses parked on the common. Nevertheless, ~~when~~, <sup>friend</sup>, one evening, I brought out from town a mother and wailing baby from a bombed refugee hostel, a room was found for them.

*Bomb-shocked*  
It was in the company of little Rudi that I came to know the village intimately. We spent long days in the woods, so numerous, so varied, so filled with tranquillity. ~~The~~ aeroplanes, seen through tree-tops, looked like birds. Rudi ceased to scream at them.

Winter brought quiet, save for Nazi planes flying over at night. When Spring came and the cherry orchards broke into foamy blossom, Rudi was well. Now he walked sturdily up and down hill, through the fields, the nursery-garden, the orchards. There are rights of way everywhere and there's scarcely a fence; some beneficent endowment has saved these spaces of invaluable land.

*Rudi*  
He had friends everywhere - in the cottages, the bungalows and proud houses with wrought-iron gates. He loved best to visit the caravans that clustered round every farm-house, now, like <sup>c</sup>chickens round hens, or the camouflaged buses where soldiers lived in the woods. Radiating delight, he admired the Home Guard at their drill

REFUGED INTO WAYSIDE SENTRY BOXES, AND HIS DIRECTORS.

Hills, woods and hollows divide the region into little communities; <sup>in hills here and land under heavens are</sup> ~~the cluster of small modern houses with neat gardens~~ <sup>small & cabbage & following</sup> ~~the crescent of old cottages, each with its orchard or back garden~~ <sup>there</sup> ~~it, between the little woods, hide straggling farms; Around the~~ <sup>Council houses in Red-house lane - those name some folk wish to change</sup>

the common stand fine old mansions behind wrought iron gates, <sup>between the</sup> ~~wood and orchards hide straggling farms~~ <sup>large centres here</sup>

Rudi had friends everywhere. He loved best to visit the <sup>near the children when moment the school is closed; cricket are</sup> ~~caravans that clustered round every farm-house, now, like chickens~~ <sup>in an instant and bells thud on water</sup> ~~round hens, or the camouflaged buses where soldiers lived in the~~ <sup>and the farm dash away to the pond</sup> ~~woods. Radiating delight, he admired the home Guard at their drill.~~ <sup>round their school-mistress who has a good</sup> ~~peeped into wayside sentry boxes, and air raid shelters,~~ <sup>gave</sup> ~~Now the mothers appear, passing~~

<sup>camp under the walnut-tree</sup> ~~flask and leaves are spread~~ <sup>and fling themselves down</sup>

Passers-by <sup>motor-cycle stops</sup> ~~the grass smiling, and green~~ <sup>black-current juice</sup> ~~lovely flush in his cheeks~~ <sup>some of the women</sup> ~~three of the daily dead~~ <sup>and no more is left</sup> ~~about 'our web'~~

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explored the crashed German plane, went to the Post Office for barley sugar, or to the Day Nursery to play with toys, and to the common - his beloved common - every fine afternoon.

In Summer, the life of the village centres here. Out tear the children, the moment the school is closed; ~~cricket~~ are up in an instant and balls thud on bats; shouting boys with nets and jam jars dash away to the pond; a group of evacuees crowd round their school-mistress who has come out to teach them a round game. Now the mothers appear, pushing prams and go-carts; they camp under the walnut-tree or in the shade at the edge of the wood; flask and loaves are spread out and hot - panting youngsters come and fling themselves down, thirsty for tea.

Passers-by on the road call greetings. An explosive motor-cycle stops; children shout; it is nurse. She comes across the grass, smiling, and gives a message about the Baby Clinic and black-currant juice. Rudi runs to her and her eyes light up to see lovey flush in his cheeks. She walks away talking gravely with some of the women: the news from the bombed farm-house is bad: three of the family dead. Plans are made to help the survivors and no more is said. This is not one the villages which talk about "our bomb" for months: the people have too much to do.

6. Harvesting is a mighty task: the meadows, lacey white with marguerites, and later the amber corn + sea-green barley have to be cut. Boys + girls have serious work to do; you see a few groups in the big fields the sturdier children pitching hay to the men on the tops of the ricks, while the others clean up with rakes;



Harvest is a mighty task: the meadows, lacy-white with marguerites and, later, the amber corn and sea-grey barley have to be cut. Boys and girls have serious work to do; They grow brown and hardy. For the older people, life presents ceaseless problems: where to find a home for this London mother with twins? - what's to be done with that great lad who bullies the others? - This orphan: can Matron possibly spare a cot? - the girl in the caravan at Todd's Bottom is coughing; she must have a room... cycles are pedalled and telephones buzz. Life in Chipperfield is eventful, because the troubles or achievements of one household affect so many friends.

"It's like leaving your native place", Rudi's mother said, <sup>half</sup> happily when the neighbours came crowding to bid her good-bye.

In war as in peace this village has it's pleasures. <sup>a</sup> musician lives here. ~~Mary MacNair~~. Her reputation made, she has abjured cities and makes her garden and her music here. Other <sup>even</sup> music have settled near, and she and they love to teach. No talented child need go without lessons. There is folk-dancing <sup>to</sup> the school-master's fiddle on Miss Brooke's lawn. There is a class in eurhythmics too, and a choir. Every evening Miss MacNair plays in her cottage studio for anyone who lives to come. Her friends, their maids, visitors from London, children from the School for the Blind, women from the cottages, evacuated Civil Servants, Polish and Austrian refugees meet here; they listen to Mozart and

Chopin while the evening scents pour in from the garden and colours change in the sky, and the tensions of war are eased.

8 In London, with its empty houses, its debris, and its dearth of children, one loses the sense of the future; you regain it in Chipperfield; This little democracy with its immense family, its seagair and gifted leader-ship in health and teaching, its free spaces, wild nature, agricultural labour and metropolitan art, is the English village of tomorrow, *perhaps*.

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