

BRIGHTER VILLAGES THE NEW LIFE OPENING UP FOR THEM

Rural Centres Needed in the
Countryside

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POINTS THE WAY

Lord Oxford, whom we all know better as Mr. Asquith, has been talking of the brightening up of village life. It is a very important subject for us all.

One of the wisest movements ever suggested for country places is now being considered by the Cambridgeshire Education Committee, on the suggestion of its secretary, Mr. Morris. The object is to form two experimental village centres for all kinds of useful public activities (education, civic duties, reading, music, entertainment, and social intercourse), and to provide halls suitable for them.

Such work is not entirely new to intelligent public spirit in rural districts, but in Cambridgeshire it is suggested that it shall be planned officially, with support from public funds, local and national. We cannot imagine a greater boon. Such a scheme, wisely managed, would help to cement the whole community into one fellowship, and brighten and deepen country life.

For Young and Old

Broadcasting seems to have had some effect in suggesting this movement, and one cannot wonder at that being so. Seeing how easily and cheaply a programme of interest, instruction, and entertainment can now be received everywhere, the receiving of it collectively must occur to many. What could be more convenient than to walk along to the village hall where the broadcast programme, and other forms of mental employment, were being provided for the general good?

That village hall or institute! How much might it not do to transfigure country life if it were intelligently built, organised, and managed! The Cambridgeshire scheme contemplates it under the name of a "college." Certainly it would be well to have in it arrangements for definite evening teaching, but it should appeal to everyone in the village, old and young, and we do not think a college is the idea.

What Every Village Wants

First, there is the want in every village of a public library containing the books that are most urgently needed, though the absence of them may not yet have been felt, except by a few. Every citizen ought to have within reach a collection of the treasures of knowledge in the form of the books that will help to build up mind, character, and general competence to play a good part in the world. That can only come in an adequate degree through public libraries.

As people in the villages increasingly feel the stimulus of contact with the world's intellectual centres, through speeches, lectures, music, and freer access to books, they will certainly feel the need of discussing for themselves the things that are being brought before their minds. Public life will be quickened. Meetings for local conference and discussion will be wanted. Desire for definite education will grow.

Lure of the Towns

Once upon a time the most characteristic life of our island was found in the villages. It may be so now, though we doubt it. Stagnation has been creeping over the countryside since the lure of the towns has been strongly felt. That is a calamity, for given proper and sufficient housing, and intellectual and social contact with the world, country life is far more healthy than the life of towns. There is no reason why the village should not have all the mental advantages of the town and its own special advantages too. The way to that desirable end lies along the road mapped out in rural Cambridgeshire.

CHILDREN OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY



A Ring-o'-Roses by the Sea, by Mr. Gemmell Hutchison



Mollie, Daughter of Mr. Guy Hambling, by Mr. Bertram Priestman, R.A.



Apple Green, by Mr. Stanley Cursiter

Among the pictures in the Royal Academy this year are a number of paintings of children, many of which are very pleasing. We give on this page reproductions of some of the most interesting of these children of the Royal Academy

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POWER OF THE EYE

A SURGEON'S WONDERFUL IDEA

Setting an Instrument Moving
with a Glance

STRANGE POSSIBILITIES

A new and marvellous field of investigation, the possibilities of which stagger the imagination, has been opened by Mr. Charles Russ, a London surgeon.

He can make an instrument move by simply looking at it, the power of his eye rotating a coil of fine metal wire suspended on a fibre of unspun silk. Not only can Mr. Russ himself do this, but any ordinary healthy person, child or adult, can do the same, though the degree of movement varies with the individual.

The idea is not quite new, for it was much discussed a year ago, but as a result of a series of elaborate experiments carried out during the past year Mr. Russ is satisfied that an electric force is constantly leaving the human body during life, and that this force is greatest in the brain and escapes chiefly through the eyes during seeing.

What a Glance Will Do

A year or two ago Mr. Russ exhibited to a number of scientists at Oxford an instrument of a simple kind with a coil which could be made to turn to one side or the other when a person gazed fixedly at it. It took some seconds, however, for the power of the eye to operate. Now, with more delicate instruments, the fixed gaze is not necessary; a mere glance provides the force sufficient to make the coil rotate.

Mr. Russ conceived his theory of an invisible beam coming out of the eye before he made his instrument. The apparatus was invented to test the theory; and in order that there might be no mistake Mr. Russ enclosed it in a box with a window. This shut out any possibility of movement being due to draughts or vibration.

Human Wireless

To test whether the movements were caused by radiant heat aluminium vessels containing boiling water were taken near, but either there was no motion at all or it was so slight as not to count. The instrument was also submerged in paraffin while being looked at, to shut out any possibility of heat affecting it. It responded to the human gaze in that position as readily as it did in air or in a partial vacuum.

This "human wireless ray," as Mr. Russ calls it, would, he thinks, offer an explanation of the dislike which most people have to being stared at. Two adults, he says, cannot continue to look into each other's eyes, even by friendly arrangement beforehand. Whether the gaze is friendly or hostile one must, before long, give way and drop the eyes.

A Marvellous Theory

A person reading or engaged in watching some object becomes conscious of another person staring at him from some unseen position, and the natural impulse is to look round at the observer. The lion avoids the gaze of his trainer.

All these facts, Mr. Russ thinks, are due to the invisible rays which proceed from the eyes. He even believes the prevalent custom of railway travellers reading papers throughout their journeys is due to an unconscious desire to avoid the invisible rays from the eyes opposite.

Though children can move the indicator-coils by looking at them, sick adults get no results. Some people obtain far greater movement than others, and a brilliant actress and an expert and daring airman caused rapid rotation through sixty degrees.

It is a marvellous theory, and the experiments may be the beginning of a great new field of science.