

THE LANDSCAPE OF ENGLAND.

By CHARLES BRADLEY FORD.

Illustrated from drawings by Brian Cook and from photographs.

With a foreword by G. M. Trevelyan, O.M.

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As a nation we are resigned and not unduly depressed by the too familiar wireless-weather-report of "unsettled," and it needed an oriental visitor to point out the silver lining of this cloudy outlook, in the comforting philosophy that the vagaries of our climate were more than compensated for by the resultant beauty and play of colour in our landscapes, consequent upon our whimsical weather.

Strictly speaking however "landscape" is not a matter of colouration but of formation, as its meaning is *land-shape*. Landscape shows us the countryside in the nude. Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter clothe her with garments of varying hue and texture, which modulate her contours and muffle her shape but the landscape proper is no more changed by the robes she doffs and dons than is the "female form divine" by the changes of costume that Fashion dictates.

Landscape often possesses a beauty that is impaired by colour. Beauty of outline and silhouette can be side-tracked by forceful colouration that draws attention away from the scene to obtrude the scenery.

Therefore in conformity with its title (*The Landscape of England*) this book is illustrated by photographs, as landscape is sculpture not painting, and is best rendered achromatically, for who would paint a statue.

The book embraces 33 English counties and presents us with 135 photographs and some 30 pen drawings by Mr. Brian Cook. Many of the former are full-page reproductions and as the book is royal 8vo. is thus enabled to unfold a large expanse of beautiful landscape impossible in conventional snapshots.

That England is beautiful we recognise—and as the book is "dedicated to the Members of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England" we realize that no better method of attaining this object could be devised than by the optical evidence supplied in this volume.

The author asks his readers to excuse the frequent brevities and curtailments of the letterpress but this is quite unnecessary, as verbosity needs an apology, brevity is to be commended, and the brevity herein displayed is of the commendatory order.

The book being entitled "The Landscape of England" it is to be expected that the landscapes form the predominant feature, to which the letterpress is subservient or might be omitted altogether.

It is, however little and good, just what is needed to supply a setting for the photographic gems, light touches on historical traditions, geological formations, recording objects of interest, ancient monuments and topical activities, which no illustration could supply but are invaluable to anyone passing through and requiring a nutshell guide to the landscape provided. The country is divided into five main sections, and for convenience of grouping East Anglia has opened her arms and embraced Essex and Hunts.

East Anglia proper, that is Suffolk, Norfolk and parts of Cambs, is well represented and in comparison with the landscapes of other counties we are led to conclude that the charm of our own county, Suffolk, is dependant in great measure, not so much upon vast open spaces as upon close-up views of enclosed areas and cultivated districts, converting her into a garden county, with picturesque villages, beautiful churches, halls, parks and groups of trees, dotted over a garden landscape.

And in this charming cultivated landscape of Suffolk we have a convincing proof that man's hand need not necessarily mar God's country but can make it either smile or frown.

Mr. Ford's "Landscape of England" appears at an opportune moment to strengthen the hand of those who endeavour to preserve the amenities of the countryside and to hand down to future generations the beautiful views we hold in trust, unimpaired by blatant commercializing, disfiguring architecture or unworthy work that would deprecate the lines in "Childe Harold"—

"Oh Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land."

H.A.H.