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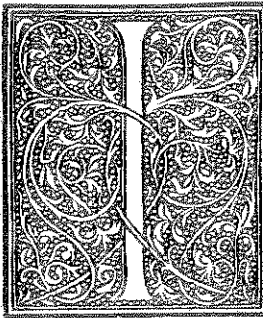
THE VISION AND THE REALIZATION

by

R. L. OUTHWAITE

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IN these days of revolution abroad and of the undermining of the old order at home, the visionary is abroad in the land who dreams of a new order arising out of the ashes of the old. But, day by day, grim reality mocks at the vision as a delusion, and lays low the castles in the air. Hope gives way to despair as the demobilized armies pass into the ranks of the unemployed and become receivers of weekly doles; as the meaning of the debt of £8,000,000,000 comes to be recognized in the fact that toilers must work six months in the year to satisfy the tax-gatherer and the protected profiteer. Dreams of freedom and prosperity give way to the nightmare of unemployment, of enslavement, and of poverty deeper and more harassing than that known to this generation. So the days which will determine the future of the people of Britain pass, so the opportunity, that will never return, is being lost. And why? Is it because there is no way by which the visions, the hopes, the aspirations of mankind can be realized? There is a way, there is a means to hand, but the visionary with his eyes in the clouds misses the path.

*THE VISION*

And what is the vision? It is that of mankind set free; of comrades in freedom, subject to no master class, producing with ease all that is necessary to maintain themselves in comfort. Of homes that invite, and to whose door the wolf of hunger never comes, nor the fear that the children of the hearth shall ever feel its fangs. A vision of communal service providing the things of beauty and knowledge, the masterpieces of the artist, of the composer, and the musician, now reserved for the rich alone; a vision of the pleasure garden, and such a building for dance and music set therein as that to which the happy people of a Danish

town flocked before the war and on whose dome the words were emblazoned: Sorgen frei—Free from Care. That vision in itself bears no absurdity. The absurdity rests in the fact that it awaits realization. For those who have seen it, from whose eyes it is fading, are those whose hands and brains produce all that the vision embodies of beneficence, and which others enjoy, but not themselves.

### THE LAW OF THE LAND

And there is a simple way to realization. A common fund is needed for common service, to make the abiding place of the workers in society no longer a plague spot, a camping ground of domesticated animals awaiting the yoke. Take your eyes from the clouds, oh! visionary, whilst there is yet time, and cast them upon the ground. Then open the books of the Law and read these words of the great legal authorities :—

The first thing the student has to do is to get rid of the idea of absolute ownership. Such an idea is quite unknown in English law. No man in law is absolute owner of his lands. He only owns an estate in them.

Williams ("Real Property," 12th ed., p. 17).

All lands or tenements in England in the hands of subjects are holden mediately, or immediately, of the King. For in the law of England we have not any subjects' land which is not so holden.

Coke ("Institutes," p. 488).

It being a received and now undeniable principle in law that all lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the King.

Blackstone ("Commentaries," Vol. II, p. 106).

### REALIZATION

Does not this, oh! visionary, enlighten you as to the realization of that communal service that you dream of? This ground at your feet, the books of the law say, is *your* land, the Crown holds it in trust for you, and you, through the Crown, are the ground landlord of Britain. So, too, with every citizen of Britain. The land is the common property of the citizens by right and by law. Cannot you now see how to come by the communal fund? Surely your eyes are not so blinded by blinking at the far-off sun that you cannot see the way to come by realization! Or is it that the way is so simple that you scorn to take it and prefer to remain a visionary and hug your chains? Be that as it may, the way is there. The holders of the land of Britain, in equity and law, are

tenants holding the common property. Let them be called upon to pay economic rent, for the privilege of holding, into the common fund and the common fund is forthwith established. There will then be provided for the realization of the vision of communal service a fund of hundreds of millions a year to start with. And as the communal activities proceed, so, year by year, will the fund grow.

### *THE COMMON FUND*

And the amount that each citizen shall pay into the common fund, when the holder of a portion of the common property is assessed, the law of rent decides it. Payment of the economic rent will fulfil his obligation to the community. He will pay what another would be willing to pay for the privilege of using the piece of the common property he holds. So, oh! visionary, you arrive at your common fund for common service, and that without taking a penny piece from the result of any man's individual effort. For the payment of economic rent is in itself a return for communal service without which land would have no value. Now you can proceed apace. From that fund in four years you can spend £1,000,000,000. Go ahead with your visions and embody them in fact, for it is realization that the people need, not the fabric of impalpable dreams.

### *POVERTY ABOLISHED*

And there is the greater vision of the world set free from poverty through each citizen being able easily to provide himself with the home, the clothing, the food, and all that makes glad the heart of man.

And, again, oh! visionary, take your eyes from the clouds; Manna dropped once from heaven, but to-day it rises up from the earth at the hand of labour. So, again, you must cast your eyes upon the ground at your feet if you would come by the realization of your vision. Remember that in law and in equity it is the land of all the citizens. But in the practice of injustice it is held in private possession by the few. And as all wealth comes from the land at the hand of labour, the men in possession determine how much wealth shall be produced. Their own needs satisfied, they lock up the storehouse and leave the millions bereft of opportunities to produce. But to unlock the storehouse there exists the simple way. These landlords, in law and equity, are tenants of the community. Make them tenants in fact. Exact from them the economic rent of the land they hold. Then they will act as tenants, they will produce from the land, or they will pass it on to another who will. And when to the millions employed, and to the millions unemployed, or partly employed, the storehouse of Nature is opened, when they are aided and cheered by the overflowing common fund provided

by natural law, think you, oh! visionary, that there will still be poverty in the land? If so, then Nature has denied to man, alone of animate creation, the opportunity to gratify the attributes with which she has endowed him. And that only the fool who says in his heart there is no God, will believe.

### *ACT BEFORE TOO LATE*

So in these days let us have visions, but let us hasten to their realization ere they fade away. For the abyss is opening, the skies darken, as mighty forces, the avengers of human folly, gather strength. Sacrifice can no longer be endured, let the land be restored to the community, and communal service, allied to individual effort in co-operation, will lift the curse of poverty from the land, and enable man to be, as Nature intended—Free. That is the message of the Commonwealth League, the vision it calls upon you to help bring to realization forthwith.

## THE COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE

### *OBJECT*

The foundation of a Commonwealth based on the establishment of the common right to the land by the payment by each landholder of the economic rent, which is the communal value of the site he holds.

Send for the manifesto.

Read the *Commonweal* (1d. weekly).

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