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Afraid of Losing His Farm.

If you had a ten-thousand-dollar farm that you had acquired by working hard for twenty years, denying yourself such luxuries as good clothes, shows, cigars, drinks, and exciting card games, which many of the working men have enjoyed in such profusion that they have nothing left, would you become a Socialist and see your farm confiscated?—A. G. Onton, Kentucky.

If I had worked hard for twenty years, wearing shabby clothes, being unable to attend the theatre and forced to forego cigars, drinks and games in which the rich indulge excessively; and if, by such stinginess and mistreatment of myself, I had accumulated a miserable ten-thousand-dollar reward, which would mean a saving of five hundred dollars a year at the expense of reasonable comfort and enjoyment, I would come to the conclusion that I had been robbed, and would be looking about to find the robber.

And I would not have to go farther than the Socialist analysis of the capitalist system to find him. I would find him in the capitalist who toils not, neither does he spin, yet indulges more freely in the things in which I had deprived myself than do the working men to whom you refer. Were I to see a Rockefeller, richer than Croesus and stronger than the government he defies and yet uses as a means of protecting and promoting his accumulations—were I to see him and many others of his kind accumulating riches and power, without rendering any service whatever in exchange for the exorbitant tribute they lay on honest industry, my dinky ten-thousand-dollar farm would look to me like thirty cents with a hole in it; and I would demand that the parasites who had fattened at my expense be deprived of their privileges, and be compelled to produce the equivalent of what they claim and hold.

If I had been able to accumulate but an average of five hundred dollars a year, and that by cheating myself out of a decent living for twenty years of the best part of my life, I would conclude that life is not worth while, if that is all it offers the man who does his part and more than his part in producing the good things of life. I would certainly be a pessimist under such conditions, if I could not see some way of saving my babies from such an experience when they reach the time when they will be compelled to go through the same grind, to no other purpose than to keep alive and to keep working.

The trouble with you is that you have put your whole life into a little patch of ground, through which your vitality has leaked into the coffers of the mighty; and you are hugging what is left, like an old hen might coddle and dote upon the empty shell from which her chick has emerged only to be devoured by some predatory beast or bird. The husks are more to you

in your present mental state than the kernal which has gone to provide an American duchess with her trosseau, or to stock the wine cellars of her plutocratic papa. Your few acres are so big in your estimation that they obscure the whole universe, and even befog your own mind. There is no danger of your becoming a Socialist, because of your abject, though needless, fear of separation from that to which you have devoted your life; but there is a growing possibility of your farm being confiscated by the same dear capitalists for whom you have labored so long and so hard.

The increasing number of tenant farmers predicts your finish; and the chances for your escape are by no means favorable, when you see in the census report the number of farm families who hire the land they till and the roof that shelters them. The process of capitalist confiscation is going on now. You may escape it for a few years or you may miss it altogether; but you are taking chances in a game that has already proved itself a loser for the many. You may struggle on in the faith that you will prove the exception; but what will you gain if you save your little farm and lose your life in drudgery? What will your children gain from such an inheritance? The wide-awake and intelligent farmers who are coming to Socialism are not so easily satisfied.

What do you suppose society would do with your farm if they were to assume collective ownership of it? Would they want to transform it into a hunting preserve, as the Rockefellers have thousands of acres in the Adirondacks? If so, for whose personal benefit could such a thing be done? Are you not intelligent enough to see that society could possibly have no interest in making a wilderness of your land? Is it not evident that the general welfare would be promoted by having the land kept under cultivation? And why would another be preferred to you? Do you think that the majority, who must make the proposed change if it is made, are so lacking in common sense and so deficient in appreciation of what is for the common good that they would throw you out only to throw someone else in?

But the Socialists do not wish to confiscate your farm. As a matter of fact, you have no farm to confiscate. By the receipt of a warrant deed you enter into a contract with the existing government, by which that government permits you to claim a sort of half ownership so long as you perform certain required stipulations. You must pay a tribute to that government in the form of tax; and if you fail the sheriff sells your land, thereby obliterating every right you have to it. You are now nothing more than a tenant under the government. Do you think that the operation of

Concluded on page three.

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Fenelon Falls Branch, **W. A. Bishop, Manager**