New Town, a proposal in agricultural, industrial, educational, civic, and social reconstruction

Hughes WR
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Author: Hughes WR

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NEW TOWN
A PROPOSAL IN AGRICULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL, EDUCATIONAL, CIVIC, AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

EDITED FOR THE NEW TOWN COUNCIL
BY
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27 CHANCERY LANE,
LONDON, W.C.2, March 1919.
This book is published with a twofold purpose. It is intended to promote thought and study in connection with the problems discussed and the ideals set forth. But it has also the more immediate object of enlisting support for the practical proposals made. The first steps towards the founding of the New Town have already been taken by the Pioneer Trust, Limited, and an appeal for the necessary capital will be found at the end of the book.
NEW TOWN

CHAPTER I

THE PROPOSAL

"Now I believe that the time has arrived when the principle of association, solemnly and universally promulgated, should become the starting point of all theoretical and practical studies having for their aim the progressive organisation of human society."—MAZZINI.

This little book contains the outlines of a proposal to found a new Country-Town in England in such a spirit and on such a plan as shall stir the hearts of all who are seeking after freedom and fellowship. It is therefore not merely a scheme of housing reform, but, with a far wider sweep, will be found to touch upon almost every branch of the great and difficult human art of living together. It is a proposal put forward by a body of men and women, after long and careful consideration, as a contribution towards that reconstruction and transformation of our national life after the war for which so many are working in a thousand different ways. The scheme has already advanced considerably beyond the paper stage. A "New Town Council," consisting of about fifty persons, is at work, preparing the way for the enterprise, and making its nature known. It is this Council which is responsible for the preparation and issue of the present book. Further, a corporate body, known as "The Pioneer Trust, Ltd.," has already been formed to prospect for a suitable site and to secure an option to purchase.

It will readily be gathered from the tone of the following chapters that, as promoters of this scheme,
we are aiming very high. In general, it may be said that our ultimate object is to provide the right conditions of life for the full development of human personality. But we recognise that this cannot be done at one stroke, nor by any formal plan, nor for one body of folk alone. We would, therefore, like to emphasise at the very outset that our proposals must be regarded as tentative in many respects, subject to many modifications of detail as the scheme develops; that we do not look to form a perfect and self-contained community—a little paradise of saints safe from the evils and dangers of a wicked world around! We know that the failings of the ordinary men and women who will live in New Town would make that impossible, and we wish its citizens to take an active and important part in the wider affairs of the county and the nation. It is largely because of the recognition of the need for sober beginnings and continuous progress towards better conditions that we lay so much stress on the educational proposals in connection with the scheme. Make these right, and other right conditions will follow in due course. Holding such provisos in mind, we yet assert our belief in the possibility of providing, by a united effort, a striking example of what can be achieved by voluntary association in improving the conditions of social life in an English town. We believe that, while action by political and semi-political methods is always necessary, yet a greater step forward can often be taken by a body of people who have the will to venture and the plan ready; and that, in fact, effective action on a larger scale, whether by legislation or otherwise, can, usually, only follow after such voluntary experiments have shown the way. An excellent example of this is seen in the way in which the work of Letchworth and the various co-operative and other voluntary housing schemes have made possible and easy the issue of such Local Government Board regulations as those which provide that in the