

Transcription, January 2015:

*The Leicester Chronicle and Leicestershire Mercury* 72(3719) (24 June 1882): 5b (anon.).

[p. 5b]

Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace has published through Messrs. Trübner and Co., Ludgate-hill, E.C., an ably written and instructive treatise on “Land Nationalisation, its Necessity and its Aims, being a comparison of the system of landlord and tenant, with that of occupying ownership in their influence on the well-being of the people.” The author dedicates this valuable work on the Land Question to the working-men of England, pointing out that its object is to advocate a reform which would not only abolish pauperism, but give to all who industriously seek it a fair share in the increased prosperity of their native land. Mr. Wallace devotes his first seven chapters to a clear and forcible exposition of the manifold evils of the existing system, effectively contrasting them with the advantages and success of occupying ownership. Naturally, however, the most interesting feature of the work is the author’s own solution of the land problem. Mr. Wallace, it may be cordially admitted, has not only well-thought-out and definite convictions upon this positive aspect of the subject, but formulates and expounds them with a logical clearness and consistency that leaves little to be desired. The author’s own cure for many of the ills to which the body politic is heir is as thorough as it is simple. It is to make the land—apart, however, from the improvements upon it—the property of the State, by paying to the owners and their living heirs an annuity or a fixed sum of purchase money, both to be ascertained by valuation. The tenant is then to purchase or otherwise acquire the tenant-right, and by thenceforth paying a fixed quit rent he is to become and continue the occupying owner, with power to sell or bequeath his interest, but without power of subletting. Mr. Wallace at some length deals with the various difficulties and objections that may be urged against this scheme, contending that, taken as a whole, it is the only one that will remove all the removable evils of the existing system, and best promote the welfare and progress of the whole community. Whatever views the reader may entertain as to Mr. Wallace’s solution of the difficulty, one thing at least all will cordially admit. It is this—that the author evinces a thorough mastery over this complicated question, and handles it with marked ability and tact.

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*The Alfred Russel Wallace Page*, Charles H. Smith, 2015.