

FOREWORD.

THE sole object of this book is to bring home to the reader the fundamental importance of the Land Question as offering the master-key to the solution of the Social Problem of the twentieth century.

Every country today produces, or with the knowledge and powers at its command could produce, wealth more than sufficient to satisfy the rational desires of all its people. The problem of production, therefore, may be regarded as practically solved. It is the problem of distribution alone that still awaits solution. The dire social ills, which to many may seem the inevitable accompaniment of our advance in material civilization—insufficient earnings, unwilling employment, undeserved helpless poverty, with its attendant train of misery, vice, and crime—are all directly attributable to the prevailing inequitable distribution of wealth. Therefore it is that the Social Problem of the twentieth century may be briefly summarized as: How to secure an equitable distribution of the national wealth among those who, with brain or with muscle, directly and indirectly, contribute toward its production. All such wealth has to be produced by labor from land, including under this latter term all the natural forces and opportunities inherent in land. Hence it is that the social customs regulating and determining the relations of the masses of the people to the land of the country they inhabit, necessarily forever remain the main factor determining their social, political, industrial, and economic conditions. Hence it is, also, that the solution of the Social Problem involves the solution of the Land Question; and that to understand the Social Problem involves the study of the Land Question. To encourage and to promote such study is the aim of this book.