

AUTHOR'S EDITION



2 2736259.

P R E F A C E .

The object of this book has been so fully explained in the first chapter, that it scarcely seems necessary to inflict a Preface upon the reader. Yet there are some things which could not well be stated in the body of the work, and which it may not be amiss here briefly to set forth.

My purpose has been to present the public in this volume with as complete and faithful a picture of contemporary England as the limits of space and opportunity would allow. That I might do this the better, I have devoted much time to the collection of materials, I have made several visits to different parts of the country, I have conversed with, and lived amongst, many varieties of people. The facts stated are those of observation and experience, and whatever there is of description in this volume may, at least, claim to be a transcript of what I have seen.

While I have endeavored to be as accurate as possible in my narrative of the general condition of England, and in my account of the influences which are at work among us, and which may, perhaps, determine our future, so have I studiously avoided all historical retrospect when it did not appear absolutely necessary for a right understanding of our present state. Thus, too, while criticism and the expression of personal opinion have seemed occasionally unavoidable, I have aimed at being scrupulously sparing of both.

Of the plan of the work, I will only here say these words. Those who honor me with a continuous perusal of its pages

will, I venture to think, perceive that its chapters are closely and logically connected by a pervading identity of purpose. There are certain central ideas in the book round which I have endeavored to group my facts and descriptions, and which I have explained at sufficient length in the introductory chapter. Whether the point of view there taken be right or wrong, it is at least that which has been taken consistently, and I hope it will have the effect of imparting to the entire work a certain air of unity and cohesion. Again, though I cannot hope to have escaped sins of omission, I would venture respectfully to be allowed to remind those who may not find all their conceptions realized that this book is not an encyclopedia, but a survey; and I would further crave permission to add that in some cases I have found it necessary to treat of particular subjects elsewhere than in those chapters in which, from their titles, such subjects might be expected to have a place. Thus, though there is no chapter exclusively devoted to the literature of the day in all its branches, I trust that a fair general view of that literature and its tendencies will be found in the three chapters, Religious England, Popular Culture and Literature, English Philosophy and Thought, which should be read together, and to which I might perhaps add that on Popular Amusements.

While the information contained in this volume is for the most part the result of study of the facts at first hand, I have also profited greatly from the perusal of official documents and other treatises. Whenever a statement is made from Blue Books of a kind likely to challenge criticism or provoke controversy, I think I shall be found to have pointed out where it may be found in the original. In other cases I have not thought it necessary to load my page with those references, whose frequent repetition chiefly serves to distract the reader's attention. The parliamentary papers which I have found of most assistance are the reports of the Commission on the employment of children, young persons, and

women in agriculture of 1867, of the Factory and Workshops Acts Commission of 1876, of the report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Truck system of 1871, as well as the periodical reports of the Educational Department, of the Inspectors of Factories, and of the Poor Law Board, and the journals of the Royal Agricultural Society. As regards the other works to which I am mainly indebted, they will be found, I think, in almost every instance named in the text or in a footnote. I would here add that I have derived many valuable facts and suggestions from the works of Mr. Clifford and Mr. T. E. Kebbel on the agricultural laborer, as also from the sketches of the same original by the author of the "Game-keeper at Home."

I have also to express my best thanks for the invaluable assistance which, in the production of this work, I have received from many friends, and from some who, till it was undertaken, were strangers. Without this help the book could not have been written. The list of those who have so helped me is long, and I can only here mention a few representative names.

I am deeply indebted to the several eminent noblemen, the management of whose estates forms the subject of Chapter IV., for the facilities afforded me for investigating their systems of territorial administration.

I am not less grateful to the following, whose names follow in alphabetical order, for much valuable information and advice in different parts of my work:—Lord Carnarvon; Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.; Mr. G. H. Croad, Clerk of the London School Board; Bishop Claughton; Sir Charles Dilke, M.P.; Mr. Grant Duff, M.P.; Mr. T. H. Farrer, Board of Trade; Canon Fleming; Mr. W. E. Forster, M.P.; Mr. Harrison, Assistant Clerk of the Privy Council; Mr. R. G. W. Herbert, Colonial Office; Sir John Lubbock, M.P.; Sir Louis Mallet, Indian Office; Professor D. Marks; Mr. Archibald Milman; Mr. A. J. Mundella, M.P.; Mr. Albert Pell, M.P.; Mr. C. Lennox

Peel, Clerk of the Council; the Rev. Dr. Morley Punshon; Mr. C. S. Read, M.P.; the Rev. Dr. Stoughton; Mr. Edward James Smith; Sir Julius Vogel; Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, M.P.

Many of these gentlemen have not only given me or assisted me to obtain much useful information, but have most obligingly read through and revised various portions of the proofs. Hence, I trust I have secured a further guarantee against serious mistakes, and so invested the book with an additional value.

I have further gratefully to acknowledge more specific assistance than this. The chapter on Commercial and Financial England (VIII.) is the work of Mr. J. Scot Henderson; for that on Criminal England (XIV.) I am indebted to Major Arthur Griffiths, Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons; the Law Courts (XXIV.) has been contributed by Mr. W. D. I. Foulkes, Barrister-at-Law of the Inner Temple; the review of English Philosophy and Thought (XXVII.) is from the pen of Mr. W. L. Courtney, Fellow and Lecturer of New College, Oxford, and author of "An Examination of Mill"; while in the chapter on the Services I have been largely assisted in the naval portion by Captain Cyprian A. G. Bridge, R.N.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.