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THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY
AND THE
ENCLOSURE OF COMMON FIELDS

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OPEN FIELDS AT EPWORTH, ISLE OF AXHOLME.

Frontispiece.

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THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY AND THE ENCLOSURE OF COMMON FIELDS

BY

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*WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF CARRINGTON, K.G., G.C.M.G., Etc.
President of the Board of Agriculture*

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE investigations embodied in this book were begun in 1894, on the suggestion of Mr. Graham Wallas, and at the request of Mr. J. A. Spender. They were continued in subsequent years, in conjunction with the London School of Economics, and the results were summarised in a thesis entitled "The Enclosure of Common Fields in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," which was submitted to the University of London in 1904, and approved as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Science in Economics. That thesis consisted in the first place of a series of maps, partially reproduced in this volume through the kind assistance of the Royal Geographical Society; and in the second place of manuscript matter which has been revised for publication in the form of this volume and under the present title. The original maps are in the custody of the London School of Economics, and can be seen by those who desire to examine them. They include a series of county maps, on which parishes in which common fields have been enclosed by Act of Parliament are coloured and marked according to the date of enclosure, and maps illustrating the process of Parliamentary enclosure, and the working of the common field system. Those who are interested in the enclosure history of any particular county may also be recommended to consult the Victoria County History.

It is my pleasant duty here to gratefully acknowledge my obligations to the two gentlemen above mentioned for the original impulse to study the process of the destruction and decay of English village communities; to the London School of Economics; and in particular to its first Director, Mr. W. A. S. Hewins, its present Director, Mr. H. J. Mackinder, and Mr. Hubert Hall,