

P R E F A C E .

I HAVE been asked to write a line of introduction to this book, and gladly comply, as its primary purpose is to remind our children that they inhabit not an island but an Empire. There are few political facts, perhaps none, that should exercise so great an influence on their future lives.

For a collection of States spread over every region of the earth, but owning one head and one flag, is even more important as an influence than as an Empire. From either point of view it is a world-wide fact of supreme significance; but in the one capacity it affects only its own subjects, and in the other all mankind. With the Empire statesmen are mainly concerned; in the influence every individual can and must have a part. Influence is based on character, and it is on the character of each child that grows into manhood within British limits that the future of our Empire rests.

If we and they are narrow and selfish, averse to labour, impatient of necessary burdens, factious and self-indulgent: if we see in public affairs not our Empire but our country, not our country but our parish, and in our parish our house, the Empire is doomed. For its maintenance requires work and sacrifice and intelligence.

If, on the other hand, we aim at the diffusion of the blessings of industry undisturbed by war, if we aim at peace secured, not by humiliation but preponderance, we need to preserve our Empire not for ourselves only but for