

course of the work. What I maintain is, that when a work is written on English Law, which is complete in point of arrangement, the long series of labours which are now just commencing will have been brought very nearly to a conclusion.

LONDON, *October, 1871.*

### PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

I AM encouraged to hope that this book may still be of some use to students. It is true that there has been a slight tendency of late to underrate the importance of a close inquiry into the meaning of legal words and phrases. But this tendency will pass away: and the historical research which at present engages most attention will in the meantime have done good service. The recently published treatise of Pollock and Wright on Possession is a most valuable contribution to an investigation which I hope to see carried further, and it has, I feel sure, greatly gained by the historical inquiries which preceded it.

I am much indebted to Mr. Montague, of Oriel College, Oxford, and to Mr. Sheppard, of Trinity College, Cambridge, for the suggestions and corrections which they have sent to me.

OXFORD, *August, 1889.*