

PREFACE

WHEN I was invited by the Provost of University College, University of London, a short time ago to deliver some lectures on Australia I readily responded, as it afforded me personally pleasure to make known the resources and possibilities of the country in which I was born and in which I have spent the greater part of my life. But the subject appealed to me also from a wider and National point of view. Perhaps in no portion of the world has the genius for self-government been given greater opportunity for development than in Australia. Many novel and intricate problems of constitutional, industrial, and general social interest have been boldly undertaken by the Commonwealth and its constituent States—sometimes with success, sometimes not. In these days of reconstruction the experiments of our democratic kinsmen overseas are of absorbing interest to us, and the successful experience of these progressive communities should be of the utmost value when the people of the British Isles are confronted with the solution of similar difficulties.

It became impracticable, however, within the compass of two or three lectures even cursorily to introduce the many aspects from which Australia can be advantageously studied, and I have been encouraged to expand the scope of my survey and to embody the results in the present modest effort, which I commend to the acceptance of those who are not indifferent to the vital part which will be played by the Overseas Dominions in the development—and I trust consolidation—of the great Commonwealth of Nations.

We are now on the threshold of a new era. Australians have been revealed to us as a people possessing those qualities