

## P R E F A C E.

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HAVING been consulted by the family and friends of the late Lord Elgin as to the best mode of giving to the world some record of his life, and having thus contracted a certain responsibility in the work now laid before the public, I have considered it my duty to prefix a few words by way of Preface to the following pages.

On Lord Elgin's death it was thought that a career intimately connected with so many critical points in the history of the British Empire, and containing in itself so much of intrinsic interest, ought not to be left without an enduring memorial. The need of this was the more felt because Lord Elgin was prevented, by the peculiar circumstances of his public course, from enjoying the familiar recognition to which he would else have been entitled amongst his contemporaries in England. 'For' (if I may use the words which I have employed on a former occasion) 'it is one of the sad consequences of a statesman's life spent like his in the constant service of his country on arduous foreign missions, that in his own land, in his own circle, almost in his own home, his place is occupied by others, his very face is forgotten; he can maintain no permanent ties with those who rule the opinion, or obtain the mastery, of the day; he has identified