

A PREFATORY NOTE

THE map of England is an epitome of English history, but it wants reading. This little book is an attempt by a man who had studied it lovingly to help others to get in the way of understanding it for themselves. The local story of an English county or town shows one many things that the ordinary history-books do not and often cannot attempt to notice. It makes their dry bones live. It gives meaning to a number of isolated and unconsidered facts. It has a charm of its own that attracts many who have not the opportunity of doing good historical work on a larger scale.

Grant Allen had special gifts for writing such a guide to local English history as this book really is. He had a good eye for the "lie of the land"; he was a perpetual observer, and a born expositor and interpreter. He had a first-hand knowledge of many of the documents on which much of our early history rests. He wrote brightly and clearly without seeking to efface his own individuality. He loved his subject for itself, and had thought it over in his many journeys and resting-places all over England.

It was a pleasant thing to go a walk with him. The country was to him a living being, developing under his eyes, and the history of its past was to be discovered from the conditions of its present. He would put