

PREFACE

A FEW words will be enough to explain the limited purpose of this little book.

My object has been to inquire into the English law existing at the present day in order to find out whether we can fairly say that it recognizes anything like general principles in its treatment of the rights and liabilities of men acting together in association. From this it will be seen that certain questions, however interesting and important in themselves, fall outside the scope of this essay. Thus, for example, we are not here concerned with the historical problem of the origin of corporations, nor with the question of how our theory of collective personality (if we have one) has been developed in the course of time. Nor, again, have I ventured into the domain of comparative jurisprudence in order to analyse the rules and doctrines that may prevail in other systems. Still less have I attempted to grapple with the problem, so fascinating to philosophers and so dangerous to lawyers, of the 'group-will'.

It is, however, obvious that the interest of this branch of law does and should extend far beyond