

THE BRITISH COAL INDUSTRY

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

ARISTOTLE once adventured the opinion that things with which the political science is conversant possess so great an ambiguity that we must be satisfied if we can indicate the truth by a rude adumbration and if our conclusions are similar in accuracy to the things themselves.

There is certainly so great a diversity in the points of view from which the facts pertaining to the present conditions of the coal industry may be viewed as to make both the presentation of these facts and the deducing of conclusions therefrom a matter of singular difficulty so that men equally endowed may arrive at conclusions the most diverse. It is so largely a matter of the point of view, and that depends hardly so much upon reason as upon sentiment.

This being the state of our case, it is not impertinent to require before plunging *in medias res* somewhat into the history of the industry, so that