

## PREFACE

IN the midst of the great industrial developments which followed the close of the Napoleonic wars the claims of the rural population were to a large extent overlooked. So amazing was the realized and prospective wealth of a "nation of shopkeepers" who had made good their claim to control the trade routes of the world that the eyes of the nation were turned almost exclusively upon the towns and seaports. In the present century again, amid the ever-increasing volume of England's trade and her abounding riches, accompanied at the same time by a social unrest of unprecedented force, the attention of our country and those who guide its destiny is chiefly centred upon urban interests and urban demands. Trade rivals have menaced or destroyed some of our monopolies, and our earlier claim to be the workshop of the world must nowadays necessarily submit to modification ; but we have not yet as a nation learnt the true value of our fertile fields and the men who cultivate them. Agriculture, indeed,