

PREFACE.

TO measure the South African War of 1899-1900 merely by the population of the two Boer Republics, would necessitate its consideration as an unimportant contest in comparison with the great international conflicts of the century. To measure it by the real power of the Dutch in South Africa, under present conditions, and by the principles involved in its inception and prosecution, makes it a struggle which rivals in importance the Crimean War, the American Civil War or the Franco-Prussian conflict. In the first of these, Great Britain, France and Sardinia united to resist the dangerous designs and aggressive policy of Russia which threatened their power in the Mediterranean and the British route to India through its intended seizure or acquisition of Constantinople. In the second, the United States was fighting a great conflict for national unity. In the third, Prussia averted a campaign of "On to Berlin" by speedy and successful military action.

All of these elements find a place in the South African War. The policy of President Kruger, President Steyn and the Afrikaner Bund, of Cape Colony, has been developing for years into a dangerous and combined effort for the creation of a United Dutch South Africa and the seizure of Cape Town—one of the chief stations of British commercial and maritime power. Mr. Chamberlain precipitated matters, so far as the Cape Colony Dutch were concerned, by a policy of firmness to which they were unaccustomed at the hands of the Colonial Office and which, cautious