

## PREFACE.

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MY DEAR LADS,

YOU may be told perhaps that there is no good to be obtained from tales of fighting and bloodshed,—that there is no moral to be drawn from such histories. Believe it not. War has its lessons as well as Peace. You will learn from tales like this that determination and enthusiasm can accomplish marvels, that true courage is generally accompanied by magnanimity and gentleness, and that if not in itself the very highest of virtues, it is the parent of almost all the others, since but few of them can be practised without it. The courage of our forefathers has created the greatest empire in the world around a small and in itself insignificant island; if this empire is ever lost, it will be by the cowardice of their descendants.

At no period of her history did England stand so high in the eyes of Europe as in the time whose events are recorded in this volume. A chivalrous king and an even more chivalrous prince had infected the whole people with their martial spirit, and the result was that their armies were for a time invincible, and the most astonishing successes were gained against numbers which would appear overwhelming. The victories of Cressy and Poitiers may be to some extent accounted for by superior generalship and discipline on the