

P R E F A C E.

THE history of these men is largely the history of Great Britain during the last half of the nineteenth century. With Peel begins the relief of Ireland through Catholic Emancipation; with Gladstone, better land laws, and perchance self-government for Ireland. With Palmerston is told the story of the Crimean War; with John Bright, the struggle for free trade, and his noble defence of America in our Civil War; with Forster, the great gift to England of elementary education; with Shaftesbury, the elevation of labor through legislative enactments and the most generous sympathy; with Beaconsfield and with Fawcett, victory over obstacles almost insurmountable, the race question, and blindness. If, as Froude says, "those whom the world agrees to call great are those who have done or produced something of permanent value to humanity," then the statesmen sketched in this volume may well be called great. They loved and served their country, and have helped her to reach an exalted position among the nations.

S. K. B.