The Origin & Growth of the English Colonies and of Their System of Government

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AN INTRODUCTION TO MR. C. P. LUCAS’S HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE BRITISH COLONIES

BY

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‘A SHORT HISTORY OF BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY,’ ETC.

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THE 'Introduction to a Historical Geography of the British Colonies,' which was written by my friend Mr. C. P. Lucas in 1887, being out of print, and the author being unable to prepare a new Edition, I have at his request and that of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press undertaken the work. In view of the great development of colonial questions, which has taken place in the interval between 1887 and the present time, and of the fact that several books have been published, giving a general and succinct account of the British colonies, it was thought advisable, not merely to edit and revise the former book, but somewhat to enlarge its scope, while incorporating the old matter, where it covered the same ground.

It has been sought to deal, however inadequately, with some of the "wetopsiau, which confront the student of colonial history. General histories assume a knowledge of economic facts which is often absent. Some grasp of questions, such as the mercantile system and the labour problem in new countries, seems desirable before entering upon a detailed study of the political history. Again, a history of the British colonies, as they are, should find room in an Introduction for a brief consideration of that other colonial empire, which was English and is now an English-speaking World-Power. Lastly, some explanation of the manner in which the system of colonial government was developed in the course of three centuries may usefully precede a study of the historical facts. For any views which are expressed upon debateable questions I am solely responsible.
A short list of authorities is given at the end of each chapter: such list being, for present purposes, as short as possible. The most elaborate and exhaustive bibliography on colonies and colonization is, so far as I know, contained in a Report on ‘Colonial Administration 1800–1900,’ prepared in 1901 by Mr. O. P. Austen, Chief of Bureau of Statistics, Washington, for the Congress of the United States; but a very full list of books will be found in Mr. Ireland’s *Tropical Colonization*. In spite of the many volumes which have been written on colonial questions, the standard works of Seeley, Sir C. Dilke, and M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu will not easily be superseded. The Preface to the Introduction in 1887 referred to the invaluable articles in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, on economic questions the articles in Mr. R. I. Palgrave’s *Dictionary of Political Economy* will be found no less valuable.

HUGH EDWARD EGERTON.

*August, 1903.*