

**THE BEGINNINGS OF
ENGLISH OVERSEAS
ENTERPRISE; A
PRELUDE TO THE EMPIRE**

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The beginnings of English overseas enterprise; a prelude to the empire by Sir C. P. Lucas

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SIR C. P. LUCAS

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BY

SIR C. P. LUCAS

K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

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PREFACE

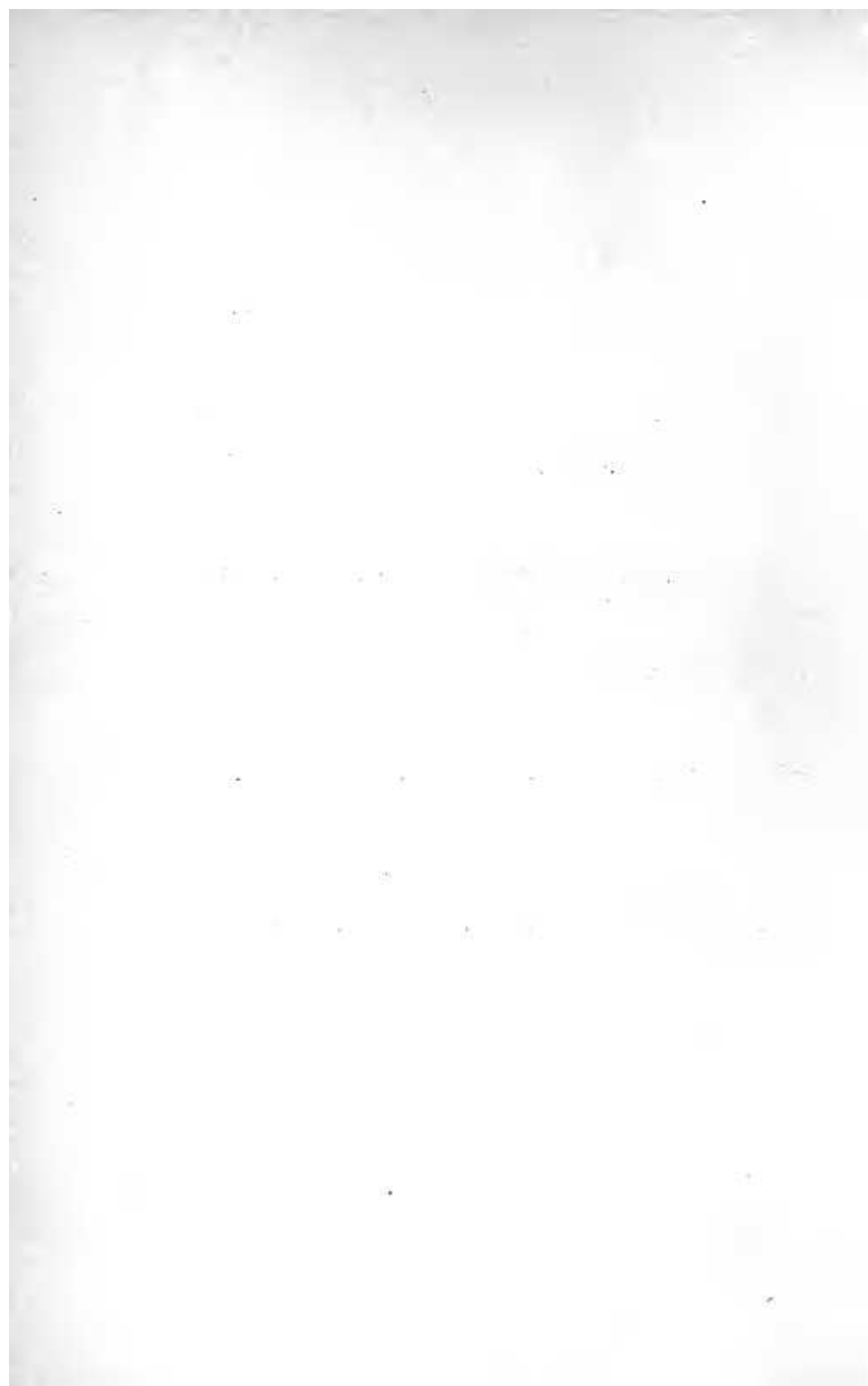
THIS book is intended to give an account, from standard sources, of the earliest English associations, in connexion with trade beyond the seas, principally of the Merchant Adventurers of England, whose importance seems to me to have been strangely minimized or ignored in most text-books of English or British history. Much of the book is concerned with times later than the Middle Ages, my object being to try to illustrate the continuity of English history and the cardinal fact that the British Empire is the result of growth. A large number of notes and references have been included, in the hope of saving some time and trouble to students, of what I have found to be a most difficult and laborious subject. I am indebted to Miss K. M. Eliot for help in connexion with Henry the Fourth's Charter.

C. P. LUCAS.

March, 1917.

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CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

AT all times Britain must have had some overseas trade, some dealings with the mainland which lies so near its shores. Coming and going of men implies interchange of commodities of one kind or another, traffic being scanty when there is anarchy on land and piracy at sea, plentiful when there is strong rule on land and vigilant guardianship of the water.

British tin appears to have been exploited and exported for some three centuries before the Christian era, finding its way across the Straits of Dover and through France to Marseilles. Under Roman rule tin, lead, and iron were worked and exported, lead, mentioned by both Caesar and Tacitus, being, it would seem, a special attraction.¹ Among other exports in Roman times, corn was sent over to Gaul and to the Rhine country, while British cloth is mentioned in an Edict of Diocletian.² London, according to Tacitus, was even at the beginning of the Roman occupation of the island, in A. D. 61,

Early
British
traffic.

¹ See Mommsen, *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, trans., 1886 ed., vol. i, p. 176.

² Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain*, 3rd ed., 1915, p. 77.