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G. P. GOOCH

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No. 20

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HISTORY OF OUR
TIME c4

1885—1911

George Peabody
BY
G. P. GOOCH, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH DEMOCRATIC IDEAS IN THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY," "ANNALS OF
POLITICS AND CULTURE," ETC.



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P R E F A C E

WITHIN the narrow limits of this little volume it is obviously impossible to describe every event and to trace every tendency of the last twenty-five years. Much that is of interest, and not a little of importance, must be sacrificed to the necessity of exhibiting major occurrences in bold relief. Thus the reader will search these pages in vain for the history of Belgium and Holland, of Switzerland and Scandinavia, of Australia and New Zealand.

The first six chapters, which record the development of the European Powers and explain their relations to one another, form the core of the book. In the case of each country we find some dominant characteristic which gives a certain unity to the story. In Great Britain it is the rise and decline of Imperialism. In France it is the defense of the Republic against its foes, within and without. In the Latin South it is the wrestle with the evil legacy of the past. In Germany it is the emergence of world ambitions. In Austria-Hungary it is the

racial conflict. In Russia it is the struggle for a constitution. In the Near East it is the eternal strife of the crescent and the cross.

The latter part of the book is mainly devoted to a bird's-eye survey of Asia, Africa, and America. The closing chapter briefly sketches a few of the movements—political, social and religious—which know nothing of geographical or racial boundaries.

The infinitely complex and variegated life of the last generation tempts the historian to crowd his canvas with more colour than it will carry. The modifications of economic structure, the ferment of thought, the sensational triumphs of physical science, the experiments in literature and art,—these and many other phenomena clamour for notice. But a small book is never improved by cultivating the ambitions of a large one. If it is to have a character and a unity of its own, its author must frankly recognize the limits within which he has to work. For this reason I have made this little volume in the main a record of political action, though fully conscious that politics are but one aspect of the many-coloured tissue of civilisation.

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