

**A SHORT HISTORY OF
AGRICULTURE
IN THE
BRITISH COLONIES**

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BY

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OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1950

Oxford University Press, Amen House, London E.C.4

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON

BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS CAPE TOWN

Geoffrey Cumberlege, Publisher to the University

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

HISTORY is too often regarded as consisting of politics, with a little economics. Inadequate consideration is given to technical changes, and especially modern scientific discoveries, which have altered not only economic conditions but the homely life and mental outlook of human populations, and in some cases have involved changes in the ecology of our species. The story of agriculture in the British colonies has never been told as a whole, and the purpose of the present short account is to draw attention to this neglected aspect of their history. The emphasis has been deliberately laid throughout on the technical history of agriculture, and only sufficient economics introduced to make the story intelligible, as this aspect has been more adequately treated in existing text-books.

My intention has been, broadly, to confine this history to those territories which fall within the purview of the British Colonial Office; but some reference has been made also to the High Commission territories in South Africa, to the condominium of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, to Southern Rhodesia, and to what is now the self-governing Dominion of Ceylon, which has played such an important part in the history of tropical agriculture. None but incidental references have been made to the sub-continent of India, which would deserve a treatment to itself, or to the remaining Dominions, which lie for the most part in the zone of temperate agriculture and are involved in quite different problems. I have also excluded from this survey territories which have been at one time or another under British administration but are now no longer so—the thirteen North American colonies; Tangier, Minorca, and the Ionian Islands; Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq;

Burma, Java, Weihaiwei. The history has been brought down to the end of 1948.

To avoid encumbering the text with a mass of footnotes, I have relegated all references to a selected bibliography at the end of each section of the book, listing titles among which will be found authority for all but the most minor facts quoted in the text. Footnotes have only been used to supply references where passages are quoted verbally or nearly so.

My grateful acknowledgements are due to Professor G. E. Blackman and Mr. G. E. Metcalfe, who were kind enough to read through the manuscript of the book and made valuable comments; but the responsibility for all faults remains mine.

G. B. M.

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