

## 2 RELIGION, COLONISING AND TRADE

men and women are conscious agents—they have motives for what they make or mar. It may therefore be of interest to try to trace from some of the records of the men of action and of the writings of the different periods, how far the motives and methods, which were at work in connexion with the Old Empire down to 1783, were of a piece with the views and forces which have since prevailed. The question may possibly be thought to answer itself. Human beings remain human beings all the time with, in the main, the same motives determining actions shaped according to change of time and circumstance. Moreover, conditions of life in modern days and in a crowded and ultra-democratic world have become so immeasurably and progressively more complex than they were a century and a half ago, that it may be considered futile to set earlier and later times side by side. On the other hand no harm can be done, and possibly some useful guidance may be given or suggestion made by comparison and contrast.

It will be readily admitted that the sixteenth century, the hundred years before the British Empire actually began to exist, is an integral part of the history of that Empire. No introduction ever was more completely part and parcel of a whole work than was this Tudor prelude. On the other hand, as historians have pointed out, in the case of the British Empire, far more than other empires, the line is clearly drawn between the preliminary age of adventure and the succeeding age of permanent beginnings: 'Never was there a set of men worse adapted for the sober business of establishing a colony or governing a subject race; yet they