

ADAM SMITH

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Adam Smith by Francis W. Hirst

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FRANCIS W. HIRST

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ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS

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PREFATORY NOTE

EARLY in 1793 Dugald Stewart read at two meetings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh his "Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith." Written with the sympathetic pen of a friend and disciple in the Corinthian style that Stewart loved, the memoir was too good to be superseded. A century passed, and in 1895 appeared Mr. John Rae's exhaustive *Life of Adam Smith*. Mr. Rae's comprehensive researches cropped the ground so close that little seemed to have been left for his successors to glean. But the discovery of Smith's *Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue, and Arms*, edited by Mr. Edwin Cannan and published in 1896, has furnished new and important materials.

Of Smith's innumerable critics and commentators, Bagehot, Oncken, Ingram, and Hasbach seem to me to have understood him best. The misdirected erudition of some others has only proved the importance of allowing him to be his own interpreter.

Dr. David Murray of Glasgow has very kindly read portions of my proofs, and has contributed most generously from his wonderful store of learning.

F. W. H.

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