

**HISTORICAL GLEANINGS;  
A SERIES OF SKETCHES:  
MONTAGU, WALPOLE,  
ADAM SMITH, COBBETT**

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Historical gleanings; a series of sketches: Montagu, Walpole, Adam Smith, Cobbett by James E. Thorold Rogers

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**JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS**

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HISTORICAL GLEANINGS.

# HISTORICAL GLEANINGS

A SERIES OF SKETCHES

*MONTAGU. WALPOLE. ADAM SMITH.*

*COBBETT.*

BY

JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS

London

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1869

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## P R E F A C E.

THE object which I have before me in the following sketches, is to present a set of historical facts, grouped round a principal figure. The essays are in the form of lectures. Three out of the four were read at Newcastle-on-Tyne, before the Philosophical Society; and at Rochdale, before the Pioneers. The fourth, the subject of which is Walpole, was read to an audience in University College, London.

The history of the eighteenth century ought to have greater practical interest in the eyes of Englishmen than that of any other epoch in their annals. During this time, the political system of the country grew up, despite the imperfections which characterised the machinery of Parliament and the scandals which accompanied nearly every administration. The same century witnessed the growth of national wealth, in the expansion of this country's commerce and manufactures, despite the erroneous economical theories which found acceptance with most thinkers and almost every statesman. That negative side of

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politics and economy which gathers its inferences from the refutation of persistent fallacies, and which therefore assists towards dissipating other delusions, which are not yet abandoned, was developed in the first instance from the practice and the theory of the same age.

If any writer could draw a series of sketches, which might enable the general reader to arrive at a clear conception of the social and economical condition of our immediate ancestors, he might make truth as entertaining as fiction, and be instructive as well as agreeable. To effect such a result, he will need certain powers. He must have skill in grouping his facts, as well as the art of lively composition. But the chief part of his labour will consist in the collection of materials.

I can lay claim to no higher merit than that of diligent collection. I cannot assume that I have made the subjects which I am treating in the following pages as clear to my reader as they are to myself. But I am persuaded that the writer who possesses the gift of historical exposition, might follow the method pursued in these sketches with advantage, and thus make the past live again to his reader.

I have not undergirded my pages with a single note; have not cited the host of authorities to whom I am indebted for my facts. There is, I think, a tiresome affectation in such a cumber of references,

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when the originals are open to the study of all. If I had to serve up a heap of strawberries on one dish, I see no reason why I should gravely present my guest with a heap of stalks on another dish.

I make no apology for the economical reasonings which are interspersed in these lectures. In treating any historical topic it is necessary to acknowledge wars and dynastic combinations, but the best part of historical teaching does not, I think, consist in the more prominent events which have occupied the attention of those who lived among such facts or who were their agents, but in expounding the moral and material progress of society, and thereupon such parts of history as are too customary to attract superficial attention. It is very rarely the case that persons are able to form a just estimate of the time in which they are living. It is certain that the only means of arriving at even an imperfect estimate is to be obtained by a survey of society from its economical aspect.

JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS.

OXFORD, *June 5, 1869.*

