

**HISTORY OF THE TAXES  
ON KNOWLEDGE: THEIR  
ORIGIN AND REPEAL,  
VOL. I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649605347

History of the Taxes on Knowledge: Their Origin and Repeal, Vol. I by Collet Dobson Collet & George Jacob Holyoake

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**COLLET DOBSON COLLET & GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE**

**HISTORY OF THE TAXES  
ON KNOWLEDGE: THEIR  
ORIGIN AND REPEAL,  
VOL. I**



*HISTORY OF THE TAXES ON KNOWLEDGE*



COLLET DOBSON COLLET.

HISTORY  
OF THE  
TAXES ON KNOWLEDGE  
*THEIR ORIGIN AND REPEAL*

BY  
COLLET DOBSON COLLET

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE

VOL. I

London  
T. FISHER UNWIN  
PATERNOSTER SQUARE

MDCCCXCIX

(1899)





## INTRODUCTION.

---

IT is an inadequate thing to say that the author of this book was a remarkable man. Remarkable men are common. But unusual men are not common, and Collet was an unusual man. For more than fifty years I was associated with him in public affairs, and I never knew any one so discerning as he in choosing a public cause, so incessant in promoting it, with such plenitude of resource for attaining it. He had absolute disinterestedness—never having concern for himself, and never seeking any remuneration for public work he did ; though sometimes—not often—something came to him from the consideration of others, but never on his solicitation and never adequate to his ceaseless services. Many a time he has come to my house at midnight to discuss some new point he thought of importance. He had all the qualities of a great secretary, as the narrative of this book shows. He habitually sought

the opinion of the Committee before acting in its name. He read every letter to them and every document proposed to be issued. When they differed on points of policy, or terms of expression, he deferred to the views of others, not only with acquiescence, but willingness. During the more than twenty years in which I have been chairman of the Travelling Tax Abolition Committee (which succeeded the agitation for untaxed knowledge) I remember no instance to the contrary of his ready deference. In the Twelve Years' Contest of which these pages are the History, his fertility in suggestion was of great advantage to the Committee. From among them Mr. Bright, Mr. Gibson, or Mr. Cobden (who had an instinct of fitness) would select the most suited to the purpose in hand. Early in life Mr. Collet studied for the law, and retained a passion for it, which was a constant advantage in dealing with Acts which during a hundred and forty-three years had enchained the Press. No one now remains who could tell, or so fully interpret what took place in those now distant days, since his were the only hands through which all the documents passed—and who was present at consultations unknown to the public.

What will strike every reader of this book is its conspicuous dispassionateness. It is free from all injustice of imputation. Its abiding charm is its

scrupulous fairness to every Government with which we came in contact, and to heads of departments with whom unceasing war was waged. Their personal honour was never confused with the mischievous Acts they were compelled to enforce. The History is that of a model agitation in its thoroughness and steadfastness, in fairness and courtesy.

The reader will meet with several passages referring to the important services of Mr. John Francis, publisher of the *Athenæum*. As early as 1830 he was struck by the inscription on the *Examiner* newspaper of these words: "Paper and print 3½d., Taxes on Knowledge 3½d., price 7d." This inspired Mr. Francis with the determination to accelerate the extinction of the malevolent imposts upon Intelligence—a determination which never ceased to animate him. Nineteen years later, in January, 1849, he took an office in Salisbury Street, and on the 5th of May, the London Association, founded by him for the Repeal of the Advertisement Duty, issued its first circular (two months after the formation of the Taxes on Knowledge Abolition Committee, whose proceedings are the main subject of this History). William Ewart, the member for Dumfries, was the president of the new Association, John Francis its treasurer, John McEnteer its