

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES AND
RECOLLECTIONS (WITH EARLY
LETTERS) OF HENRY JOHN
STEPHEN SMITH M.A., F.R.S.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649444687

Biographical Sketches and Recollections (with Early Letters) of Henry John Stephen Smith
M.A., F.R.S. by Henry John Stephen Smith

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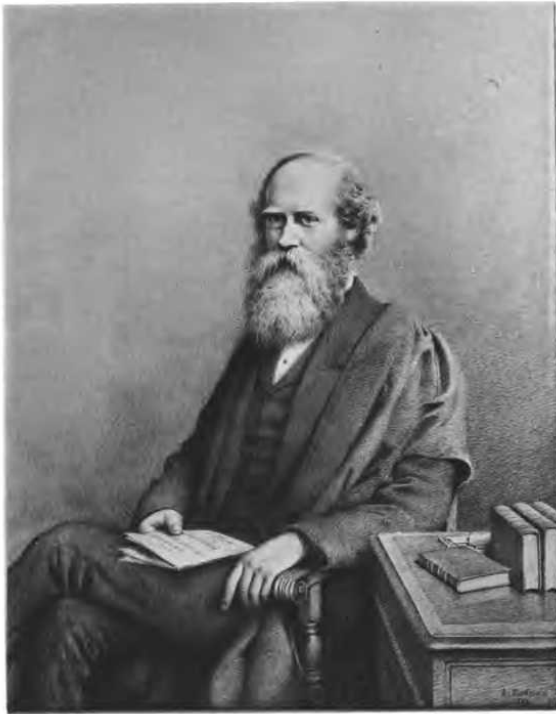
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Henry J. Smith

— Smith, Henry John Stephen

to Eleanor & Smith
to Charles & Valma
in memory of his brother
7th 1895

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

AND

RECOLLECTIONS

(WITH EARLY LETTERS)

OF

HENRY JOHN STEPHEN SMITH

M.A., F.R.S.

LATE SAVILIAN PROFESSOR OF GEOMETRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

WITH A PORTRAIT

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Math 143.3

Harvard College Library
Norton Collection,
Dec. 3, 1907.

Oxford

HORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

THE short record of Henry Smith's life, which I have compiled at the request of his sister, is chiefly based upon a Memoir by herself, which I was anxious to give in its entirety, but for which she has desired me to substitute my own words. I have to thank Professor Irving for a letter containing his recollections of Henry Smith at Balliol in his first years as Fellow and Lecturer. The Memoir and Letters from which I have worked are unfortunately most defective during the years of my own absence from England, 1871-1883; and I must ask my readers to bear in mind under what disadvantages I have attempted to perform a sacred duty. Happily, Henry Smith's character, about which there is really no difference of opinion, exhibits an unbroken continuity of growth. As a boy he seemed to have something of the mature wisdom of a man; and to the day of his death he retained the simplicity and high spirits of a boy. My own estimate of him, based on the close intimacy of more than twenty years, represents, I hope and believe, what his friends thought and would wish said. To those who did not know him, it will perhaps appear that my judgment has been influenced by friendship. Those who knew him will notice points I have missed or excellences I have slurred, and will condemn my inadequacy.

The original plan of this Memoir assumed that it would be supplemented by the publication of a large number of Henry Smith's letters. This was over-ruled in Oxford while I was in Australia, and cannot now be reverted to. Of these letters a few only have been published. Neither, unfortunately,

have I leisure or strength to recast the Memoir altogether. I have done what I can in that direction, and can only hope that the difficulties under which I have worked may be borne in mind.

CHARLES H. PEARSON*.

MELBOURNE, 1888.

LONDON, 1893.

HENRY JOHN STEPHEN SMITH was the second son of John Smith, a distinguished though short-lived Irish barrister, who, after graduating at Trinity College, Dublin, was law pupil, at the Temple, of Serjeant Henry John Stephen, the learned editor of Blackstone's Commentaries. Mr. John Smith went back to practise in Dublin, and in 1818 married Mary Murphy. By this marriage he had four children—a daughter, who died of consumption in 1834 at the age of fifteen; a son, Charles, who died also of consumption in 1843, being then a cadet at Addiscombe; a daughter who still lives; and the subject of this Memoir, who was named after his father's old tutor, and who was born on the 2nd of November, 1826.

Mr. Smith died in 1828, of abscess of the liver, and his widow was left for a time in very straitened circumstances. Fortunately, after delays which seemed interminable, the Courts affirmed the validity of a bequest of £10,000, which had been made to Mr. Smith by his cousin the Marchioness of Ormond, and which her husband disputed. With this money, and with that produced by the sale of a house which Mr. Smith had just built, the widow had wherewithal to provide adequately for her family; and partly to escape from sorrowful associations, partly to secure for her children that good education which it had been their father's earnest wish they should receive, Mrs. Smith resolved within six months of her husband's death to pass over into England. The family wandered successively to the Isle of Man, 1829; to Harborne near Birmingham, 1829-30; to Leamington, 1830-31; and then to Ryde in the Isle of Wight, where nine or ten years were spent.

Probably no widow left in charge of a young family could have been better fitted to train them for eminence in after life than was Mrs. Smith. A tall

* Dr. Pearson's death has deprived this 'Sketch' of the benefit of the author's final revision.