

**HOBBS**

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Hobbes by George Croom Robertson

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**GEORGE CROOM ROBERTSON**

# **HOBBS**



Philosophical Classics for English Readers

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# H O B B E S

BY

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
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## P R E F A C E.

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SMALL as this volume is, untoward circumstances have prevented its completion till long after the first third of it was already in print. The delay is only too likely to have affected the unity of treatment; still, the original design has been adhered to in the main. That design was, even within such narrow compass, (1) to bring together all the previously known or now discoverable facts of Hobbes's life; and (2) to give some kind of fairly balanced representation of the whole range of his thought, instead of dwelling only upon those humanistic portions of it by which he has commonly been judged. Readers will not proceed far before they apprehend the reason why the account of the "System" has here been imbedded in the "Life,"—in departure from the usual order of exposition in books of the kind. More than of almost any other philosopher, it can be said of Hobbes that the key to a right understanding of his thought is



to be found in his personal circumstances and the events of his time.

I desire to offer most grateful thanks to His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, not only for permitting me to have free access to the Hobbes MSS. at Hardwick, but also for his signal generosity in intrusting the more important of them to me in London, when it was found that they could not be conveniently studied on the spot. This favour was first granted, a long time back, at the instance of the late Mr Grote; but lately it has been renewed, as regards the most valuable of the MSS. (the copy of 'The Elements of Law, Natural and Politique,' with Hobbes's autographic dedication and corrections), upon the expression of a simple request. I have been thus enabled to discover not a few facts of importance concerning one whose connection with three generations of the Cavendish family reflected equal credit upon it and upon him.

My thanks are due also to the Council of the Royal Society—moved by my friend Mr Francis Galton—for so readily allowing one of the two portraits of Hobbes in possession of the Society to be photographed for the frontispiece of the volume. Though the history of this portrait appears not to be traceable, it unmistakably represents the man whose name it bears,—and at an age much earlier than any of the other portraits (all good) that have previously been reproduced. Unfortunately, the painting has become very dark, and the necessary distinctness has not been obtained in the

photograph without some sacrifice of the shades marked in the original. The result is nevertheless very creditable and of exceeding interest.

A few narrative sentences—chiefly in chap. vii., and making about a page or two altogether—do not differ materially, when at all, from some that stand in the article on Hobbes contributed by me to the last edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' in 1880. There seemed no advantage in seeking to give them a different turn, when precisely the same meaning had to be conveyed, — in their case at no greater length; and I have to thank the publishers of the 'Encyclopædia' for according the use of them. (Perhaps I may be permitted here to note that, in the 'Encyclopædia' article, Hampden's *trial* for ship-money is erroneously set down as begun in February, instead of November; and for the footnote on Bishop Laney at p. 36*a* I would now substitute what stands at bottom of p. 202 below.)

