

**AN INTRODUCTION TO  
ENGLISH ECONOMIC  
HISTORY AND THEORY**

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An introduction to English economic history and theory by W. J. Ashley

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**W. J. ASHLEY**

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ENGLISH ECONOMIC  
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AN INTRODUCTION  
TO  
ENGLISH ECONOMIC  
HISTORY AND THEORY

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TO  
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OF  
ARNOLD TOYNBEE.

AUG 21 1918 *Dr. W. H. ...*



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## PREFACE

Two causes, above all others, sometimes working separately, sometimes in conjunction, have gradually modified the character of economic science. These two causes are the growing importance of historical studies, and the application to society of the idea of evolution. The first to make itself felt was history: in the hands of Savigny it became the foundation of a new method of jurisprudence, the value of which has been signally illustrated in our own time by Maine; and from the lawyers the historical method passed to the economists. Yet the lessons of Roscher, of Hildebrand, and of Knies, remained for over a quarter of a century unheeded; nor did they begin to carry their due weight until the practical needs of modern life had shown the deficiencies of older economic methods. But, meanwhile, the idea of an orderly evolution of society had been slowly making itself felt,—an idea which, whether conceived, as by Hegel, as the progressive revelation of spirit, or, as by Comte, as the growth of humanity, or, as by