

**LIFE OF TOBIAS  
GEORGE SMOLLETT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649228959

Life of Tobias George Smollett by David Hannay

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**DAVID HANNAY**

**LIFE OF TOBIAS  
GEORGE SMOLLETT**



**"Great Writers."**

EDITED BY

PROFESSOR ERIC S. ROBERTSON, M.A.

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*LIFE OF SMOLLETT.*

LIFE  
—  
OF  
TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT

BY  
DAVID HANNAY  
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LONDON  
WALTER SCOTT  
24 WARWICK LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW

1887

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# LIFE OF SMOLLETT.

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## CHAPTER I.

**T**OBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT was born in 1721, the younger son of a younger son of a Scotch laird, in that part of Dumbartonshire, known as the Lennox. The exact date of his birth is unknown; but he was baptized on the 19th of March, and was doubtless born in that month. His family were gentlefolk. He was a gentleman of coat-armour, and in France would have been counted noble. The Smolletts of Bonhill belonged, however, to use the French phrase, rather to the *noblesse de robe* than to the *noblesse d'épée*. The novelist's grandfather, Sir James Smollett of Bonhill, was for part of his life a judge in the Commissary Court, and, though the family gave, like other Scotch houses, many of its younger sons to the noble profession of arms, most of its members were lawyers or men of business. The antiquity of the family was not great, but their position as gentry was so clearly recognized, that Sir James Smollett "intermarried" with a daughter of McAulay of Ardenaeple, who was no less a dignitary than heritable bailie of the Lennox. He—that is Sir James—

was an active and successful man, not only as a lawyer and laird, but as a politician, for he was sent by the burghers of Dumbarton to several of the old Scots' Parliaments, from 1685 onwards. Finally, he was named one of the commissioners for carrying through the Act of Union with England in 1707. This event put an end to his political career, and he spent the last years of his life in managing, and, as it would seem, adding to his patrimonial estate of Bonhill. Sir James was a Whig and a Presbyterian. There is nothing to show that he in any way sympathized with the wilder and fiercer sections of his party and his Church in the bad days before the revolution, but he may be guessed to have been a somewhat dour and hard-fisted Scot of the worldly religious type.

Sir James so far enjoyed the blessings promised to the just man that he had a family of children, four of them sons, who he might hope would carry on his name and his works. The blessing was not however unmixed. The eldest son Tobias, after serving in Lord Strathmore's regiment, died young, leaving only a daughter. The second, James, and the third, George, who were lawyers, do not seem to have been successful men. James fell into trouble and died before his father. The old laird must have had some ground of complaint against the third son, George, for when he settled his estate, he left it, firstly, to his grandson James, the son of James, and then to his grandson James, the son of George, although this one of his sons was alive at that time. There is no mention in the will of his fourth son Archibald, or of Archibald's children, unquestionably because he had