

*Life of Adam Smith.* By R. B. HALDANE, M.P. London, Walker and Scott, 1887.—12mo, ix, 116, x, pp.

This volume has been contributed by Mr. Haldane to the series of *Great Writers* edited by Professor Robertson. Its aim is therefore primarily literary, and it is presumably not intended for students of economics. At all events it is a mere sketch, containing no new material, and giving only a synopsis of Smith's economic opinions, which will be of no interest except to the general reader. The sole reason the book is mentioned in this place is to call the attention of students to the bibliography, prepared by Mr. John P. Anderson of the British Museum, and appended to Mr. Haldane's volume. The bibliography not only contains full titles and information as to thirty-three different editions of the *Wealth of Nations*, but also gives for the first time an exceedingly serviceable list of the books and criticisms on Smith's great work. This list contains one hundred and three titles, exclusive of magazine articles, and comprehends all the principal books in English, French, German, Italian, and Russian. I have been able to discover no omissions of importance, except the works of Held, Studnitz, Helferich, Delatour, and Janzhul. The bibliography will be found very convenient.

E. R. A. S.

*Letters of David Ricardo to Thomas Robert Malthus, 1810-1823.* Edited by JAMES BONAR, LL.D. Oxford and London, Henry Frowde, 1887.—8vo; xxiv, 251 pp.

It is not given to every thinker to become his own commentator more than half a century after his death, and at the moment when his views must be re-affirmed and re-interpreted or suffer permanent eclipse. This unusual fate has overtaken that remarkable man who gave to political economy one-half of its scientific method, and whose *Principles* are the institutes by which degrees of orthodoxy in the science are measured. Mr. Bonar, whose excellent book on *Malthus and his Work* did good service in recalling attention to the historical connection between recent developments of economic thought and the labors of Malthus, has put students under further and very great obligations in the present work. The letters are printed from the original manuscripts in the possession of Colonel Malthus, C.B. They cover the whole period of the friendship of Ricardo and Malthus. It is greatly to be regretted that the letters from Malthus to Ricardo were probably destroyed, for, as Mr. Bonar very truly observes, not only must we decline to believe that we have the whole case before us when we are within hearing of only one

of the disputants, but in this particular case, though Ricardo had every desire to be just to his opponent, "his cast of mind was so different that he can hardly be thought to have entered into his opponent's views with perfect sympathy."

Mr. Bonar has edited the collection with scrupulous care, and added a wealth of notes and references that will be extremely helpful to the reader who desires to follow out with some minuteness the early development of English economic thought. The preface contains a judicious estimate of Ricardo's intellectual qualities, and points out how different were the premises of all his political and economic reasonings from those that economists start from to-day. This is followed by an "outline of subjects," which enables the reader to discover at a glance what topics are discussed in the letters, or what letters deal with the particular subject he may be following, and to learn without waste of time the drift of the argument.

The letters are devoted chiefly to economic discussion, though there are frequent allusions to public affairs and the political reforms in which Ricardo was deeply interested. In many of them we catch momentary glimpses of his domestic life, and there is now and then a pleasing disclosure — wholly devoid of self-consciousness — of his amiable disposition and simple manliness. There is no such wealth of incident, no such complete self-revelation, and therefore no such biographical interest as we find in the letters and diaries of Professor Jevons, but there is enough to fully verify the impressions formed of Ricardo by his contemporaries and to bear out the portrait of him drawn by McCulloch, as an affectionate and zealous friend, a man ever open to conviction, loving truth for its own sake, and one than whom "no man was ever more thoroughly free from every species of artifice and pretension; more sincere, plain, and unassuming." He thoroughly detested London and all its ways, and lost no opportunity to spend a few days at his quiet country seat, Gatcomb Park, where he loved to entertain his friends — and Malthus best of all. The friendship of the two men was grounded in the most genuine respect for each other's character and abilities. Each was the other's best, and it may be added, most unsparing critic, and their constant interchange of opinions was the stimulus that spurred each to the performance of much of his best work. Ricardo's views are invariably expressed in terms of stately courtesy, but they are defended, and those of Malthus are assailed, with a vigor that leaves nothing to be desired.

The publication of these letters could hardly have been more opportune. For twenty years the drift of opinion has set more and more strongly away from the Calvinism of Ricardo, and toward the Arminianism of Malthus, to quote the figure used by Mr. Bonar in his former