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Two Letters of Adam Smith's

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“A wise and noble scheme, if it be viewed in its internal bearings, for extending the intercourse of a great people, for maintaining its European influence and enhancing its sentiment of nationality; but with respect to foreign trade a measure of jealousy and rigour, not the less but the more grievous because its severe, and in many instances, crushing, enactments were ushered into the world under the most alluring titles of simplicity and uniformity, and with a professed limitation of the maximum or general duty upon imports to 10 per cent. *ad valorem*.”

At this point the present appreciation of Gladstonian economics must cease. I say appreciation rather than criticism, because prior to the passing of Free Trade there is much to praise and little to blame. The influence which Mr. Gladstone exerted on Peel, the splendid administrative work which he performed at the Board of Trade, the admirable judgment which he displayed in the economic debates of the period, and finally the valuable contributions which he made to economic literature, have hardly received adequate recognition. So far, however, he has only been a good commercial Minister; in the great schemes of political finance he has been an agent, a valuable, perhaps an indispensable, subordinate, but not an originator or a dictator.

FRANCIS W. HIRST

TWO LETTERS OF ADAM SMITH'S.

IN cataloguing a collection of autographs left to the Bodleian in 1863 by Captain Montagu, R.N., Mr. Madan recently came upon the following letters in Adam Smith's handwriting, and kindly drew my attention to them. Both are on half sheets, and the folding indicates that they were enclosed in a packet rather than transmitted separately. “Mr. Thomas Caddel” is Strahan's partner, who seems to have preferred to spell his name “Cadell.” He was obviously the recipient of the second letter, which does not bear his name, as well as of the first.

DEAR SIR,

After thanking you very sincerely for the trouble you have already taken about my affairs, I must still beg of you to take a little more; which is that you would not only send all the four boxes as soon as possible to Edinburgh directed to the care of Mr. Kincaid, but that you would ensure them to the value of two hundred Pounds; and likewise that you would send me as soon as possible the account of the whole expense including that of the two last books you was so good as to procure for me; viz. Anderson and Postlethwait. I ever am

Dear Sir

Yours sincerely

ADAM SMITH.

LOWER GROSVENOR
STREET
25 March 1766.
To Mr. THOMAS CADDEL.

DEAR SIR,

I received this moment your favour of the 12 instth. I am much obliged to you for your attention in procuring me the Volumes of the Philosophical transactions which I wanted; But you say nothing to me of the Abbè Morellet's translation of my Book, which I am extremely desirous of seeing. I am sorry to give you so much trouble, but I beg you would endeavour to procure me a copy of it for Love or Money. The Abbè himselfe, I understand, is now or was lately in London with Lord Shelburne. Yesterday Mr. Spottiswood delivered me a Packet from Strahan containing some part of the index of my Book. A note on the outside of it requested to know if I wished the index to be printed in Quarto and to be Delivered with the other Additions, to the Purchasers of the former Editions. I am afraid it is now too late, as all the numero's in the index must be altered in order to accomodate them to either of the two former editions of which the Pages do not in many places correspond. I am afraid therefor, this must be omitted. I shall agree, however, to what you and he think proper. I ever am

Dear Sir

most affectionately

Yours,

ADAM SMITH.

CUSTOM HOUSE

EDINBURGH

18 Nov^r, 1784.

The date of the first letter is startling, as Adam Smith is believed to have been in Paris, engaged in his tutorial duties, from Christmas, 1765, till November, 1766 (Rae, *Life*, pp. 194, 232). It is altogether unlikely that he made a flying visit to London in March, 1766, and if he had done so, he would not have wanted the four boxes sent to Edinburgh as soon as possible. On the other hand, as a philosopher who was absent-minded enough to put bread and butter into the teapot instead of tea-leaves, and then pronounce the resulting fluid to be the worst tea he ever met with (Rae, *Life*, pp. 237, 238), he may well be supposed to have been capable of writing "1766" when he ought to have written "1767," even as late in the year as March 25. "Lower Grosvenor Street, March 25, 1767" would present no difficulty. There is no doubt that he was in London at the beginning of 1767. The exact date of his departure for Scotland is not known, but he had been "very deeply engaged" in study at Kirkcaldy for "about a month" on June 7, 1767 (Rae, *Life*, pp. 237, 238, 242). From the dates of letters in the *Chatham Correspondence* (ii, 265, 456) I gather that Charles Townshend, the Duke of Buccleuch's stepfather, had a house in Grosvenor Square in 1766. He writes from Downing Street in January, 1767 (*ibid.*, iii., 149), and we may suppose that the Duke on his return from France went into the Grosvenor Square house, and that Adam Smith was established in convenient proximity.¹

¹ Probably in the house of Hume's chief, Lord Hertford. — (EDITORS E.J.)

The second letter, with its date, is in conflict with Mr. Rae's statement (*Life*, p. 362) that the Additions to the first and second editions of the *Wealth of Nations* were published in 1783, a year before the third edition. But Mr. Rae quotes no authority for his statement, and it appears to be incorrect. We should require very positive evidence to make us believe that Adam Smith and Strahan and Cadell would publish the Additions before the third edition, embodying them in their proper place, was ready.

"Mr. Spottiswood" is mentioned in a letter of 1777, and Mr. Rae says he was a nephew of Strahan (*Life*, p. 323). "Mr. Kincaid" is doubtless the Edinburgh bookseller whose name appears below that of Millar at the foot of the title page of the first edition of the *Moral Sentiments*.

Twenty-one volumes of *Philosophical Transactions* are mentioned in Bonar's *Catalogue of Adam Smith's Library*, but there is no "Postlethwait," and the only "Anderson" is James Anderson's *Diplomatum et Numismatum Scotiæ Thesaurus*, which was published in Edinburgh in 1759, and therefore is probably not the book referred to. The mention of Anderson and Postlethwayt together as the two last books purchased rather suggests the two bulky works, Adam Anderson's *Deduction of the Origin of Commerce*, and Malachi Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*. Poor Cadell seems to have had a very good excuse for not having procured Morellet's translation in the fact that the work was never published (Rae, *Life*, p. 359).

EDWIN CANNAN

THE CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S WORK AT THE HAGUE.

THE Exhibition for Women's Work which was opened at The Hague on July 9th includes in its programme a series of conferences on many important questions relating to the economic and social condition of women. They began on July 11th, and are to continue until September 15th. Among the subjects on which papers have been, or are to be read, are—the industrial training of women, social work, the training of orphans, social purity, the poor, education, domestic servants, social work in India, hygiene, sick-nursing, industrial schools, &c.

The group of subjects which came under the heading "the industrial training of women," covered in itself a fairly wide range, and included discussions on factory inspection, the condition of shop assistants, rent collecting, women managers in factories, the teaching of the deaf and dumb, commercial training for women, insurance, dentistry, photography, &c. A brief sketch will here be given of some of the economic points raised at this conference on the industrial training of women, which is now concluded. Mej. J. ter Meulen first read a paper on rent collecting and the supervision of workmen's dwellings. She herself has been trained in England by Miss Octavia Hill. She