8th of November 1846 at Keig in Aberdeenshire, where his father was Free Church minister. He was educated at home and at Aberdeen University, where he attained the highest academic distinctions, winning among other things the Ferguson mathe­matical scholarship, which is open to all graduates of Scottish universities under three years’ standing. In 1866 he entered the Free Church College at Edinburgh as a student of theology. During two summer sessions he studied philosophy and theology at Bonn and Göttingen, making friends in all branches of learning. From 1868 to 1870 he acted as assistant to the professor of natural philosophy in Edinburgh University. During this period he was not only most successful as a teacher, but produced much original work—especially in the experimental and mathe­matical treatment of electricity—which is still regarded as standard. In 1870 he was appointed and ordained to the office of professor of Oriental languages and Old Testament exegesis at the Free Church College, Aberdeen, and here he began that series of theological investigations which, characterized as they were by learned research and the use of the most scientific methods, were destined to make his name famous. He was the pupil and personal friend of many leaders of the higher criticism in Germany, and from the first he advocated views which, though now widely accepted, were then regarded with apprehension. The articles on Biblical subjects which he contributed to the 9th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* distressed and alarmed the authorities of the Free Church. In 1876 a committee of the General Assembly of that Church reported on them so adversely that Smith demanded a formal trial, in the course of which he defended himself with consummate ability and eloquence. The indictment dropped, but a vote of want of confidence was passed, and in 1881 Smith was removed from his chair. During this long struggle he was sustained by the conviction that he was fighting for freedom, and at the end of the trial he was probably the most popular, if not the most powerful, man in Scotland. Marks of sympathy were showered on him from all sides.

In 1875 he was appointed one of the Old Testament revisers; in 1880-1882 he delivered by invitation, to very large audiences in Edinburgh and Glasgow, two courses of lectures on the criticism of the Old Testament, which he afterwards published *(The Old Testament in the Jewish Church,* first edition 1881, second edition 1892, and *The Prophets of Israel,* 1882, which also passed through two editions); and soon after his dismissal from his chair he joined Professor Baynes in the editorship of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* and after Professor Baynes’s death remained in supreme editorial control till the work was completed. His versa­tility, firmness combined with tact, width of view, and pains­taking struggle for accuracy were largely responsible for the maintenance of its high standard. But he did not let his other duties interfere with his Semitic studies. He visited Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Tunis and southern Spain, and had an intimate knowledge of, and personal acquaintance with, not only the literature, but the life of the East. His early friendship with J. F. McLennan, that most original student of primitive marriage, had a great influence on Smith’s studies, and his attention was always strongly attracted to the comparative study of primitive customs and their meaning. His chief con­tributions to this branch of learning were his article Sacrifice in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* his *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (Cambridge, 1885), and above all his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1st edition 1889, 2nd edition 1894). His originality and grasp of mind enabled him to seize the essential among masses of details, and he had in a marked degree the power of carrying a subject farther than his predecessors.

In 1883 Robertson Smith was appointed Lord Almoner’s Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, which henceforth became his home. He occupied rooms in Trinity College till 1885, when he was elected to a professorial fellowship at Christ’s College. In 1886 he became university librarian, and in 1889 Adams Pro­fessor of Arabic. In 1888-1891 he delivered, as Burnett lecturer, three courses of lectures at Aberdeen on the primitive religion of the Semites. Early in 1890 grave symptoms of constitutional disease manifested themselves, and the last years of his life were full of suffering, which he bore with the utmost courage and patience. He never ceased to work, and when near his end was actively engaged in planning the *Encyclopaedia Biblica,* which he had hoped to edit. He died at Cambridge on the 31st of March 1894, and was buried at Keig. Small and slight in person and never robust in health, Robertson Smith was yet a man of ceaseless and fiery energy; of an intellect extraordinarily alert and quick, and as sagacious in practical matters as it was keen and piercing in speculation; of an erudition astonishing both in its range and in its readiness; of a temper susceptible of the highest enthusiasm for worthy ends, and able to inspire others with its own ardour; endowed with the warmest affections, and with the kindest and most generous disposition, but impatient of stupidity and ready to blaze out at whatever savoured of wrong and injustice. The sweetness and purity of his nature combined with his brilliant conversational powers to render him the most delightful of friends and companions.

See also James Bryce, *Studies in Contemporary Biography* (1903).

(A. E. S.)

**SMITH, SIR WILLIAM SIDNEY** (1764-1840), English admiral, was the second son of Captain John Smith of the Guards, and was born at Westminster on the 21st of July 1764. He entered the navy, according to his own account, “ at the beginning of the American War,” being only about eleven years of age. For his bravery under Rodney in the action near Cape St Vincent in January 1780, he was on the 25th of September appointed lieutenant of the “ Alcide,” 74. After serving in the actions against the French fought by Graves off Chesapeake in 1781 and by Rodney at the Leeward Islands in 1782, he was on the 6th of May of the latter year promoted to be commander of the “ Fury ” sloop, and on the 18th of October advanced to the rank of captain. His ship having been paid off in the beginning of 1784, he spent two years in France and afterwards visited Spain. From 1790 to 1792 he advised the king of Sweden in the war with Russia, receiving for his services the honour of knighthood. After his re­turn to England he was sent on a mission to Constantinople, and having joined Lord Hood at Toulon from Smyrna in December 1793, he, though only on half pay, was actively employed in the attempt to burn the enemy’s ships and arsenal. In the following years he was engaged in the Channel hunting French privateers; but, having with the boats of his squadron boarded in Havre-de- Grâce harbour a lugger which was driven by the tide above the French forts, he was on the 19th of April 1796 compelled to surrender and sent a prisoner to Paris. By means of forged orders for his removal to another prison he made his escape from the Temple, and, crossing the Channel in a small skiff picked up at Havre, arrived in London on the 8th of May 1798. In October he was appointed to the command of the “ Tigre,” 80, and was sent to the Mediterranean. By a very curious decision of the govern­ment he was joined in commission with his brother Spencer Smith, minister at Constantinople. Learning of Bonaparte’s approach to St Jean d’Acre, he hastened to its relief, and on the 16th of March 1799 captured the enemy’s flotilla, after which he successfully defended the town, compelling Napoleon on the 20th of May to raise the siege and retreat in disorder, leaving all his artillery behind. For this brilliant exploit he received the special thanks of the Houses of Parliament and was awarded an annuity of ₤1000. On the 24th of January 1800 he took upon himself to make the convention of El Arish, by which the French were to have been allowed to evacuate Egypt. His action was disallowed by his superiors, who insisted that the French must surrender. Sub­sequently he co-operated with Abercromby, under whom he commanded the naval brigade at the battle of Aboukir, where he was wounded. On his return to England he was in 1802 elected M.P. for the city of Rochester. In March 1803 he was commissioned to watch the preparations of the French for an invasion of England. Having on the 9th of November 1805 been promoted to be rear-admiral of the blue, he was in the following January despatched on secret service for the protection of Sicily and Naples. His conduct was as usual brilliant, but, also as usual, his vanity and self-assertion led him into quarrels with the military officers. He relieved Gaeta and captured Capri, but