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PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF  
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| FIRST EDITION . . . . .                | <i>May 1906</i>      |
| SECOND EDITION . . . . .               | <i>February 1907</i> |
| THIRD EDITION (2s. 6d. net.) . . . . . | <i>December 1909</i> |
| FOURTH EDITION . . . . .               | <i>January 1910</i>  |
| FIFTH EDITION . . . . .                | <i>February 1912</i> |

5751  
PRINCIPLES AND  
METHODS OF TAXATION

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PRINCIPAL OF BIRKBECK COLLEGE, LONDON

LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.  
1912

X72

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## PREFACE

THE object of this work is to present in a concise and simple form an account of the British system of taxation and the principles on which it is based, together with some of the leading historical facts in its evolution. Taxation is a complex subject, and one on which there is no perfect consensus of opinion. Though in practice it compels the attention of every one in some degree, yet its principles are by no means universally understood; familiarity with the concrete facts does not impart principles of method, while the trouble of acquiring them is a barrier to many. One reason perhaps is that the subject has for the most part been discussed in general treatises on economics, or, when separately treated, has been handled with much elaboration and detail, so that few except economic students have followed up its intricacies and subtleties; the average citizen with little leisure has small acquaintance with the more learned and exhaustive analyses.

There is room, and indeed need, for a brief and logical statement of the bases of taxation and an exposition of the incidence of the tax system of this country. No topic has occupied more of public attention in recent

years, nor is any likely to exercise a greater influence on the immediate future of the nation in its application. It is desirable in the highest degree that all citizens should be able to think out the economic consequences of taxation for themselves ; to this end some assistance, analytic and historic, is necessary. To satisfy the need in a succinct form is the aim of this work ; it offers no new theories, but seeks to aid clear perception in a difficult and somewhat controversial field of enquiry. The task necessarily implies considerable condensation. It is hoped that the work will be found helpful, and that it may induce many readers to prosecute the enquiry in the larger classical writings on taxation, a list of which is supplied in the short bibliography at the end.

In this fifth edition the original text remains virtually unaltered. To introduce the latest figures in every instance would have involved too much alteration ; moreover, in most cases the changes during the last few years have been slight and unimportant. In other cases the latest available statistics have been added either at the end of a chapter or in the Appendix. These include Tables of Revenue and Expenditure, Local Taxation, National Debts, and the chief alterations made by legislation which have affected taxation since 1905.

G. A.-S.

*Christmas 1911.*

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