

ADAMS'S UNPUBLISHED PAPERS.

The Scientific Papers of John Couch Adams, Vol. II. Part I., *Extracts from Unpublished Manuscripts*, edited by R. A. SAMPSON. Part II., *Terrestrial Magnetism*, edited by W. G. ADAMS. Cambridge, Pitt Press, 1900. 4to. xxxii + 646 pp., with 6 magnetic charts.

Lectures on the Lunar Theory. By JOHN COUCH ADAMS, edited by R. A. SAMPSON. Cambridge, Pitt Press, 1900. 8vo. 88 pp.

By those who knew John Couch Adams best the examination of the manuscripts which he left and the publication of a selection from them has been looked forward to with much interest. His well known reluctance to publish anything not in a complete form—"I have some finishing touches to put to it"—raised hopes that valuable results might be contained in the packets of neatly-written and dated papers which were turned over after his death for examination. It was known that he had been at work on various problems, in particular on that most difficult one—the theory of Jupiter's satellites, and on the theory of terrestrial magnetism. It was known, too, that Adams rarely attacked a problem without throwing a new light upon it or evolving some unexpected result. He had not fallen into the modern habit of making "preliminary communications," or, at least, if these were made they were verbal and did not find their way into print. Thus the publication of this volume was looked forward to with greater expectation than is usual in the case of other scientists who have lived to his age.

I shall not be misunderstood in saying that a slight feeling of disappointment arises on turning over its pages and seeing the matter contained therein. Adams's reputation as a mathematician and astronomer of the highest class rests on too firm a basis to be disturbed by anything which may or may not be contained in his unpublished papers. His published work, small in quantity though it may be, made an ineffaceable mark on the subjects which he touched. The discovery of Neptune, the determination of the accurate value of the secular acceleration of the moon's mean motion, the method by which he arrived at the correct period of the November meteors are sufficient to stamp the character of his work without mentioning other results which show equal