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## Intellectual Influences of Scotland on the Continent<sup>1</sup>

**I**N the case of every nation we can trace certain large effects that were directly due to influences which came to them from without. In the development of our own country we are reminded at every stage of her history of what she owed to the community of nations of which she has been a member. In the earliest period of her history that is known to us we find the missionaries of the Celtic Church of Ireland spreading light in certain portions of her territory. By the time she became a distinct kingdom she was open to all the influences that went to mould the different nations of Christendom, and to her contact with these nations she owed feudalism and the Catholic Church—the foundations of the mediaeval societies. Her Reformation of the sixteenth century was not self-originated, but was due to a European movement. So in the eighteenth century the prevailing type of religion, known as Moderatism, was born of the speculations of thinkers who were not her own sons.

It is a natural question to ask—has Scotland, on her part, exercised any perceptible influence on the sister nations of the Christian group? Compared with these sister nations, she has certainly been at a disadvantage. By her geographical position and her limited natural resources, she was debarred from playing such a permanently important part in the world as was assured to

<sup>1</sup> Introductory Lecture delivered to the class of Ancient (Scottish) History, University of Edinburgh, October 15, 1913.

nations with greater material advantages. Only at certain periods of her history has she, owing to a conjunction of circumstances, been one of the determining factors in the rivalries of the powers of Europe. An interesting chapter might be written on these periods when, owing to a special set of conditions, she possessed a political importance that made her action an anxious concern in the councils of every European Court. Our interest at present, however, is in less palpable forms of influence than those of politics and diplomacy; it is with influences in the spheres of thought and feeling only that I propose to deal in what follows. What new currents of speculation, what new springs of emotion, has she communicated to other peoples which the world has agreed to recognise as directly proceeding from her? As we shall see, there is one century in her history—the eighteenth—during which she was in remarkable degree a source of stimulus in almost all the intellectual interests of the time in Western Europe. To what extent she contributed to the common intellectual capital in the preceding centuries we have insufficient knowledge. It is on dubious grounds that we can claim certain writers of the Middle Ages whom we know to have been potent inspirers of their contemporaries, and, on the other hand, in the case of others whom we can claim with certainty we have not the information requisite to estimate their influence. With such information as we possess, however, and with such detail as time permits, let us note the most remarkable Scots who, previous to the eighteenth century, may be regarded as seminal minds in their respective ages.

If we were to give credit to our early historians, as all Scotsmen once did, Scotland was betimes in the field. According to that remarkable annalist, Hector Boece, who did not invent the story, it was two Scots who assisted Charlemagne in founding the University of Paris. Unfortunately, as Charlemagne flourished in the ninth century, and the University of Paris was not founded till the twelfth, this early proof of Scotland's intellectual superiority we must perforce reject. How the story arose we can conjecture. The truth is that all through the Middle Ages, and even after them, Scotland figured under borrowed plumes. The illusion arose from a confusion of the designation *Scotia*. The original *Scotia*—*vetus et major Scotia*—was not Scotland, but Ireland, and it was not till the eleventh century that the territory north of the Tweed came to be designated by that name. But long before that date Ireland had a great repute in the world for

her learning. Whoever on the Continent knew Greek in the days of Charlemagne was either an Irishman or had been taught by an Irishman. It was the result of this confusion of terms that Scotland so long got credit for excellencies which were not her own.

One scholastic theologian of distinction, who flourished as early as the twelfth century, we can claim with certainty as a Scot. It is our historian John Major who tells us what we know of him. This was Richard of St. Victor, a monk of the Augustinian Order, who apparently spent most of his life in the schools of Paris. Here is Major's quaint account of him: <sup>1</sup>'He was second to no one of the theologians of his generation; for both in that theology of the schools where distinction is gained as brother meets brother on the battlefield of letters, and in that other where each man lets down his solitary pitcher, he was illustrious,' and Major adds that he 'published a vast number of most meritorious lucubrations.' Also, according to Major, the name of Richard of St. Victor is associated with a dogma which has filled a large place in the history of the Catholic Church; in one of his sermons he was the first clearly to enunciate the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Richard died about the year 1173, and on his tomb in the cloister of St. Victor was inscribed a Latin epitaph, from which we may infer that he died at a comparatively early age. The lines may be rendered as follows:

For virtue, genius, every art renowned,  
 Here, Richard, thou thy resting-place hast found.  
 Scotia the land that claims thy happy birth,  
 Thou sleepest in the lap of Gallic earth.  
 Though haughty Fate hath snapt thy short-spun thread,  
 No scathe is thine; thou livest still though dead.  
 Memorials of thy ever-during fame,  
 Thy works securely keep thy honoured name.  
 With step too slow death seeks the halls of pride,  
 With step too swift where pious hearts abide.

Of far more resounding fame than Richard of St. Victor was a Scot of the following generation—Michael Scot, called of Balwearie. It is only in comparatively recent years that Michael's real significance in his time has been recognised. In the traditions of his countrymen, as we know, he was the mightiest wizard

<sup>1</sup>The translation is that of Mr. Archibald Constable (Scot. Hist. Soc. vol. x.)

Scotland had produced, and it is this conception of him that Sir Walter Scott has used with such effect in his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. On the Continent, also, it was as an adept in the black arts that he attained notoriety—a notoriety blazoned for ever in Dante's great poem. As one who impiously professed to reveal the secrets of the future, Dante assigned him a place in the eighth Circle of the *Inferno*, where the appropriate punishment of the sinners was to have their heads turned round so that they were compelled to walk backwards, 'for to look before them was denied.' In one of his grim pictures Dante brings the would-be diviner before us. 'That other,' his conductor Virgil tells the poet, 'that other so thin in the flanks was Michael Scot; and of a truth he knew the play of magic arts.' His sinister renown as a master in *diablerie* Michael shared with every thinker in the Middle Ages who attempted to extend the bounds of human knowledge. His contemporary, Roger Bacon, was in equally ill-repute as being in league with the infernal powers, but, less fortunate than Michael, he paid a severe penalty in this world, and not in an imaginary hell. Both were interested in what we now call physical science, and it is a sentence in Bacon's works that clearly marks the service that Michael did for his generation. Michael Scot, Bacon tells us, was the first to translate Aristotle's treatises concerning nature and mathematics, with the result that Aristotle's fame was greatly magnified among the Latins. The significance of this sentence of Bacon is that it marks the dividing line between the earlier and the later scholasticism. Previous to these translations by Scot, the schoolmen knew only Aristotle's writings on logic, but with his new works in their hands their speculations made a new departure, and found scope in wider interests, and in more various problems. It will be seen, therefore, that Scot was an initiator, a pioneer who has his own place in the history of philosophic thought. So far as we know, he was the first of the legion of wandering Scots who in successive ages sought the fountains of learning wherever they were to be found, and who not infrequently gained the patronage of the great. We can trace dimly his steps in France, in Italy, and in Sicily, where he found favour with that brilliant imperial heretic, Frederick II. It was at Frederick's instance, it would appear, that he travelled as far as Toledo in Spain, and there it was that he made the acquaintance with the Arabic translations of Aristotle by Averrhöes which he rendered into Latin, for he knew no Greek. And besides his distinction as a revealer of Aristotle, he

has another claim which has been fully recognised. Along with his translations he gave Averrhöes' Commentaries on Aristotle, and thus became one of the founders of Averrhöism, the rankest and most deadly heresy of the Middle Ages, inasmuch as it was the negation equally of benignant and malign spiritual forces in nature.

In the thirteenth century flourished a still more distinguished thinker than Michael Scot—Duns Scotus, the 'Subtle Doctor,' who has also been claimed as a native of Scotland. As both England and Ireland contest the claim, however, and the evidence in favour of each of the three claims cannot be considered satisfactory, we must perforce leave him out of account. We are in the same difficulty with regard to another famous writer of the thirteenth century—Johannes de Sacrobosco, the Latinised form of Holywood, Holybush, or Halifax. Sacrobosco was the author of a work—a text-book on the Ptolemaic astronomy—which had as wide a circulation and as lasting a repute as any production of the Middle Ages. Long after Copernicus had exploded the Ptolemaic system it continued to be a text-book in the schools. George Buchanan versified it with poetic adornments in his poem on the 'Sphere,' and as late as 1656 the Government of Holland ordered that it should have a place in the teaching of the youth of that country. But as England, Scotland and Ireland with equal probability claim him as their son, he also must be left out of our roll.

It is not till the close of the fifteenth century that we meet with the name of another Scot who can be said to have had a European reputation. In an interesting passage in his 'Praise of Folly,' in which he specifies the characteristics of the different nations, Erasmus says of the Scots that they plume themselves on their skill in dialectic subtleties—a remark, it may be said in passing, which Galileo also made a century later. Erasmus's testimony to the metaphysical aptitudes of Scotsmen may have been suggested by one whom he must have personally known, as they were members of the same college—the Collège Montaigu, in the University of Paris. He was John Mair or Major, a native of Haddingtonshire, where he was born in 1470. He received the elements of his education in his own country, probably at the burgh school of Haddington, which John Knox also attended. His higher studies he pursued at the Universities of Cambridge and Paris, in the latter of which he became one of its most distinguished teachers. The subject in which he won his fame was

that scholastic philosophy which had exercised the wits of the successive generations of thinkers throughout the Middle Ages. The ponderous folios he produced bear witness to an industry truly prodigious, and are at the same time a monument of the futility of so much of human effort. For it was the misfortune of Major that he came at a time when the scholastic philosophy of which he was the exponent was moribund, and a new world of ideas was being opened up to which apparently his eyes were shut. He became, in fact, the jest and the butt of the men who looked to ancient Greece and Rome for inspiration and spiritual nutriment. Yet the distinction of those who selected him as an object for their wit is a tribute to his great reputation as a champion of the old order. The arch-mocker Rabelais had evidently heard of him, as in the wonderful library of St. Victor in Paris his Pantagruel found a book by Major entitled *The Art of making Puddings*. He was known to Melanchthon, also, so far off as Wittenberg. In a reply to the censure of the Sorbonne on the opinions of Luther, Melanchthon has these biting words on Major: 'I have seen John Major's *Commentaries on Peter Lombard*. He is now, I am told, the prince of the Paris divines. Good heavens! What waggon-loads of trifling! What pages he fills with disputes whether there can be any horsemanship without a horse, whether the sea was salt when God made it. If he is a specimen of the Parisian, no wonder they have so little stomach for Luther.' Be it said that Melanchthon does not exaggerate the absurdity of the questions which Major raises in his *Commentaries*. He seriously discusses, for example, whether God could become an ox or an ass if He chose, and whether John the Baptist's head, when it was cut off, could be in more places than one. It would be a mistake, however, to conceive Major as a hidebound obscurantist. Apart from his logic and philosophy, he gave proof of an open and original mind. Both in his *Commentaries* and in his *History of Greater Britain* he expounds political theories which were eventually adopted at the Revolution of 1689. And he has a more remarkable claim to be regarded as an independent thinker; he threw out an idea which gives him a place in the history of Poor Law Reform. In his *Commentaries on Peter Lombard* he expresses this opinion, which in his day was regarded as of startling originality: 'If the prince or community should decree that there should be no beggar in the country, and should provide for the impotent, the action would be praiseworthy and lawful.' And what is interesting is that the hint was taken by

one state and city after another, and put into action as a remedy for mendicancy—the intolerable evil of the age. From this account of Major it will be seen that in his day he was a figure of European importance, and deserves to be regarded as one of the brightest ornaments of his country.

Major's contemporary, Hector Boethius or Boece, may be more briefly passed over. A native of Dundee, he also studied in Paris, became a professor of philosophy there, and was subsequently Principal of the newly-founded University of Paris—an office which he filled with notable distinction. In philosophy he was a schoolman like Major, but, unlike Major, he was open to the new lights of the Revival of Learning. He was the friend and correspondent of Erasmus, the most brilliant adversary of the scholastic theology, and he wrote a Latin style which was evidently formed on classical models. Moreover, he did not, like Major, compose Commentaries on the Schoolmen, but confined himself to biography and history, and bequeathed two books to the world—his *Lives of the Bishops of Mortlach and Aberdeen*, and his *History of the Scottish Nation*. It is only with his *History* that we are now concerned, as it had an influence of its own kind beyond the limits of Scotland. From a Scots translation of it by Archdeacon Bellenden, the English annalist Holinshed appropriated certain passages for his *Chronicles of England*, and it was in Holinshed that Shakespeare found the nucleus for *Macbeth* and the local colour in which the play abounds. But further, it had the distinction of being translated by the royal cosmographer of France, and was thus the means of giving currency on the Continent to notions regarding Scotland which are hardly extinct at the present day. In his wonderful *History* Boece circumstantially relates the lives and fortunes of the successive kings of Scots whose portraits adorn the walls of Holyrood, and his narrative materially helped to convey the impression, long prevalent on the Continent, that the Scottish monarchy was the oldest in Europe. Moreover, in his description of the physical characteristics of his native country, he enumerates so many marvels that Scotland came to be regarded as having been a distinct creation.

At the opening of the sixteenth century were born three Scots who in different spheres did honour to their country abroad. They were Alexander Alane, better known as Alesius, Florence Wilson, and George Buchanan. Alesius, as his record proves, must have been one of the most strenuous Scots who ever left his

native land. He was born in Edinburgh in 1500, and it is from his hand that we have the first prose description of his native city. When a boy he fell down the Castle rock, and his preservation was considered so marvellous that it was variously attributed to the portions of Scripture he wore round his neck, to his guardian angel, and to the piety of his parents. In early manhood he adopted Protestant opinions, and was forced to flee to Germany, where at Wittenberg he gained the friendship of Melancthon. Subsequently he came to England, where he was well received by Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, and lectured on theology at Cambridge. Driven from England by the statute of the 'Six Articles,' he returned to Germany and played a notable part in forwarding the Reformation in that country. Florence Wilson was a man of another type. Mystic and humanist, he at Lyons became the centre of a circle of scholars who looked up to him as a rare exemplar of the graces and virtues that should adorn learning. Of Buchanan's fame on the Continent it is unnecessary to speak. For two centuries he was for Continental scholars what Grotius called him, 'Scotiæ illud numen.' By the beauty of his Latin verse, and by the purity of his style in his *History of Scotland*, he won for his country a place in the intellectual commonwealth of the nations.

As has already been said, the ideas that underlay the Scottish Reformation were not of home growth, but were mainly taken over from Continental Reformers. Directly, therefore, it had no intellectual influence on other countries. Indirectly, on the other hand, it affected the whole subsequent development of Christendom. Had Queen Mary, on her return to Scotland in 1561, found the country still in the communion of the Church of Rome, momentous results must have ensued. We know how passionately she coveted the English Crown, but, as things went, she did not even succeed in persuading Elizabeth to recognise her as her successor. Had Scotland been Catholic, however, Mary would in all probability have been in a position to make herself Queen of England by force of arms. At the period of her return the majority of the English people were still Roman Catholics. Backed by her own subjects, and supported by the Catholic party in England, she would have had a superiority of force against which Elizabeth could not have successfully contended. The result would have been that England would have been gained to Rome, and with the loss of England, its great bulwark, Protestantism

would have been at the mercy of the great Catholic powers of the Continent. Thus indirectly, it will be seen, the Scottish Reformation may have determined the spiritual and intellectual development of Western Europe during the last three centuries.

The object of the present lecture is to note what original ideas, what fresh springs of emotion, Scotland may fairly claim to have contributed to the general movement of mind in Continental countries. Of the many distinguished scholars who issued from the Scottish Reformation we cannot say that any of them made such contributions. In the books that they wrote, in their teaching from the many professorial chairs which they filled on the Continent, so far as we know, they enunciated no thought, nor struck any new note that drew the world's attention. The most distinguished of them, Andrew Melville, signalized his teaching by his free handling of Aristotle as he had been interpreted by the schoolmen, but in this he was no pioneer. From the Reformation till the eighteenth century there is but one Scot, Napier of Merchiston, whose name is written in the European firmament. By his discovery of logarithms Napier has a permanent place in the roll of original discoverers in mathematical science.

We come to the eighteenth century—the century in the national history when she made her largest contribution to the forwarding of human culture. These mocking words of Voltaire themselves attest the variety and importance of the ideas that then went forth from her. 'It is an admirable result of the progress of the human spirit,' Voltaire wrote, 'that to-day rules of taste in all the arts, from the epic poem to gardening, come to us from Scotland. The human spirit daily expands, and we should not despair of soon receiving manuals of poetics and rhetoric from the Orkney Islands.'

We recognise as inadequate all attempts to explain the appearance of galaxies of genius at particular epochs in different countries. All that we can say in general of Scotland during the eighteenth century is that her people were then more alive both to material and intellectual interests than at any previous period of her history. During the two previous centuries the nation had been preoccupied with ecclesiastical and political questions which at once narrowed her outlook and absorbed her energies. In the eighteenth century she, like other countries, ceased to be dominated by theological questions, and turned her energies to making the most of this world. Thus was created an atmosphere in which her best minds could expatiate freely, and raise questions that, in a previous age,

would have sent their propounders to the stake. Be it said, also, that throughout the eighteenth century Scotland was in closer touch with the Continent than at any previous period. The most important European books were widely read, and it was the custom, we are told, for every Scottish gentleman with £300 a year to travel abroad for two or three years before settling down to the duties of his position. Even in the Hebrides, Dr. Johnson says in his account of his journey to these islands, 'he never entered a house in which he did not find books in more languages than one.'

It was under these conditions that from Scotland there issued a series of works, in widely different spheres, which potently influenced European culture. In three distinct domains this influence may be traced—in the domain of abstract thought, in the domain of physical science, and in the domain of literature. In the brief space at my disposal I can do little more than indicate the most representative names, but even the bare mention of these names will recall what were the main intellectual interests of the eighteenth century.

The first name that meets us in the domain of abstract thought is that of Francis Hutcheson, 'the never-to-be-forgotten Hutcheson,' as his pupil Adam Smith calls him. A Scoto-Irishman by birth, Hutcheson received his University education at Glasgow, where he subsequently held the post of Professor of Moral Philosophy for seventeen years. His tenure of that post marks an epoch in the intellectual development of Scotland. The testimony of succeeding Scottish thinkers to the awakening influence of Hutcheson's teaching is unanimous. He built up no philosophic system as they did, but by his gift of exposition and of touching the higher instincts in man he created a new spiritual atmosphere for the world around him. The ideal that inspired all his teaching was that *reine Menschlichkeit*, which in the latter half of the century was the evangel proclaimed with fuller content by Herder and Goethe. On the Continent his influence was greater in Germany than in France, where the Newtonian philosophy, as expounded by Voltaire, held the field. To his influence in Germany, however, all German historians bear testimony. Probably without exception, every German thinker of the latter half of the eighteenth century owed more or less to the inspiration and to the ideas set forth by Hutcheson. In the development of the German *Aufklärung* he was a potent force, and his doctrines in psychology and aesthetics were a permeating influence in German literature. But

the conclusive tribute to the importance of Hutcheson is that he was a favourite author of Kant, who freely acknowledged his debt to him, both by way of stimulus and suggestion.

The name of the next eminent Scottish thinker—that of David Hume—is writ large in the history of European thought. The issue of his teaching has been described as ‘intellectual suicide’—a strange conclusion to have been reached in Scotland, which for nearly two centuries had been the peculiar home of dogmatic assertion on all ultimate questions. His influence in his own country was both deep and lasting. Largely owing to his teaching the prevailing philosophic creed of Scottish thinkers during the latter half of the eighteenth century was a pagan naturalism, for which Christianity was an aberration of the human mind. In the House of Commons an honourable member ventured to assert that ‘the Scots were not *all* free-thinkers.’ As late as 1817, John Gibson Lockhart could say that Hume’s was regarded as the *beau idéal* of the Scottish mind; and still later (in 1832), Carlyle spoke of Hume as ‘the pontiff of the world,’ who ruled most hearts and guided most tongues, and whom Goethe had finally displaced from his sovereignty. On the Continent his influence was even greater than at home; for there, in the words of the most competent of witnesses, he became ‘the chief factor in shaping European thought.’ Like Hutcheson, he was a greater power in Germany than in France, where the *Encyclopédistes* had already evolved a philosophic system of their own. In France, it would appear that Hume was more generally appreciated as an historian than as a metaphysician. Writing from Paris in 1765, Horace Walpole says that Hume ‘is here treated with perfect veneration. His History . . . is thought the standard of writing.’ Be it added that in the following century Auguste Comte spoke of Hume as ‘his principal precursor in philosophy.’ On Hume’s influence in Germany it is unnecessary to enlarge. In the time-honoured phrase he ‘woke Kant from his dogmatic slumber,’ and with what consequences in the world of speculative thought the philosophical literature of every country is the speaking testimony.

To the third name in the succession—that of Adam Smith—it is sufficient merely to advert, as it is one of the landmarks in the history of human development. In three distinct spheres he exercised a potent influence on Continental thought. His *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published in 1759, affected the speculations of every German writer on ethics and aesthetics (Kant included) in

the latter part of the eighteenth century. Of economic science, his *Wealth of Nations* constitutes him, if not the founder, at least its presiding divinity.

We come to the specific product of the Scottish genius in the region of abstract thought—the ‘Scottish School of Philosophy,’ of which Thomas Reid was the father. Alike in France and Germany the teaching of that school was welcomed by conservative spirits as supplying the most effective weapons against the common enemy—scepticism. During the first three quarters of the nineteenth century it was the officially recognised philosophy in the colleges of France. In his *Souvenirs d’Enfance* Renan tells us how he was reared on ‘*le bon Thomas Reid*,’ whose teaching, he was assured, soothed and consoled and led to Christianity. But the most striking testimonies to the interest of the Scottish School come from two unexpected sources—one from a Frenchman and the other from a German. Auguste Comte writes thus of his obligations to the whole succession of Scottish philosophic thinkers. ‘It is to the Scottish School, and not like many others, to the German School, that I owe the first rectification of the grave aberrations, at once moral and intellectual, peculiar to what is called the French School. I shall never forget how my evolution was in the first instance especially due to some luminous inspirations of Hume and Adam Smith.’

The other testimony comes from a still more unexpected source—from Goethe, to whom all abstract thinking was distasteful, but whose all-embracing eye no manifestation of the human spirit escaped. ‘The reason,’ he says, ‘why foreigners—Britons, Americans, Frenchmen, and Italians—can gain no profit from our new (German) philosophy is simply that it does not directly lay hold on life. They can see no practical advantages to be derived from it, and so it is that men turn more or less to the teaching of the Scottish School as it is expounded by Reid and Stewart. This teaching is intelligible to the ordinary understanding, and this it is that wins it favour. It seeks to reconcile sensationalism and spiritualism, to effect the union of the real and the ideal, and thus to create a more satisfactory foundation for human thought and action. The fact that it undertakes this work, and promises to accomplish it, obtains for it disciples and votaries.’

The second domain in which Scotland made its own contribution to the world’s progress—the domain of physical science—is beyond our present scope, and it may suffice merely to advert to the work of William Cullen in medicine, of Hunter in anatomy,

of Sir John Leslie in physics, of Hutton in geology, and of James Watt, 'the chief of inventors,' in practical discovery.

We come to the third domain—that of literature—in which Scotland exercised an influence on the Continent. In recent years French and German scholars have given their attention to the subject, and with some unexpected results. In the sphere of imaginative literature, it appears, Scotland has made a double contribution: it supplied new themes, new motives, and new inspiration, and it gave to the world certain novel theories regarding the nature of genius and the conditions under which it works.

Only two Scots can be named who, as poets, attracted the attention of Europe in the eighteenth century. The one was James Thomson, the author of the *Seasons*; the other, James Macpherson, the 'translator' of *Ossian*. To Thomson's *Seasons* German and French historians of their respective literatures ascribe the awakening of a new interest in nature which permanently affected the development of poetry in both countries. According to a French author, who has written a large book on the subject, Thomson not only inspired Rousseau in his attitude to nature, but in his poem on *Liberty* supplied him with his 'moral ideas' and his 'sociological doctrine.' In Italy Thomson appears to have been widely known. At least, some thirty years after the publication of *The Seasons*, an Italian historian of literature could write that it was 'universally read with infinite pleasure by all lovers of good poetry.' . . . On Macpherson's *Ossian*, now a disenchanted thing, it is unnecessary to dwell. It struck the most resounding note in European literature of the eighteenth century, and it laid its spell on the greatest man of action and the greatest man of thought among their contemporaries—Napoleon and Goethe.

Recent German research has opened up a new chapter relative to the intellectual influence of Scotland on the Continent in the eighteenth century. From the seventies of that century a ground-problem which occupied German thinkers was the nature of genius, especially as it manifests itself in creative literature. In the consideration of this problem, we are now told, German writers owe a large debt to two Scotsmen who are all but forgotten even in their own country. The one was Henry Home, Lord Kames, whose work entitled *Elements of Criticism* attracted the attention both of French and German critics. It was, indeed, a passing remark in that work to the effect that the *Henriade* was not a satisfactory epic poem that provoked Voltaire's sarcasm

already quoted. In Germany, however, his influence was greater than in France. Every important German writer on aesthetics, Kant included, derived inspiration and suggestion from his speculations on that subject.

The other Scottish writer, even less known than Home to his countrymen of to-day, exercised a still greater influence on German thought. He was Alexander Gerard, a Professor in the University of Aberdeen, and the two books that brought him his fame were his *Essay on Taste* and his *Essay on Genius*. The *Essay on Genius* a recent German writer has described as 'an epoch-making performance' on its subject, and he supports his statement by tracing the obligations of Kant to Gerard in his conceptions of the nature of genius and taste. And Kant himself freely acknowledged the obligation. 'Gerard,' he said, 'is the best writer on the subject.'

In another field of literature which has a closer interest for us on the present occasion—the field of history—there were three Scots whose works made the tour of the Continent and exercised an influence of their own. The names of two of them—Hume and Robertson—are familiar to every student of history; the name of the third—Adam Ferguson—is less known, yet of the three he was the most fruitful in suggestion to Continental writers. As we know, Robertson and Hume owed their inspiration to the example of Voltaire, but what gave them their distinction was a unity of treatment and a logical arrangement of their materials of which there was no previous example. Their Histories were regarded as models of lucid narration and philosophical reflection, and, translated into various Continental languages, were read with equal admiration by the general reader and the professional historian. Writing after the middle of the eighteenth century, the Italian literary historian already quoted exclaims: 'Who does not read and admire Hume's History!' and of Robertson he says that he has won 'immortal praise.'

The influence of Ferguson was of another kind, and was mainly confined to Germany. His *History of the Roman Republic* long held its place as a standard book, but it was in his speculative works, his *Essay on Civil Society* and his *Principles of Moral and Political Science* that he threw out the suggestions which influenced German conceptions of the scope and meaning of universal history. To Ferguson pre-eminently among other English and Scottish writers has been traced the beginning of a new method of historical research which appeared in Germany

in the latter half of the eighteenth century. 'Generally speaking,' says the German writer whom I am following, the 'German conception of *Weltgeschichte* was prompted by English authors,' and among these authors he assigns a special place to Ferguson.

With the eighteenth century closes the continuous succession of Scotsmen who in such different spheres made their respective contributions to European culture. In the nineteenth there was but one, Sir Walter Scott, who by his original genius appealed to the civilized world and influenced the imaginative literature of every country. For the Scottish nation, therefore, their eighteenth century has an unique interest. May it be added that for Europe at large it has an interest of its own, if merely as a curious chapter in the history of the human spirit ?

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