

Sir William is known to the world chiefly by his contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*, and his edition of the works of Dr. Thomas Reid. The contributions to the *Review* extend from the year 1829 to 1839, and were collected and republished in 1852. His edition of Reid, which was the work of many years of patient and profound thought, first appeared in 1846. These writings are known and prized throughout both Europe and America. Among those who take an interest in philosophical pursuits, it has long been matter of regret that the state of Sir William's health rendered it doubtful whether he should be able to confer systematic completeness on those incomparable philosophical fragments which he from time to time gave to the world, and unfold even more fully his great stores of learning. There is now but one feeling of unmingled sorrow that the great mind which alone could have worthily filled up the sketch it delineated, has passed for ever from amongst us.

By the death of Sir William, the University has lost its greatest ornament, and Scotland one of the most illustrious of her sons. His attainments in general erudition were of the highest order; at once so varied and minute as rarely to be equalled, and in these times certainly unsurpassed. His historical learning, especially, was both ample and profound. In the department of speculative science, with which Sir William's name is peculiarly identified, he stood alone in Britain, if not in Europe—remarkable alike for subtle and profound thought, and for breadth and minuteness of erudition. His writings and academic teaching have inaugurated a new era in the history of Scottish speculation—an era that reflects in a high degree the qualities of mind and habits of thought of its founder. In the hands of Reid, Stewart and Brown, Scottish philosophical thinking was comparatively limited in its range, being chiefly psychological, and its relation to other schools, whether preceding or contemporaneous, were but few and ill-defined. By the influence of the great master, who has so recently departed, Scottish thinking,—while it has lost nothing of its manly independence and its sober but elevated spirit,—has widened its sphere and put itself in contact and alliance both with ancient and modern speculation. The wonderful philosophical erudition of Hamilton peculiarly fitted him for this task. With ancient, mediæval, and modern speculation he was thoroughly familiar. And what is a still rarer circumstance, and one more peculiarly distinctive of a powerful and independent mind, the amplitude of his erudition, instead of impeding or fettering the free exercise of his intellect, only lent it additional stimulus. No thinker, perhaps—at least, no modern thinker—has made greater and better use of the historical results of philosophical inquiry, in the way of moulding and sustaining his own thinking, than Hamilton. But in regard to the historical anticipations of the doctrines of this system, it may be truly said that it is only in the illumination which his own independent reflection has cast upon them that they acquire clearness, distinctness or significance. He walked at large through the domain of the history of speculation; but so obscure in themselves are many of the indications of doctrines which he developed and raised to the highest importance, as at once to impress us with the conviction that what he discovered there was mainly in virtue of the light which he carried with him, and brought to bear on what would otherwise have been faint and undistinguished.

Sir William Hamilton is no more; but he has left behind him a name of which Scotland may well be proud, and which will henceforward be a familiar word in philosophical schools. The doctrines that are peculiarly identified with his name will doubtless form the chief groundwork of philosophical debate in the future