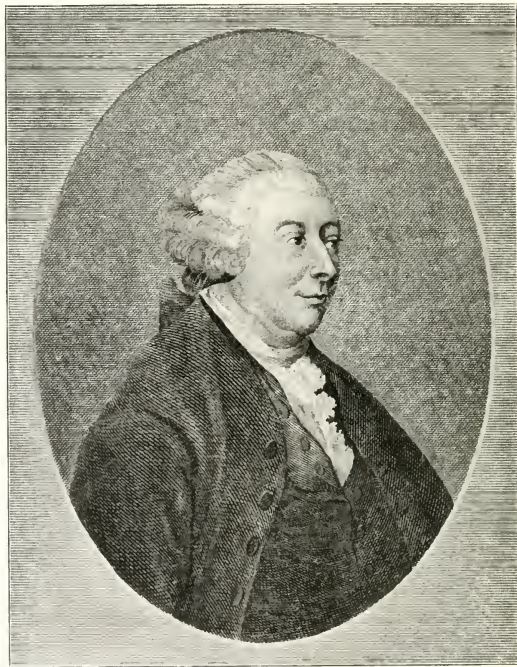


"spirit of the ancient *Märchen*, and thereby succeeded in setting in relief the serious nature of the story and the religious comfort that underlies this most exquisite production of human fiction." μ.

HUME'S ENQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.¹

Following Descartes's *Discourse on Method*, The Open Court Pub. Co. has issued, as the second philosophical classic of their Religion of Science Library,



DAVID HUME.

(1711-1776.)

Scottish Philosopher. (After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

David Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Other philosophical classics, like Kant's *Prolegomena*, are to follow, and it is hoped that the series

¹*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. By David Hume. Reprinted from the edition of 1777. With Hume's Autobiography and a letter from Adam Smith. Chicago: The Open Court Pub. Co. 1900. Pages, 180. Price, 25 cents (rs. 6d.).

will thus eventually form a consecutive and comprehensive course of philosophical reading in the great original works of philosophy, which are far less bulky in size and more attractive as to matter than is generally supposed.

The present volume, which upon the whole is easy and entertaining reading, is an unannotated reprint, merely, of the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, made from the posthumous edition of 1777, together with Hume's charming autobiography and the eulogistic letter of Adam Smith, usually prefixed to the *History of England*, but deserving of wider circulation. These additions, with the portrait by Ramsay, which forms the frontispiece to the volume, render the picture of Hume's life very complete. The volume has also an index.

With the great public, Hume's fame has always rested upon his *History of England*,—a work now antiquated as history and remarkable only for the signal elegance and symmetry of its style. This once prevalent opinion, however, our age has reversed, and, as has been well remarked,¹ "Hume, the spiritual father of Kant, now takes precedence over Hume, the rival of Robertson and Gibbon." It is precisely here, in fact, that Hume's significance for the history of thought lies. With him modern philosophy entered upon its Kantian phase, became critical and positivistic, became a theory of knowledge. For the old "false and adulterate" metaphysics he sought to substitute a "true" metaphysics, based on the firm foundations of reason and experience. His scepticism—and of scepticism he has since been made the standard-bearer—was directed against the old ontology only, and not against science proper (inclusive of philosophy). "Had Hume been an absolute sceptic, he could never have produced an Immanuel Kant. . . . The spirit of the theoretical philosophy of Hume and Kant, the fundamental conception of their investigations, and the goal at which they aim, are perfectly identical. Theirs is the critical spirit, and positive knowledge the goal at which they aim. To claim for Kant the sole honor of having founded criticism is an error which a closer study of British philosophy tends to refute."²

Of Hume's purely philosophical pieces the present book and the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* are, in their precise, lucid, and engaging style, the most representative and the most elegant. The *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* will be published in a succeeding number of the Religion of Science Library (having the portrait here reproduced for its frontispiece), and together these two pieces will afford an exact and comprehensive knowledge of Hume's philosophy.

μ.

REINCARNATE.

From sky to sky a silent land,
Through which an idle river flows,
Upon its banks, on either hand,
The purple iris blows.

The sunlight faints in languorous stream,
The sunlight fades in empty air—

¹ Alfred Weber, *History of Philosophy*, New York, 1896.

² Weber, *loc. cit.*, pp. 419-420.