THE LATE DEAN OF BRITISH MEN OF LETTERS, David Masson, so long survived the appearance of his more important literary works that probably more than one admirer of his monumental "Life of Milton" only became aware that its author was still alive from reading the notice of his death — if the bull is permissible. Sixty-three years ago Carlyle hailed the young author of "The Three Devils: Luther's, Milton's, and Goethe's" as the honestest of literary craftsmen and a friend that was simple, sincere, open-minded, and helpful. Long after that, it is interesting to recall, this honest literary craftsman was proposed to Carlyle, or by him, as perhaps the suitable person to undertake the difficult and delicate task that finally, as all the world knows, fell to Froude. In a review of Lord Cockburn's "Life of Lord Jeffrey," contributed to "The North British Review" fifty-five years ago, Professor Masson, discussing Scottish influence on British literature, inclines to the opinion that the peculiar characteristic of the Scotch intellect, the fundamental quality of the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*, is emphasis. "All Scotchmen are *emphatic*,"

he declares. "If a Scotchman is a fool, he gives such emphasis to the nonsense he utters as to be considerably more insufferable than a fool of any other country; if a Scotchman is a man of genius, he gives such emphasis to the good things he has to communicate that they have a supremely good chance of being at once or very soon attended to." In Masson's vigor and effectiveness there is surely no lack of emphasis. Whatever he had to communicate had a very good chance of being attended to without much delay. Born in Aberdeenshire and holding for almost half his long life a professorship in Edinburgh University, he was through and through a Scotchman, and was also the teacher of eminent Scotchmen, from Ian Maclaren and Henry Drummond in the late sixties, to Barrie and Crockett in the early eighties — and who knows how many others, of a later decade, that are still to make themselves famous? As first editor of "Macmillan's Magazine," young Masson rallied about him as contributors many of the foremost writers of the time, with Carlyle, Tennyson, and Thackeray among them. As a force stimulating to good literary work by both example and precept, he made himself felt in London as afterward in Edinburgh. Filling for many years a chair of English literature and rhetoric, he gained the love as well as the respect of his pupils. "His work in the class," says one who knows, "was always alive with enthusiasm, the enthusiasm born of broad scholarship and resolute conviction that he had a great message to deliver. The text of the lectures was not the main thing; it was the man. Belief, not novelty, is the basis of all originality. Masson did not seek to train special researchers along Ph.D. lines of barren activity; his aim was ever to develop that latent power of vision which is the source of all great literary expression."

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