

DAVID GEORGE RITCHIE was born in Jedburgh, Scotland on 26 October, 1853, into a cultured family which included among its number academics and clergymen. He was the only son of three children born to George Ritchie and Elizabeth Bradfute Dudgeon. His father was the parish minister, elected as a moderator to the general assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1870. There were family connections with the Carlyles and in 1889 Ritchie edited the Early Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle. He was educated at Jedburgh Academy, and entered Edinburgh University in 1869 where he was introduced to philosophy by Campbell Fraser and Henry Calderwood. While at Edinburgh he attended a botany class which stimulated a life-long interest that was to find expression in his ethical and political writings. His main subject was classics in which he graduated with first class honours in 1875. He then went to Balliol College, Oxford where he gained a first in Classical moderations (1875) and in the 1878 final Greats examinations. In the same year he became a fellow of Balliol, and in 1881 was made a tutor, a position which he also held at Balliol from 1882-86. While at Oxford he was influenced by both T. H. Green and Arnold Toynbee. Ritchie was unsuccessful in his application for the chair of Logic, Rhetoric and Metaphysics at St. Andrews in 1891 against Henry Jones and W. R. Sorley. Sorley lost out by one vote to Jones and went on to chairs at Cardiff, Aberdeen and Cambridge (where he influenced the young Michael Oakeshott). When Jones left St. Andrew's in 1894 Ritchie was appointed to the chair at St. Andrew's. He was awarded an hon, LL.D. by Edinburgh University in 1898, and in 1898-9 he was president of the Aristotelian Society.

One of Ritchie's colleagues described him as a socialist and 'zealous' democrat whose way of thinker seemed to have little in common with ordinary people. He was an early member of the Fabian Society, but left in the mid 1990s. He was at the forefront in criticising the application of naturalistic theories of evolution to society. His The Principles of State Interference was one of the most widely read political tracts in the English speaking world.

Ritchie was married twice. The first time to Flora Lindsay Macdonell in 1881 who gave birth to a daughter. In 1889, the year after Flora died, he married Ellen S. Haycraft

with whom he had a son. Ritchie died after a short illness on 3 February, 1903 at St. Andrews where he is buried.

Biographical: E. S. Haldane, 'Ritchie, David George (1853-1903)', Dictionary of National Biography 1901-1911; Robert Latter, 'Memoir' in Philosophical Studies by David D.

Ritchie (London, Macmillan, 1905).

Principal works: Darwinism and Politics (1889); The Principles of State Interference (1891); Darwin and Hegel with other philosophical studies (1893); Natural Rights (1894); Studies in Political and Social Ethics (1902). All published by Sonnenschein in London.