



Crowded with Genius: Edinburgh, 1745-1789

James Buchan

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In the early eighteenth century, Edinburgh was a filthy backwater town synonymous with poverty and disease. Yet by century's end, it had become the marvel of modern Europe, home to the finest minds of the day and their breathtaking innovations in architecture, politics, science, the arts, and economics—all of which continue to echo loudly today.

Adam Smith penned *The Wealth of Nations*. James Boswell produced *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. Alongside them, pioneers such as David Hume, Robert Burns, James Hutton, and Sir Walter Scott transformed the way we understand our perceptions and feelings, sickness and health, relations between the sexes, the natural world, and the purpose of existence.

In *Crowded with Genius*, James Buchan beautifully reconstructs the intimate geographic scale and boundless intellectual milieu of Enlightenment Edinburgh. With the scholarship of a historian and the elegance of a novelist, he tells the story of the triumph of this unlikely town and the men whose vision brought it into being.

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