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Amy Ackerberg-Hastings* (aackerbe@verizon.net). *John Playfair, the Scottish Enlightenment, and "Progress" in the History and Philosophy of Mathematics*. Preliminary report.

The thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment were fascinated by the concept of progress, both in human history and in the development of the natural world. Commentators, especially popular writers, have noted that the Scots' optimism about progress established a foundation for 21st-century assumptions about the nature of this concept. Toward the end of the Scottish Enlightenment, John Playfair (1748-1819), a younger contemporary of the principal Edinburgh figures of the movement, joined the conversation. In particular, in 1816 he penned "Dissertation Second: On the Progress of Mathematical and Physical Science Since the Revival of Letters in Europe" for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This talk provides some historical background for the session by describing how this University of Edinburgh professor of mathematics and then of natural philosophy understood the meaning and role of progress in mathematics and its history. The talk will also suggest how paying attention to the complexities of this concept can benefit today's teachers. (Received June 21, 2012)