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Reminiscences of Scotch Character.

John Muir

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NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Reminiscences of Scotch Character.

Character is a charming little book—a con-
creteness and vividness which distinguishes, in a
the American edition, he says, "No doubt
lyric, but of an entirely Scotch kind. The
principle of motion in language is never
rical poetical power, and a distinctive
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There was a time when the older Scotch peasantry held a bold assertion of their religious opinions, of which the following rebuke, received by the late Lord Rutherford from a shepherd, is a fair specimen, and well illustrates the locality.

The Lord had entered into conversation with him, and was complaining bitterly of the weather, which prevented him from making a pastoral tour of inspection, and of the hardships incident to his vocation. "What a d—d misl!" and then expressed his wonder how or for what purpose there should be such a thing as an agrarian law, by which he could not walk about the country freely and unhampered. "What ails you at the mists, sir? it wets the soil, it rooks the yews, and, adding, with much animation, "the shepherds are thus reduced to beggary and a fair sample of the modern poet, or the corrupted bard.

An English artist traveling professionally through Scotland had occasion to remain over Sunday at the inn near the spot where he was expected to be the next day. During the long leisure cast away the time he walked out a short way in the environs, where the picturesque ruins of a castle met his eye. He asked a countryman whether it were true, and if so would he be pleased to show him the name of the castle. The reply was somewhat startling: "It's no the day to be speen sic things!"—not the proper day to ask about lost castles. This was an old story of a famous preacher of geology, who, visiting in the Highlands, met an old man on the hills on Sunday morning. The professor had passed the very severe instructions on Sabbath desecration entertained in Ross-shire, had pocketed his hammer in hand, and was thoughtlessly breaking specimens of geology, when the old man, turning sharp round his eye, turned sharp round upon him: "What ails you at the mist, sir? it wets the soil; it rooks the yews, and, adding, with much animation, "the shepherds are thus reduced to beggary and a fair sample of the modern poet, or the corrupted bard.

In the chapter on old Scottish conviviality are many astonishing illustrations of the instinct in the suppressed manliness and dignity at present so largely expressed in Scottish plumage. The professor was delighted to see the old man so engrossed in his friendly occupation, the quantity of whisky one could carry, indulgence or unwillingness to drink deep being regarded as a mark of a man and fettle character. Not long after, when he met the old man with a bottle in his hand, the professor said to him: "I hear that your father was a 'three-bottle-man,' and a certain well-known baronet of convivial tastes. I was on one occasion of bearing testimony to the propriety, however, when you and he were set down to a table with other more high-minded qualities of a friend of whom I wished to commend after fully stating the circumstances. He had not the slightest objection. He declined it proper to notice his convivial attainments, and added accordingly with cautionary approval on so important a point. "And he is a fair specimen of a good man."

Sir Walter Scott, William Erskine and Mr. Craigmillar were dinner guests of Lord Crichton, who had dined with a certain drunken lawyer of Skenebr, and Scott, of hardy, strong and healthy frame, had matched the day in many一杯, and the rum was sent down to the poor in a jug. Sir Walter, in refined and delicate mental and bodily temperance, was a bad hand at anything resembling that of the off side. On the party breaking up, the following advice was given to the NSDictionary of Scott, assuming that he would rise high in the profession, and adding: "I'll tell ye what, Walter Scott, that lad Craigmillar is a man I can; but tak my word for't, it's no by drinkin'."

On Quaint Scotch Expressions.

The following is a fair sample of the quaint and original character of Scottish ways and expressions: A poor man came to his minister for advice. He was much engaged in being married. As he expressed some scruples, however, on the subject, the minister asked him whether there was

Some Anecdotes.
any doubts of his being accepted. No, that was not the difficulty; but he expressed a fear that it might not be altogether suitable, and he asked whether, if he were once married, he could not go back upon the step. The clergyman assured him that it was impossible; if he married it must be for better and worse; that he could not go back upon the step. So, thus instructed he went away. After a time he returned, and said he had made up his mind to try the experiment, and he came and was married. Ere long he came back very disconsolate, and declared it would not do at all; that he was quite miserable, and begged to be unmarried. The minister assured him that was out of the question. The man insisted, however, that the marriage could not hold good, for "the wife was worse than the devil." The minister demurred, saying that was quite impossible. "Na," said the poor man, "the Bible tells ye that if ye resist the devil he flees ye, but if ye resist her she flees at ye." A baby was out with the nurse, who walked it up and down a garden. "Is't a laddie or a lassie?" said the gardener. "A laddie," said the man. "Weel," said he, "I'm glad o' that, for there's ower mony women in the world." "Hech, man," said Jess, "di' ye no ken there's aye maist sawn o' the best crap?" The intense interest felt by Scotchmen in the incidents of their national history is curiously exemplified in the following: A blacksmith, whom Sir Walter Scott had formerly known as a horse doctor, and whom he afterwards found practising medicine in England, with a reckless use of "laudamy and calomy," apologized for the number he might kill, by the assurance that it "would be lang bfore it would make up for Flodden." A similar example has been recorded in connection with Bannockburn. Two English gentlemen visited this famous battlefield, and a country blacksmith pointed out with much intelligence the respective positions of the Scotch and English armies, the stone on which was fixed the Bruce's standand, etc. The gentlemen on leaving pressed his acceptance of a crown piece. "Ta, va," replied the Scotsman, with much pride, "Bannockburn bas cost ye encuch already." SCOTCH PROVERBS. The chapter "On humor proceeding from the Scottish language, including Scottish proverbs," is perhaps the most interesting in the book. Here are the three best of the proverbs, good enough for the most benevolent angels of human conception: "Kindness creeps where it canna gang," prettyly expressing that where love can do little, it will do that little though it cannot do more... "Leal hear~ never le<.>d," well expresses that an honest, loyal disposition will scorn, and scorn all circumstances, to tell a falsehood. "The e'ening brings a' hame," meaning that the evening of life, or the approach of death, softens all repelling influences, and brings together separated by quarrels. The literal idea of the "e'ening bringing a hame," has a high and illustrious antiquity, as in the fragments of "Sappho," thus paraphrased by Lord Byron: O Hesperus! thou bringest all good things— Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer; To the bird whose wings o'er the waifs are weary, The welcome stall to the o'erlabored steer; Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.