

SCOTTISH CHARACTERISTICS.

"Their Origin and Practical Worth."

"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do."—I. Chron. xii., 32.

THESE words occur in the midst of the account which we have, in this chapter, of the gathering of the tribes of Israel to David to make him king. And when we read them in the light of that wonderful and spontaneous movement, it becomes very evident that these tribes possessed characteristics which distinguished them, not only from all other peoples and nations, but which distinguished them from one another. And God who, in their creation and by His providence, makes men to differ, never ignores their distinguishing characteristics. And so when telling us of the gathering of the tribes to David, he not only records the names of the different tribes, but fixes indelibly upon the page of inspiration the features and qualities by which one tribe was distinguished from another. Each tribe possessed something more than a name, something more than the number of the individuals who rallied around its standard, and occupied so much territory in the country. The tribes were not like so many bullets run in the same mould, and placed in different boxes, their only distinction being that they occupied different places. They possessed a tribal character, features and qualities which marked them off and distinguished them from one another. And the Holy Spirit is as careful to mark the distinctive characteristics of the tribes as he is to record their names and their numbers. Thus he tells us that the Benjaminites were ambidexterous, "they could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones, and shooting arrows out of the bow"; that the Gadites were "men of war, fit for the battle, who could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains"; that the children of Simeon were "mighty men of valour for the war"; that the children of Ephraim, for their heroic deeds of daring and prowess, "were famous throughout the house of their fathers"; and that the children of Issachar were "men