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“ THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD.”—Prov. xix. 2.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF REV. JOHN MITCHELL, LATE
OF RIVER JOHN.

THE biography of any man, however humble his sphere of life may have been, affords lessons of practical improvement. It is a favourite maxim with some, and one in which there is not a little truth, that every man sent into the world is sent on a particular mission. He has a particular work to do, which perhaps no other man *can* do, and which assuredly no other man *will* do. The effects which his life produces, and the impressions which he leaves behind him, when closely and minutely examined, are, in the circle in which he moved, only such as he alone could have produced or left. To use a term frequently employed by philosophers, there is an *idiosyncrasy* of life or of moral character, as well as of temper or disposition. In other words, there are peculiarities in every man's life to be met with in no other. This idea is often brought out in a variety of forms even in the commonest walks of life. How often do we hear it asserted by the humblest peasant among us, that nothing is created in vain,—that every thing has its special use,—that every flower, nay, every word, is created for some specific end, although frequently we may not be able to detect that end! The same remark we apply to the life of a man. Special powers or capabilities are brought out.—Certain functions come into operation. Peculiar effects are produced. Individual influences work, it may be imperceptibly, on those around him.—Some or all of these characterize every man. In this light the history of the humblest individual, especially if he be a christian, may be viewed as interesting. It teaches some practical lesson. It gives some special view of the goodness or wisdom of God. It illustrates some mental or moral power.—Variety, a boundless variety, shines out in all the works of Jehovah. It appears in human life too. Let the devout soul take such a view of it; and who could restrain him from exclaiming: “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.”

We purpose, in the present article, to give a brief sketch of the life of the Rev John Mitchell, late of River John. As one of the fathers of our Church, such a sketch should be interesting. A number of papers, which have lately come into our hands, communicate some facts that should increase this interest. But it will be valuable, more particularly for giving an illustration of