

the abundant droves of black-faced sheep and black cattle, and the stores of excellent butter and cheese which every year come out of these hills to the great markets, bear witness to the quality of the pasture. It might have been hoped that in so rocky a tract minerals of some sort would be found to compensate for the comparative poorness of the surface. Many a viewer and "prospector" has scoured the sides of the hills and valleys. Copper, lead, and iron in small quantities have been found; but there seems no probability that the pastoral character of the country will ever be to any serious extent disturbed by mining operations. And yet, curiously enough, in one of the deep valleys on the northern margin of the hilly tracts of Carrick a small coal-field exists—a little bit of the great Scottish coal-field, which by some ancient terrestrial revolution has got detached from the rest, and become, as it were, jammed in between the two steep sides of the valley of the Girvan.

The colliers of Scotland have been in all time a distinct and a superstitious population. For many a long century they and the makers of salt were slaves, bought and sold with the land on which they were born, and from which they had no more right to remove themselves than if they had been of African descent, and born in Carolina. Customs and beliefs which had gradually died out elsewhere naturally lingered for a time among the colliers; and indeed until the general use of steam machinery and the invasion of an Irish labouring population, the Scottish miners maintained much of their singularity. Down in that little coal-field of Carrick, however, shut out from the rest of the mining districts, and even in no small degree from the country at large, the colliers preserved until only a few years ago many traits which we are accustomed to think