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UNITED PARISHES OF DUTHIL AND ROTHIE-
MURCHUS.

(COUNTIES OF MURRAY AND INVERNESS.)

By the Rev. Mr PATRICK GRANT.

D U T H I L.

Name, Situation, Surface, Soil, &c.

THE ancient name of the parish of Duthil was *Glenchearnich*, signifying, in Gaelic, "Glen of Heroes;" from various exploits of the inhabitants in expelling the Cummins from that part of the country, as well as from their obstinate defence of it, afterwards against the depredations of the Highlanders. The modern name Duthil is from *Deogh-dball*, "excellent valley;" the Kirk-town being situated upon a rising ground, commanding the prospect of a valley about 1000 acres. The parish is in the county and Synod of Murray, and presbytery of Abernethy; extends 14 miles from E. to W. and is 10 miles in breadth, is bounded by the parish of Moy on the N. by Alvey on the W. by Abernethy on the S. and by Inverallen on the E. The general appearance is hilly, with
fir,

fir, birch and alder, on the skirts of the hills; but beyond them it is covered with heath, and is rocky. It is divided nearly into two equal parts by the river Dulnan, signifying in Gaelic, "floody," running from W. to E. about 14 miles. On both sides of which lies a great part of the arable ground. The soil towards the lower end of the parish, which widens into a flat for several miles, frequently overflowed by the Dulnan, is deep. Towards the upper end, and at a distance from the river, shallow, yet fertile through the whole. The climate is extremely healthy, and the most common distempers are nervous fevers, and swellings in the joints, occasioned, most probably, by the vicissitudes of heat and cold, which occasion too frequent and imprudent changes of warmer clothing for the Highland garb. There are several mineral springs in the parish, two of which have been serviceable in the gravel.

Animals, &c.—The quadrupeds are of the common kind in the Highlands. Some of the horses are of the large labouring species. The Highland garrons, as they are called, though not so sufficient for labour, are more adapted to the lower class of people, easily supported, by running out in the fields most part of winter. This country, once stored with the finest woolled kind of sheep, has for some years been over-run with the coarse Linton breed, which ought to be extirpated from every country. The parish abounds with grouse, partridge and black-game, and a vast variety of the smaller kind of birds. The wood-cock appears in October, and disappears in April.

Population.—At the time of Dr Webster's report, the numbers in Duthil and Rothiemurchus were 1785. In the

the earlier periods of society here, when only the skirts of the hills were inhabited, the lower grounds being covered with wood, and infested by wolves and other ravenous animals, the population bore a nearer proportion to what it now is than it did for a series of years previous to the rebellion in 1745. Since that memorable period, the population has decreased considerably, owing chiefly to two causes. The opportunity afforded young adventurers to traverse the field of fortune, and throwing land into large farms. The amount of the present population of Duthil is 830, all of the established church; males, 372; females, 458; annual average of births, 70; deaths, 15; marriages, 15; souls under 10, 150; from 10 to 20, 244; from 20 to 50, 295; from 50 to 70, 98; from 70 to 100, 43; farmers and families, 54; household servants, 3; labouring servants, male and female, 230; one student at college. Formerly most of the gentlemen's sons and of farmers studied at college; but for 40 years past, they have become adventurers abroad. Number of persons born in other parishes in Scotland, 141; number of gentry, 5. About 20 years ago there was a considerable number of very creditable gentlemen with families in this parish, most of whom have now become extinct; and the few remaining are soon likely to become so, their sons preferring various pursuits abroad; bachelors, 3; each marriage, at an average, produces 7 children; inhabited houses, 166; persons at an average to each inhabited house, 5.

Agriculture, &c.—Cattle, at an average, are 1022; sheep, 3424; horses, 315; ploughs of the Scotch kind, and a few English, 105; carts, 260; arable acres, 2183; all under corn and potatoes, excepting a few under cabbage, turnip and fown grass; acres in meadow-grass, 2467;

2467; acres in mofs and moor adjoining to the arable and meadow, 4650. What quantity of ground lies waste, or in common, being the hilly part of the parish, I cannot ascertain. At least a third of the parish is under wood. The parish supplies itself abundantly with provisions. The only articles of export are black cattle and sheep. The real rent of the parish is about L. 1100 Sterling. There are but a few inclosures in the parish. The people murmur exceedingly at inclosures, their cattle having been accustomed to range promiscuously through the year, excepting in the summer season, and while the corns are on the ground.

Stipend, School, Poor.—The value of the living, including 2 glebes, is L. 67. The church was built in 1400, repaired in 1770. The manse was built in 1704, rebuilt in 1763. Sir James Grant is patron, and the only heritor.—There are 2 schools, a parochial one, and the other established by the Society for propogating Christian Knowledge. The salary of the parochial school is 100 merks. The salary and perquisites will amount to about L. 12 Sterling. The number of scholars during the winter season is about 30. In former years, when a number of gentlemen's families resided, there were usually about 70 scholars, some of whom were sent yearly to the University. But the salary is now so inadequate to the expence of living, that no proper schoolmaster can be had; so that the gentlemen are obliged to send their children, at a great expence, to distant counties to school. The salary of the Society school is L. 9 Sterling, with suitable conveniencies, furnished by the tenants, in whose district the school is stationed. The number of scholars, at an average, does not exceed 20.—The number of poor receiving

ving alms is 16. The annual contributions for their relief do not exceed L. 5. There is no established fund.

Prices, Wages, &c.—The price of beef, for a few years, has stood at $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. the lb. formerly at $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; mutton now at 3 d. formerly 1 d. ; butter, 12 s. formerly 5 s. the stone ; cheese from 4 s. to 6 s. formerly 2 s. 6 d. Days wages of labourers in husbandry, and common labourers, when married, 1 s. which is sufficient to maintain a family. The fuel used is wood and peat, and is the most expensive fuel in any part of Scotland, requiring the labour of the whole summer. Thus the farmer is under the necessity of neglecting the proper business of the farm. The usual wages of male domestic servants are L. 6 a-year ; female servants L. 3. They are entitled to several articles besides wages, and engage only for a half-year, which is very distressing to the farmer. If some mode is not adopted to regulate the wages of servants, such as restricting their wages to a reasonable sum, by the universal consent of counties, the farmer must unavoidably fail. Servants during the summer, stroll about idly, and live upon their former half-year's wages, knowing that the farmer must yield to the highest terms when the harvest approaches. The idea of preventing, or even discouraging servants from going to the south country, so universally suggested, approaches too near to oppression. Servants confess that their wages are beyond the profits of their labour, but when 1 or 2 farmers are necessitated for labourers, they are obliged to give high fees, and from this view numbers of servants lie in waiting. The increase in value of saleable articles might seemingly admit of an augmentation of rent. But letting the Hill-improvements to separate possessors, having diminished these articles, by reducing the number of cattle, and these too pinched in their pasture, still the same number of servants

wants is necessary. It would therefore be of infinite advantage to the possessors of low farms to have the Hill-improvements also in their possession, or portioned out upon the common pasture, though they should pay the addition of rent. This observation, if applicable only to a particular district, would be foreign to the purpose; but it extends to a vast track of country; to the western districts of Aberdeen, Banff and Murray shires; and a great part of Inverness and Perth shires, which properly comprehend the Highlands of Scotland. Servants wages having increased so prodigiously, it is more advantageous to the farmer to employ cottagers or day labourers, for the purposes of husbandry, where fuel and other necessaries can be conveniently had; but where it is otherwise, the difficulty of collecting fuel for the tenant's own use, and also for the cottagers, which would be necessary, if employed in his service, would be unsurmountable. Employing cottagers or day labourers universally in this way, being generally married, would have the good effect of increasing population, as well as subjecting servants to more tolerable behaviour, where they must necessarily be had. Still there is one particular absolutely necessary to be observed, which, if not attended to, will be an unsurmountable bar to the farmer's industry. It is the proper regulation of the price of corn and meal; when meal can be had under 16 s. a boll, (144 lb. Averdupois,) the different classes of labourers become idly disposed. The wages of 1 half-year will maintain them idle a great part of the year.

Roads and Bridges.—The roads and bridges have for some years been kept in repair, by statute labour exacted in kind. The road from Grantown to Aviemore, 13 miles in length, was repaired in 1779 to 24 feet in breadth, being formerly 12 feet, by the country people,

at the request of the proprietor Sir James Grant, without affecting the statute labour of the year. Of which road there are 9 miles extending through the southern limits of the parish, therefore, of no material advantage to the people of this country, chiefly accommodating the public. The bridges were originally built at the expence of the proprietor, one of which, a stone bridge of one arch, over the water of Dulnan, built in 1700, having now fallen into disrepair, is completely supplied by a bridge built last summer, 1791, close by it. A military road being projected by Duthil to Dulleybridge, than which, if executed equal to what of it is finished, no road can be more complete. For the proper line of this road, the public are much indebted to the assiduity and attention of Colonel Montgomery, Inspector General of military roads; having traversed on foot a vast track of very rugged ground for that purpose, and thereby rendered the line at least 4 miles shorter than that universally adopted, before Colonel Montgomery inspected it, at the same time avoiding the expence of bridges, and the inconveniency of rising ground. The objection to this line, which appeared to other inspectors, arose from mosses of immense depth intervening.

Miscellaneous Observations.—The general size of the people is 5 feet 6. The greatest height which any individual in the parish has attained to, is that of a gentleman alive at present, being 6 feet 7, handsome and well proportioned.—They are extremely industrious, more properly laborious, in the cultivation of their possessions, superstitiously treading in the footsteps of their ancestors, disregarding every new mode of improvement, in which, unfortunately, this country is not singular. To emancipate from

a prejudice so universal and deeply rooted, will require strong and uncommon exertions. The efforts of a native have hitherto had so little effect, that they only serve to verify, 'That a prophet has no honour in his own country.' The only effectual mode would be, by one or more strangers of experience settling in such districts, as a necessity of this kind requires. Though proprietors, for a number of years, should give the highest encouragement, the advantage in time would be immense.—Until of late, the people were very fond of a military life; but the wages of servants increasing so exceedingly, that spirit is almost totally overcome. Formerly none would enlist but in the Highland corps. Bounty-money now determines the choice. The people are sufficiently economical, yet extremely hospitable and well disposed. They enjoy the comforts and advantages of society, as much as an inland country, and a severe climate, will admit of.—The situation of the parish in 1782 and 1783 was truly distressing. Had it not been for Government bounty, and Sir James Grant's large supplies from distant countries, the poorer class of people would have perished. So great was the destruction of the crop in 1782, by the frost setting in so early as the month of August, that the most substantial corn which was sent to some of the mills in this parish, was a crop of wild oats from a piece of ground which had been ploughed, but not sown. From various observations made upon this kind of grain, it appears to be a spontaneous production; so that should oats, by some calamity, be swept off from the face of the earth, it might be regained by a proper cultivation of this species of grain, offensive as it is. It will naturally occur to those unacquainted with a severe climate, that early sowing would, in some degree, prevent the fatal effects of frost. This may answer in a favourable
climate,

climate, but impracticable, where for most seasons the ground is bomb proof in the middle of March, and mere puddle for some time thereafter. In 1680, as nearly as can be recollected, there was a famine in this and the neighbouring counties, of the most fatal consequence. The poorer sort of people frequented the church-yard, to pull a mess of nettles, and frequently struggled about the prey, being the earliest spring greens, which they greedily fed upon. boiled without meal or salt. So many families perished from want, that, for 6 miles in a well inhabited extent, within the year there was not a *smoke* remaining. Nursing women were found dead upon the public road, and babes in the agonies of death sucking at their mother's breasts. Numbers, to avoid the horror of their bodies being exposed, finding the near approaches of unavoidable death, crawled to the church-yard, for the purpose of more immediate interment, that the earth, which denied them subsistence, might piously receive their remains into its bosom.—An augmentation of rent, the prodigious increase of servants wages, and letting small improvements toward the skirts of the hills, called Hill-improvements, all concur as causes of great alteration in the customs and style of living of the inhabitants, within these 20 years. That emigrations, to an extensive degree, have happened from a country where such oppression prevails, is not to be wondered at. Still emigration is no criterion to judge by, of the situation of a people. Whole tribes, who enjoyed the comforts of life in a reasonable degree, have of late years emigrated from different parts of Scotland, from mere humour, and a fantastical idea of becoming heir own masters and freeholders.—The language principally spoken is the Gaelic, and the names of places are derived from that language; as *Craig-Elachie*, 'Rock of Alarm.' There are 2
rock.

rocks of the same name, one at each extremity of the country called Strathspey, about 30 miles distant. Upon the approach of an enemy, the signal was sent from the one to the other, for all fit to bear arms to appear at an appointed place. Hence the Grants motto, 'Stand fast Craig-Elachie.'—The only principal inn in the parish is at Aviemore. There are no ale-houses. The number of houses in which whisky (a beverage which seems fit only for dæmons) is sold, is 10. There were many more, until of late, when they were suppressed by the proprietor, upon finding the very bad effects on the morals of the people.

R O T H I E.

ROTHIEMURCHUS.

Name, Situation, Soil, &c.

THE parish of Rothiemurchus was united to Duthil in 1625. Sir James Grant of Grant is patron. The name in Gaelic is *Raat-mber-gbiuisb*, 'great plain of fir.' It is situated in the county of Inverness, Synod of Moray, and presbytery of Abernethy; extends 7 miles from E. to W. upon the south banks of Spey; 4 miles in breadth. Bounded by the parish of Duthil on the N. from which it is separated by the river Spey; on the W. by Kingusich; on the S. by Athol and Braemar; on the E. by Abernethy. The nature of the soil near the banks of Spey is deep and fertile; but, in general, is shallow. There is an inexhaustible quarry, more properly a mountain, of limestone, in the centre, with abundance of fuel. There are 2 small lakes, abounding with char. Lochnellan, one of them, exhibits a scene most picturesque and romantic, and by the situation of the surrounding hills are formed 5 very remarkable echoes. Upon a small island in Lochnellan, is a castle, built time immemorial; the walls of which are still entire.—To the birds common in this country may be added, in the parish of Rothiemurchus, tarmagans, the only inhabitants, through all seasons, of the tops of the highest mountains.

Population.—The amount of the numbers at present is 280, all of the established church. Males, 130; Females, 150. Annual average of births, 30; of marriages, 5; deaths,

deaths, 12. Of souls under 10, 48; from 10 to 20, 63; from 20 to 50, 92; from 50 to 70, 46; from 70 to 100, 31; farmers and families, 9; household servants, 3; labouring servants, 46; gentry, 5. Each marriage, at an average, produces 5 children.

Agriculture, &c.—Number of cattle, 180; sheep, 2300; horses, 95. There being a number of wood manufacturers, the parish does not supply itself with provisions. The land-rent is L. 300; wood, at an average, L. 300.

School, Poor, &c.—The only school is that established by the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge. The salary is L. 10 Sterling. That, and the perquisites, amount to about L. 15. The number of scholars seldom exceeds 30.—The number of poor is 7. The annual contributions for their relief do not exceed L. 3; and there is no other fund.

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