

Strathmore, landlords and tenants have concurred in advancing the art by all the known and approved methods. The latest improvement is the application of bones for manure, which was introduced by a farmer here, and generally adopted. It is pretty well known in Scotland, that the farmers in Strathmore are amongst the most intelligent and enterprising of their profession.

Great improvements have also been made in building gentlemen's seats, and tenants' houses, and the parish now presents a highly cultivated and pleasing aspect.

Drawn up 1833—Revised May 1837.

PARISH OF RATTRAY.

PRESBYTERY OF DUNKELD, SYNOD OF PERTH AND STIRLING.

THE REV. WILLIAM HERDMAN, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name of Rattray seems to have belonged alike to the parish, and to the principal family that dwelt in it, and probably was transferred from the one to the other. It is said that there are records which bear the name of Rattray of Craighall and Rattray, as early as 1066. No account is given of the etymology of the name.

Boundaries, &c.—Rattray is the westmost parish in Strathmore, the district adjoining in that quarter being the Stormont. It is bounded by the river Ericht, which runs along the west and south side, the whole extent of the parish, and separates it from Blairgowrie. On the east, it is bounded by the parish of Bendochy, and farther north by the parish of Alyth. The breadth of the parish, from west to east, is about 2 miles; the length from north to south is 5; besides the detached portion of Easter Bleaton.

Topographical Appearances.—The whole surface of the parish inclines by a very considerable declivity from north to south. The southern part, washed by Ericht, is flat; but the ground soon begins to rise towards the village, a short way behind which, perhaps not more than a quarter of a mile, these hills commence, which continue to increase in elevation and ruggedness, till they terminate in the Grampian mountains; though at the distance of many

miles beyond the boundaries of this parish. The high grounds on the north break the cold winds from that direction, and render the climate more mild, and the country more sheltered in the lower parts. The soil being dry, and the air mild, the situation of Rattray is thought to be very healthy. The most prevailing winds, though soft, are from the west; the most stormy, and accompanied with most rain and snow, are from the east, coming from the sea. As in other places, there are occasional distempers and fevers in Rattray; for every person must die; but there are no epidemics peculiar to the climate.

Hydrography.—The only river in the parish is the Ericht. It issues from some springs in the Grampians; and, taking a southerly direction, holds on through Glenshee and Persie, till it reach the Strone, where it receives the water of the Ardle, a considerable mountain stream from the north-west; the Ericht and Ardle united proceed nearly in the same course as before, pass by Craighall and Blairgowrie, and round the southernmost point of this parish; about two miles beyond which, they fall into the Islay, and thence flowing to the west, they join the Tay at Meiklour, by which they are conducted to the ocean. In winter, and on all occasions of much rain, the Ericht swells into a flood; and if this flood happens in autumn, like her more powerful neighbour the Islay, she carries off large quantities of grain from the low country.

Mineralogy.—To the naturalist the mineralogy of this parish might afford matter of curiosity and entertainment. The rocks on the side of the Ericht above Craighall are of singular and formidable appearance. They rise to upwards of 200 feet above the bed of the river, and in front are almost as perpendicular as if cut with a chisel. No use has ever been made of them, and they remain as they issued from the hand of nature, enormous masses of whinstone, and proofs of her gigantic power. As the access at top is hazardous, there is generally a strip of the surface planted, which is enclosed by a stone-wall, to prevent cattle from approaching it.

The soil on the hill grounds is cold, thin, and moorish; yet it is all let for corn and cattle farms, though the only grain raised is oats, as yielding the most profitable return. The soil in the lower part of the parish is dry, gravelly, and a good deal incumbered with loose stones. The produce of such ground must depend greatly on the season. In a dry summer, the crop is very light, and in such a year as 1826, it was almost nothing, either in corn or fodder. In a season of moderate rain, the crop is very good, and the grain true

and pure. The crops commonly raised are oats, barley, and wheat; though the latter more sparingly than in former years, when the price and increase were more abundant.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Eminent Men.—In the Civil History of the parish of Rattray, Mr Donald Cargill deserves distinguished notice. He was one of the ministers who lived and suffered under the unhappy reign of Charles II. He was born about the year 1610; his father was proprietor of an estate called Hatton, in this parish, and he was the oldest son of the family. He was educated first at Aberdeen, and then at the University of St Andrews; and after obtaining a licence to preach, was called to be minister of the barony church in Glasgow. This situation, and his own zeal for religion, connected him with the covenanted clergy of that period, and involved him in all their troubles. After undergoing many hardships, and experiencing many escapes, (which it is unnecessary to mention) he was apprehended in 1680, carried to Edinburgh along with some others, tried, and condemned by the Justiciary Court for high-treason, and the following sentence pronounced: "that he should be hanged at the Cross of Edinburgh, and his head placed on the Nether Bow." This sentence was immediately executed; and such was the confidence and composure of the sufferer at the last, that when about to ascend the ladder, he said, "the Lord knows that I go on this ladder with less fear and perturbation of mind, than ever I entered the pulpit to preach!" Such are the hopes that cheer the just!

Antiquities.—If large gray stones be entitled to the appellation of antiquities, or are any indication of the religious worship of our ancestors, a few of these appear in a field, thence called Standing-Stanes, which are supposed to be the ruins of a Druidical temple. A more interesting object appears a little way to the south of that field. A large earthen mound rises in the low grounds, called the Hill of Rattray, on the eastern summit of which are the remains of a large building, named the Castle of Rattray, and which was anciently the residence of the family of that name. The mound is of an oblong form, something resembling the shape of an inverted ship; but the eastern corner of it is circular, as if sucked up by the action of a whirlpool, when the waters were retiring from the earth. In the perilous times, which were so frequent during the reign of our Scottish Kings, the family of Rattray removed from this hill to Craighall, as a place of security against the sudden incursions of enemies.

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Craighall is a very singular place. The house is seated on the top of a rock, about 214 feet almost perpendicular above the Ericht. A balcony on the outside of the drawing-room windows, secured by an iron railing, serves as a parade, whence the river, and rocks, and surrounding scenery may be viewed. Craighall is accessible only in front, which is from the south; and on each side of the entrance, a little in advance of the house, are two round buildings, evidently intended for protection, with some openings for missile weapons, as if for the use of archers, a mode of defence very common in former ages. The old house of Craighall, the date of which is not known, was greatly altered about five years ago, by the late Baron Clerk Rattray. Without enlarging the premises, he new-modelled the apartments within, and added turrets to the corners without, which serve considerably to ornament the building.

Land-owners.—The principal proprietor in the parish is Robert Clerk Rattray, Esq. of Craighall, son of the late worthy Baron, who succeeded to the estate on the demise of his cousin, Miss Janet Rattray, in 1817. The present proprietor, with his family, reside at Craighall during the greater part of the year. The other heritors are, the Earl of Kinnoul; John Rattray of Coral-Bank; the Rev. George Whitson of Parkhill; Colonel Chalmers of Glenericht; Lord Wharnclyffe; Miss M'Donald of Easter Bleaton; and Mr Crichton of Mains,—besides a number of feuars of inferior note. Rattray is comparatively a small parish, the whole valuation being L. 2575 Scots.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial registers are of considerable antiquity. They commence about the Restoration in 1660, and, with a little interruption in the Revolution 1688, have been filled up and preserved with tolerable care.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of Rattray must have undergone great alteration. In the time of Dr Webster it was reckoned 751; in the return made to Sir John Sinclair it was stated at 500: the number of the inhabitants at present is 1375,—a large increase in the space of forty years. This population resides chiefly in two villages, called Old and New Rattray, the latter of which did not exist at the date of the last report. The new village is seated on both sides of the road to Blairgowrie, and extends almost to the Ericht, which divides the parishes. The ground for houses and gardens is fixed by the proprietors to persons from the country, and particularly from the Highlands, who, finding it necessary to change their

residence, seek a more sheltered situation. The rate of feuing is about 1s. the fall, or L. 8 the acre, though some of it lately has risen much higher. The two villages are almost contiguous, and the climate and soil of both are warm, dry, and healthy. The increase of population is chiefly owing to the spinning-mills, which have been reared within the last twenty years, and which will require particular attention. The average number of births for the last seven years is 32, of marriages 12; of deaths, though more various, the number is perhaps nearly the same. The population of Old Rattray, of all ages and sexes, is about 400; of New Rattray, 300,—leaving 600 and upwards for the country part of the parish.

The number of proprietors of L. 50 and upwards annually is seven; and the whole rental about L. 2000.

The inhabitants of the country are all engaged in agricultural operations; those of the villages are employed in trades and manufactures. The great business of the common people is weaving of a coarse fabric, the materials for which are sent from Dundee. The inhabitants in general are sober, industrious, and economical. In former times, smuggling in malt and whisky prevailed much in this neighbourhood, but has now almost disappeared, in consequence of the decisive measures adopted by Government. This is a happy change for the character, the circumstances, and the morals of the people. Poaching in game is much complained of by gentlemen at certain seasons of the year; which shows the idle, pernicious, and despicable habits, of a few of the lower orders of the people.

Number of families in the parish,	318
chiefly employed in agriculture,	64
trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	149

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—Rattray being comparatively a small parish, and not remarkable for soil, furnishes no great scope for agricultural operations. The farms in general are of moderate size; and those in the higher grounds, intended both for pasture and tillage, are seldom let by the acre, but by as much rent as the tenants imagine they will bear, according to the mode of husbandry to which they are to be applied. The land about the village gives L. 3 per acre. The leases for small portions are for nine or eleven years; for farms, fifteen or nineteen years. On the estate of Craighall, there are considerable plantations of Scotch and larch fir, which were much enlarged by the late Baron Clerk Rattray. They are scarcely in a state for felling, but they are regularly thin-

ned, and the produce sold for fuel to the people in the neighbourhood. Along the sides of the Ericht, the timber raised is copse-wood or small oak, which is cut down at a certain age, chiefly for the sake of the bark, and yields a very profitable return.

There is a commonity in the higher part of the parish, of nearly 300 acres, called the Broad Moss, which is become almost a waste, for want of being divided. The only use made of it is in individuals at pleasure casting turf for fuel, and the neighbouring tenants sending their cattle to brouse on it. Though called a moss, it is more properly a muir, being a high-lying barren subject, but under proper management, might have become a plantation of some value.

The farmers have their grounds laid out in such proportions, that, in addition to grain, they raise potatoes, turnips, and artificial grasses. When potatoes bring good prices, besides their use for the benefit of the family, they are sent in large quantities to Perth and Dundee; when the demand is low, they are consumed at home in feeding cattle. The turnips and grasses are solely for the support of the bestial on the farm. The occupiers of land rear or purchase annually as much stock as they can maintain, which they feed when two or three years old, and sell to butchers or dealers, who send a great proportion of them to the Glasgow market. The Strathmore and Angus breed, which have a mixture of the Teeswater, red and white, are much esteemed for their size and keeping; and for some time past have been the principal article that have put money into the hands of the farmer. The wages of farm-servants are from L. 10 to L. 12 a year with their board; day-labourers in summer get 1s. 6d. or 1s. 8d.; in winter 1s. 2d. without victuals.

Fishings.—The principal fishing station in this parish is the Keith, where the waters of the Ericht rush over a rock, and fall into a pool below, whence the salmon are taken. The fishing is the property of Lord Wharncliffe; and during the season, when there is plenty of water in the river, salmon of the size of from eight to twelve pounds are caught in abundance. I shall transcribe the account of this fishing given by my predecessor, as it is more minute and exact than any which I can pretend to give. “There is, at a little distance from Rattray, a cascade or fall of water, about ten feet high, over a rugged rock, which forms a pool below, where salmon are caught. It goes by the name of the Keith fishing, and rents at L. 30 a year. The mode of fishing is curious. They

make what they call a drumuck, resembling thin wrought mortar, which they throw into the pool to disturb the clearness of the waters. The fishers stand on the point of the rock with long poles, and nets upon the ends of them, with which they rake the pool, and take up the fish." Besides this particular station, fishers and sportsmen, who occasionally visit the Ericht in summer, take trout and salmon by the rod, at various places along the river, as far as it skirts the parish of Rattray.

Manufactures.—Under the name of manufactures may be comprehended spinning-mills, of which there are seven in the parish of Rattray. The river Ericht, affording abundance of water, and numerous falls for driving machinery, has induced persons in the neighbourhood and even some from towns, to feu ground, and erect these structures. The mills vary in size from six to twenty horse power. The work about which they are employed, is manufacturing flax and tow into yarn; the former from one to three hanks, the latter from four to eight hanks per spindle. The number of persons necessary for these operations may be stated in round numbers at 250. They work all the six days of the week, commencing their labour at half an hour before six in the morning, and, excepting an hour allowed for each diet, continuing till seven o'clock in the evening. Few are admitted to the mills before twelve years of age, the wages of whom are 2s. per week; and the average amount of all classes, young and old, beginners and experienced labourers, may be 6s. 6d. a week. I am not able to say how far the regulations in the late Factory Bill have been adopted, or what effects they have produced in this part of the country.

It is evident, that, in a pecuniary view, these establishments are highly beneficial. They furnish the young with an income, and parents with the means of supporting their families, to an extent which could not otherwise be procured. But I am afraid that here their praises must terminate. Their effects on health must be deemed injurious, from the long confinement the labourers endure, and the thick atmosphere they are constrained to breathe. Their influence on morals cannot be favourable, unless a rigid superintendence be maintained by proprietors and guardians; as we never fail to observe, that when large bodies of people are assembled, human passions ferment and disorders ensue, except strict vigilance be preserved. A very laudable attempt to correct or prevent these evils, was made by the Legislature in their late enactment.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

It has been already observed, that there are two villages in the parish, called Old and New Rattray, in which mostly the articles necessary for family use may be at all seasons found. Blairgowrie, a much more considerable village, is at hand, where there is a post-office, and shops of all kinds in abundance for food and clothing. Cupar-Angus is the next place of consequence, at the distance of five miles from Rattray, and to which there is a turnpike road from Blairgowrie. At Cupar-Angus, the turnpike roads break off to Perth and Dundee; and through Cupar-Angus, the Defiance coach runs daily from Edinburgh to Aberdeen. Lately, a railway was formed across the Sidlaw hills, from Dundee to Newtyle, by which coals, lime, and manure are brought from town in waggons, and grain and potatoes are sent in return. On the railway, there are close coaches for passengers, which are much used as a cheap and expeditious mode of travelling. A bill is just now before Parliament for extending the railway from Newtyle to Cupar-Angus, which is expected to be a great benefit to this district of Strathmore.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church of Rattray was built in 1820 and 1821, is a very commodious house, and in perfect order. It was made to contain 620 persons. In appropriating it, the first consideration was bestowed on the poor. A portion, which would accommodate twelve sitters, was allotted to them. A similar portion was allowed to the elders, and for baptism room; and the same to the minister's family; after which, the area of the church was divided among the heritors, according to their respective valuations. The heritors, after accommodating themselves and their tenants, let the surplus seats to the trade's people in the parish, who have no right of their own. These seats to the lower orders are exceedingly cheap, at an average scarcely amounting to 1s. 6d. the sitter. The whole seats are occupied. The church is very conveniently situated for the parish in general, though there is one property, called Easter Bleaton, ten miles distant from it. This detached portion is cut off from the rest of the parish for five miles, by the intervening parishes of Bendochy and Alyth; but the few inhabitants, there, are accommodated with public worship at the chapel of Persie, a preaching station in the higher part of the parish of Bendochy, not above two miles distant from Easter Bleaton.

The manse of Rattray was built in 1813 and 1814. The glebe

contains 15 acres, the greater part of it outfield; and in whole it might let for L. 20. The living of Rattray is one of the small stipends, augmented by Government to L. 150 per annum. There is a dissenting meeting in the parish, formerly of the Antiburgher connection, but now belonging to the United Associate Synod. Their chapel will contain 340 sitters, but is partly unoccupied. The stipend arises from the seat-rents and collections, and is said to be from L. 80 to L. 100 a-year. Dissenters attend well on public worship; and the members of the Established Church are not deficient in this praiseworthy conduct. The average number of communicants in the parish church may be 500; the collections throughout the year L. 15. Since 1775, there has been an assessment on the parish for the support of the poor, which has had the effect of diminishing the collections, but could not now be easily dispensed with. The number of paupers on the list generally exceeds a dozen; and instead of considering it degrading, every one is eager to prefer his claim as fast as he can. The average annual amount of assessments is L. 45: of church collections, L. 15.

The number of families in the parish attending the chapels of Dissenters or Seceders is 65.

Education.—With regard to education, it may be said that there are principally two schools for that important end; the parish school in Old Rattray, and a private one in New Rattray. The parochial teacher has the highest salary allowed by law of L. 34, besides the dues of baptisms and marriages, which must amount to some pounds more. His fees may amount to L. 15 per annum. The private teacher depends entirely on the fruits of his industry. The numbers attending each school are nearly the same,—upwards of 40; the wages for beginners are 2s. per quarter; 2s. 6d. for reading and writing; and 3s. for arithmetic and Latin. Both masters profess to teach Latin, arithmetic, writing, and English. I have reason to believe, that they are not deficient in attention and diligence. Besides these, there are schools on a lower scale kept by females, chiefly for young girls; and some occasionally kept by males for the benefit of those in the remote parts of the parish. Perhaps, there are none of five years of age but have begun to learn to read; and none farther advanced but are taught both to read and write. The blessing of education is brought within the reach of all classes in society. If they are poor, the kirk-session pay for them; if they are in a better situation, they can easily furnish the expense from their own industry. They

need only show a willing mind, and the invaluable advantage will be attained.

Fairs.—There are two fairs in Rattray,—the one on the last Friday of April, the other the last Friday of August. They are intended chiefly for the sale of cattle. In all villages, ale-houses exist in abundance, and perhaps there are six or eight of them in the parish of Rattray. Inns are necessary for the accommodation of the public; but, by the idle and profligate, they are perverted to purposes of disorder and abuse.

Fuel.—Coals, the best of all fuel, are rather expensive in this part of the country. They are brought either from Perth, or by the railway from Dundee to Newtyle, and between purchase and freight are necessarily dear. By the wise appointment of the Creator, however, every place possesses its own advantages. In the high grounds, within three or four miles, there are mosses where peats are dug, and dried, and brought home in summer, as a preparation against the approach of winter. There are also occasional sales of wood in the neighbouring plantations, where fuel is got at a reasonable rate. With a portion of each of these, coals, peat, and wood, every person endeavours to be provided. Those on the roll of poor are furnished with a certain allowance of coals at Christmas; and all others lay up for themselves, as their wisdom or their wealth direct and enable them.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The only other object pertaining to this parish, which I shall mention as a matter of curiosity, is an iron bridge, which Colonel Chalmers of Glenericht, has thrown across the river, a little below his house. The bridge is supported by a stone pillar at each end, from which a direct span, not an arch, stretches across the whole breadth of the river. The bridge is of such wideness as to admit a passage for a carriage, with a foot tract on the side for travellers, the bottom or floor of both of which is covered with gravel to prevent alarm to man or beast. By this bridge, the Colonel has easy and elegant access to his property on both sides of the river, and also to the great road which runs from Braemar to Perth. The bridge was constructed by a Mr Justice in Dundee, and is well worthy of the notice of strangers,

May 1837.