

# EDINBURGHSHIRE

## PARISH OF RATHO.

PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH, SYNOD OF LOTHIAN AND TWEEDDALE.

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### I. - TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.* - The parish of Ratho is so called, according to Chalmers in his Caledonia, from the ancient baronial residence of that name, which was within its bounds. According to the same authority, the name is of British origin, being derived from the word *Rhath*, plural *Rathau*, [In ancient charters, the name of the parish is written in the different forms of Rathew, Ratheu, Rathow. On two communion cups, which bear the date 1684, it is spelt Rutha and Rotha. The orthography is the same as at present on other two church utensils, which bear date only a year later.] signifying a cleared spot, a bared place or plain; which derivation, although not consistent with the features of the parish as a whole, is yet in accordance with that part of it upon which the present mansion, like its predecessor, stands. It may be farther remarked, that the Celtic *Rath*, which has the same primary meaning with the British term already mentioned, signifies secondarily, a fort or artificial mount; so that possibly the name of Ratho may have been conferred upon the place, not more on account of its natural situation than the artificial works by which it was defended.

*Extent, Boundaries, &c.* - This parish is 4 miles long by 2½ broad at an average; and contains about 10 square miles of surface. It is bounded on the north, by the parishes of Kirkliston and Corstorphine; on the east, by Corstorphine and Currie; on the south, by Currie; and on the west, by Kirknewton and Kirkliston.

*Topographical Appearances.* - The general aspect of the parish is one of considerable beauty from the delightful mixture of hill and dale, of highly cultivated fields and thriving plantations. From the eastern boundary to the centre the ground is of a slightly undulating character, but rather flat than otherwise. On the west side, there runs from north to south-west, for about a couple of miles, a ridge, or rather a succession of eminences of table-land, crowned with stripes and clumps of trees, which add very much to the beauty of the scene. From the whole of this ridge, which averages from 300 to 400 feet in height, the view is extensive and highly picturesque. [The following is a statement of the altitude of different parts of the parish, as ascertained by actual survey. It is copied from a map of the parish executed by J. Anderson, Esq.]

	Above level of <u>the sea.</u>	Above Union <u>Canal.</u>	Below Union <u>Canal.</u>		Above level of <u>the sea.</u>	Above Union <u>Canal.</u>	Below Union <u>Canal.</u>
	Feet.	Feet.	Feet.		Feet.	Feet.	Feet.
Union Canal,	232	0	0	Ratho village,	274	42	0
Bonnington House,	412	180	0	middle of,			
Burnwynd,	306	74	0	Ratho Kirk,	225	0	7
Dalmahoy House,	337	105	0	Ratho House,	248	16	0
Hatton House,	335	103	0	Ratho Manse,	244	12	0

Hillwood,	318	86	0	Ashley,	199	0	33
Milburn Tower,	155	0	77	Tormain Hill,	474	242	0
Norton Hall,	341	109	0	Dalmahoy Hill,	660	0	0
North Platt Hill,	356	124	0	Kaimes Hill,	680	0	0
South Platt Hill,	380	148	0	The last two are taken from the Caledonia.			

We believe there are few spots in Scotland where such a prospect can be obtained with so little exertion. From the South Platt Hill, which is a few minutes walk from the manse, there is a distinct view of portions of at least ten different counties; some say of no fewer than fourteen. The Pentlands circumscribe the prospect to the south, but from the east round to the south-west, the eye ranges over the cultivated plains of the Lothians, the Frith of Forth with the adjacent coasts of Berwick and Fife, the counties of Kinross, Clackmannan, Lanark, and Stirling, and the giant rampart of the Grampians from Benvoirlich to Benlomond. In a clear state of the atmosphere, the view to the west is truly grand; but on an ordinary day, the immediate view of the surrounding parishes, and particularly of Edinburgh with its environs, will well repay the slight labour of ascent to one who possesses the smallest taste for the beautiful in nature.

From the Calder road, to which this ridge descends, the land again rises with a gradual ascent, till it reaches its greatest altitude in the two rocky eminences called the Dalmahoy and Kaimes hills. These two insulated hills, it may be remarked, rising from the east, terminate abruptly to the west in the manner of Salisbury Crags, and the similar eminences with which Stirling and its neighbourhood abounds, as if at a distant period they had been washed by some great western tide.

*Climate.* - Situated in the centre of the extensive valley which lies between the Pentland range and the high lands that skirt the Forth, this parish is particularly exposed to currents of wind from the east and west. The east wind prevails chiefly during the spring months, but is experienced at intervals throughout the year, bringing along with it occasionally a thick haar, which is very prejudicial to the invalid. The west wind prevails more during the summer and autumn. It is perhaps the most constant, certainly the most violent wind we have, as appears from the fact, that the branches of the trees invariably incline to the east. Our heaviest rains are from the south-east; our most frequent rains fall when the wind is between the west and south, which brings the clouds into contact with the Pentland ridge, whence they descend in showers over the neighbouring parishes.

The free circulation of air that the parish enjoys, is one cause which undoubtedly operates strongly, in conjunction with the elevation of a considerable portion of it, in producing a pure and healthy temperature of the atmosphere. In proof of the natural healthiness of the climate, it may be remarked, as a traditional notice, that when the plague prevailed in Scotland, Ratho was exempted from its ravages. And at a later period, when many of the neighbouring parishes were visited with cholera, only one case, if indeed it was one, occurred in this village. Some thirty years ago, intermittent fevers were not uncommon; but, with the system of draining, to which the land generally has been subjected, these have totally disappeared; and there is now no indigenous disease in the district; nor is it, so far as we are aware, peculiarly liable to any epidemic. An intelligent medical practitioner in the parish, informs us that, if there are any diseases of particular frequency, they are of the glandular kind, and occur chiefly among the poorer classes; but the number of these, from the improved state

of the village, is on the decline.

*Hydrography.* - There are few parishes so destitute of streams as that of Ratho. There is only one, the Gogar Burn, and that of small dimensions, which flows through it, forming a continuous line of demarcation between this and the parishes to the east. There are, besides, few if any open springs; the inhabitants for the most part being obliged to sink wells for their supply. Water, however, is easily found by digging to the depth of ten or twelve feet; and when discovered, commonly contains a quantity of lime in solution. In Addiston grounds, there is one fountain of a slightly petrifying quality. The Union Canal is the only body of water of any magnitude. Its course through the parish is about three miles in length. It cannot be said, however, that it adds at all to the beauty of the landscape; nor with its muddy waters is it very suitable for domestic purposes.

*Geology and Mineralogy.* - The ridge of high land which we have already described as traversing the west of the parish, as also the Dalmahoy and Kaimies Hills, abound in trap (whin) rock of the common formation. The stone of the former is of a tough adhesive nature, capable of being cut out in blocks of any size, and wrought into any form; that of the latter is much more brittle, and consequently unfit, except for the common purpose of road-making. The trap of the Platt and Norton hills, forms one extensive horizontal compact bed; that of the other eminences approaches much nearer to the columnar structure.

A bed of sandstone dips under the trap formation of the Dalmahoy hill at an angle of about 25°. One of clay, or, as it is popularly called, of calmstone, has been wrought upon the Ratho Hall property, but owing to its position, and its distance from the place where the trap formation is discoverable, it is difficult to say which of them is uppermost, or, indeed, if they are at all connected. We are not aware that any minerals or deposits have hitherto been discovered in any of the rocks of which mention has been made.

Coal, according to the report of some of the older people, was discovered long ago at Bonnington head; but the pit falling in shortly after the discovery, the existing proprietor was unable to prosecute the experiment, and the mining operations have not been resumed by any subsequent landholder. Experiments were also made at a remote period in the Dalmahoy grounds for the discovery of this precious mineral, but these, probably from want of perseverance, proved unsuccessful. In the Earl of Morton's deer park, several stones are still to be seen standing with the inscription: "Bored for coal 18 fathoms, and none found."

*Soil.* - There is a variety of soil in the parish. A portion of it is clay loam upon a retentive bottom, which produces good grain of all descriptions, and is particularly adapted for wheat. A few patches here and there of the very lowest land consist of black moss. The greatest proportion of the land, however, is a rich dry soft loam, resting in the more elevated situations upon whin or claystone, and in the less elevated places upon gravel or sand. The whole of this land is well calculated for the production of potatoes and turnips, which are raised to a considerable extent, - the potatoes being sent to the Edinburgh market, and the turnips consumed with cattle in the farm-yard during winter.

*Zoology.* - The game, which is not very abundant, except in the Dalmahoy preserves, consists of hares, partridges, pheasants, rabbits, and a very small proportion of grouse and black game on the south. Foxes are not uncommon, there being a considerable quantity of

cover about Norton and Dalmahoy Hill, which form occasionally places of rendezvous for the Edinburgh lovers of the chase. The Gogar Burn contains some good trout. The Canal abounds in eels and perches. No angler needs come here in the expectation of good sport.

*Botany.* - There is no natural wood in the parish, but a considerable quantity has been planted for the sake of shelter or ornament in distant or later times. All the gentlemen's seats in the neighbourhood are adorned in this way with a considerable extent of plantation. That about Milburn is perhaps the largest of very modern growth. The greatest extent of wood, however, and of the greatest maturity, is that which beautifies the residence of the Earl of Morton. Trees, to the amount of many thousand pounds in value, were cut in the pleasure grounds before the accession of the present nobleman, but, notwithstanding, the woods still present to the eye of the spectator an outline of very dense and luxuriant foliage. Every variety of the common species of trees is to be found here and in other parts of the parish, as beech, oak, plane, ash, elm, lime, and fir. The trees, however, of which there is the greatest abundance, and which seem, from the luxuriance of their vegetation, to be best adapted to the soil, are beech and elm. Around Hatton there was at one time a very large quantity of old timber, but it is now, for the most part, destroyed, much to the disadvantage of the stately edifice which reposed in its shade. A few very fine specimens of the cedar of Lebanon, of ordinary dimensions, but healthy and vigorous, are to be seen at Ratho House. Perhaps some of the finest trees now standing in the parish, and consisting of planes, elms, and ashes, are those which surround the church and burying-ground, imparting to the resting-place of the dead a solemn gloom, not unsuitable to serious feeling.

The following is a list of rare botanical plants found by David Falconer, Esq. of Carlowrie, in Dalmahoy Moss, near the old toll-bar of Ravelrig: - 1. *Coralorrhiza innata*, spurless coral root, (Smith's English Botany, Vol. xxii. pl. 1547). This plant was first described by Lightfoot, in his Flora Scottica, p. 513, pl. 23, as growing only in one place, in a moist hanging wood "on the south side near the head of Little Loch-Broom, on the western coast of Ross-shire." It has since been found in Methven Wood, six miles from Perth, and on the lands of Barry, near Dundee. It grows also under the shade of willows in the said moss. 2. *Listera cordata*, heart-leaved tway blade, (Eng. Bot. Vol. v. pl. 358.) 3. *Habenaria viridis*, frog habentaria, (Vol. ii. pl. 94.) 4. *Utricularia minor*, lesser hooded milfoil, (Vol. iv. pl. 254.) 5. *Salix repens*, creeping willow, (Vol. iii. p. 183.) 6. *S. fusca*, dwarf silky willow, (Vol. xxviii. pl. 1960.) 7. *S. cinerea*, grey willow, (Vol. xxvii. pl. 1897.) 8. *Drosera rotundifolia*, round-leaved sundew, (Vol. xiii. pl. 867.) The botanist will regret, while the agriculturist views with pleasure, the draining of the bog, where these productions are found, which is now in progress. A very valuable collection of exotics was made by the late Sir Robert Liston, which, since his death, has been dispersed.

## II. - CIVIL HISTORY.

*Barony of Ratho.* - There is no authentic notice to be found of the Barons or Barony of Ratho earlier than the beginning of the fourteenth century. It is not improbable that this was one of the many forfeited estates which fell into the hands of the Crown during the wars carried on by the different competitors for the Scottish throne, upon the death of Alexander III.

For, in 1315, the Barony of Ratho, with other estates, was granted by Robert I. to the Steward of Scotland, upon his marriage with Robert's daughter, Margery, by whom the sovereignty of this country eventually devolved upon the Stewart family. On the accession of Robert II. in 1371, the same barony, with its pertinents and other estates, were settled on the King's eldest son, as the Prince and Stewart of Scotland; [See Chalmers's Caledonia.] and the whole estates of the Stewarts were formed in 1404 into a principality, with regal jurisdiction. In the middle of the seventeenth century, this property appears to have been in the possession of a Lord Collington, as it is specially mentioned in the report of a commission appointed by Charles II. to take account of the losses sustained by him during the usurpation of Cromwell. In 1563, Ratho estate became by purchase the property of Mr Alexander Fowlis, in whose favour a charter and new gift were granted by the King as superior, with the customary legal minuteness. It is as follows: "Of all and sundries, the lands of Ratho, with the pertinents thereof, comprehending all and hail the thirty-six oxengate of the town and lands of Ratho, with the mansion, tower, fortalice, manor-place, houses, biggings, yards, orchards, doucats, loch, and meadow thereof, called Ratho Myre, lying within the parish of Ratho and sheriffdom of Edinburgh, and by annexation within the barony and sheriffdom of Renfrew, united and erected into a hail and free barony, called the barony of Ratho, to be holden of his Majesty." This property continued in the family of Fowlis till 1778, when Mr Archibald Christie succeeded as heir to Alexander Fowlis. In 1786, it was purchased by Thomas Macnight Crawford of Belleville, in North Carolina; and in 1818, it became the possession of A. Bonar, Esq. in whose family it still remains.

*Hatton.* - Of the Hatton property, which, till within these fifty years, comprehended in value and extent nearly a half of the parish, the following particulars [See Inventory of the Lauderdale Titles in possession of Messrs Gibson-Craigs, Wardlaw, and Dalziel.] have been ascertained.

It was purchased by Allan de Lawdre or Lawder from John of Hatton in 1377, which purchase was ratified by the King, as Baron of Ratho, and superior thereof. [Allan de Lawdre acted as Justiciary-Clerk on the south side of the water of Forth, for which he received from Robert the Bruce, 1309, an annual grant of L.10 Scots. The Lauders appear to have possessed extensive estates in Peebles and Berwickshire, and to have been a family of very considerable eminence in the Scottish nation. Hugh, Earl of Rosse, and Robert de Lawdre, Justiciary of Lothian, acted in 1328 as ambassadors from the court of Scotland to that of England, to arrange a marriage between David II. and Johanna, sister to Edward III. - (See Index of Charters, 1309.) - Alexander Lauder, rector of Ratho, son of Sir Allan, was promoted to the See of Dunkeld, in 1440, and dying the same year, was interred in the church of Lauder with his ancestors.

William Lauder, another son of Sir Allan, was first Archdeacon of Lothian and Bishop of Glasgow, 1408. Murdo, Duke of Albany, the Regent, made him Chancellor in 1423. In the same year, he was nominated first commissioner for treating about the redemption of James I. He continued to hold the offices of Bishop and Chancellor till his death in 1425. This Bishop laid the foundation of the vestry of the Cathedral church of Glasgow, and built the steeple as far as the first battlement, where the arms of Lauder of Hatton are still to be seen cut in several places. - (See Keith's Scottish Bishops.)

At a later period in the wars with England, the Lauders seem to have taken an active part; as among other old papers of the Lauderdale family is one containing a gift from James V. to William de Lawdre of Hattoun (Hatton) "of the relief of all his lands lying in the shires of Edin, Berwick, and Peebles, and that gratis, for good done, or to be done, the said Sir George, his father, and Sir Richard Lauder of Blyth, and James Lauder, his uncles, with most of their friends having been slain at the battle of Flodden Field, under the banner of James IV." The date of this is 19th July 1525. The same papers also mention a license granted to the said William Lauder to fortify his house at Hatton, and to appoint porters and other officers thereat, "no doubt as a preparation for an expected incursion of the English consequent upon their victory." The said Allan farther added to the estate of Hatton proper, at successive times, the properties of Norton, [The half of Norton was disposed to Sir Allan by Hugh, Earl of Eglinton, with reservation to him of its thirlage to his mill of Ratho, and giving to Sir Allan and his heirs, multure free at that mill, except the payment of a fiat of meal.] Platts, Westhall, [Westhall, including a part of Craigpark and Ratho estate, was disposed by Thomas Cripmy of Scotstoun, in the barony of Abercorn, in 1375, to be holden blench of the granter for

payment of a silver penny at the kirk of Ratho, in the time of high mass.] Priestlands, and Northraw of Ratho. To these possessions Overgogar was added by the marriage of one of the Lauder family to Annabel Ballenden, the heiress of that property, in 1610. The whole of these lands came into the possession of the Lauderdale family by the marriage of Charles Maitland, third son of John Earl of Lauderdale, to Elizabeth, the second daughter of Mr Richard Lauder in 1653, and continued in that family till 1792, when the property was sold, and shortly after was parcelled out into the original elements, of which it consisted, when it was consolidated by the purchases of Allan de Lawdre.

*Dalmahoy.* - The estate of Dalmahoy, which contains at present between a third and fourth part of the land in the parish, belonged anciently to the Dalmahoyes of that Ilk; the first of whom mentioned in the Baronetage of Scotland, is Henry de Dalmahoy, who lived in the time of Alexander III., and was, in 1296, obliged to submit to Edward I. It continued, it is presumed, in their possession till the middle of the seventeenth century, when it came into the hands of the Dalrymples, and was purchased from them by James Earl of Morton, about ninety years ago. Since that time, it has formed part of the estates of the Earls of Morton.

*Bonnington.* - The proprietor of the lands of Bonnington, or, as it was anciently called, Bondyngton, of whom mention is first made, is Robert de Erskine. [See Records of Ancient Charters.] A charter was granted him of L.20 Sterling from the annual rent of the lands of Cadyon, near Hamilton, in excambion for Bonnington. This seems to have been done with a view to reward the military services of Hugh de Eglinton, as a charter was given him immediately thereafter of the said lands, with four merks and eight shillings from the lands of Westhall in the Barony of Ratho. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the said lands were the property of Lord Collington. They have since been successively the property of families of the names of Durham, Cunningham, and Wilkie.

*Ashley.* - This estate comprehends the following lands: - 1. Those formerly known by the name of Ratho Bank, consisting of three parts of the Abthan of Ratho, which at one time, belonged to Sir James Fleming of Ratho Byres, and another part of the said Abthan of Ratho, all lying within the barony of Kirkliston, regality of St Andrews, and sheriffdom of Fife, which whole lands subsequently belonged to Sir W. A. Cunningham of Livingston, Bart., and were by him disposed in 1779 to George Reid, Esq. of Balerno, which was succeeded by his grandson, G. Reid, Esq. by whom, in 1819, they were disposed to the late George Veitch, W. S. from whose trustees they were, in 1829, purchased by the present proprietor. 2. The lands of Marylands, which originally formed part of the estate of Ratho. 3. The remaining portion of the estate of Ratho, lying on the north side of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal, and extending from Marylands to the parish church, was lately added by Mr Brown.

These lands, now comprehended in the estate of Ashley, extend to upwards of 250 acres, of which about ten acres are laid out in ornamental grounds and plantations.

*Ratho Byres.* - This designation included anciently part of the property of Ashley, as well as the land which at present goes by the name of Ratho Byres. The oldest family at present holding property in the parish is that of the Wilkies of Ratho Byres; this property having been in their possession for several centuries. The other families are comparatively of very modern standing in the parish.

*Old Books, Paintings, &c.* - In possession of the Earl of Morton is the Bible of his ancestor, the Regent, supposed to be one of the few copies now existing, if not the only complete one, of the original Scotch Parliamentary Bible. It is a folio volume, printed in a clear and beautiful type for the age, and is, like most old Bibles, illustrated by coarse plates, representative of the different subjects of Scripture history. It bears upon the title-page to have been printed at Edinburgh, by order of James VI. in 1579.

Adorning the same nobleman's residence are original paintings of the Regent Morton and Mary Queen of Scots. It deserves to be mentioned, as a matter of interest, that the likeness of the Queen is understood in the family to have been executed during her confinement in Lochleven Castle, for George Douglas, who assisted her escape.

A few years ago, during the operations consequent upon the partial draining of Lochleven, a bunch of keys were discovered, which, from the evident antiquity of their workmanship, and from their being found in the track by which Queen Mary's escape was effected, were not unnaturally conjectured to be those recorded to have been thrown into the loch by her deliverer on that occasion. They were shortly after their discovery presented to the late Earl of Morton, and are now in possession of the present Lord, the representative of the chivalrous George Douglas. They are five in number, and held together by a small iron chain. As might be expected, they are considerably corroded by the operation of the water during three centuries; but from the care with which they are now preserved, they may last till Lochleven Castle becomes again the scene of a similar story. [See *New Statistical Account, Kinross-shire*, p. 13.]

Besides many original letters of great antiquity, and curious from the royal and noble signatures appended to them, there is extant among this nobleman's papers the original warrant for the confinement of the Queen in Lochleven Castle, signed by the Lords Atholl, Morton, Glencarne, Marr, J. Graham, Alex. L. Hume, Sanquhar, Semple, and Ochiltree. The signatures are in two columns, with four names in each, and from the manner in which the signatures are affixed, it is difficult to say whether Atholl or Morton had taken the lead in a matter that involved so great an amount of danger and responsibility. There is also in the same repositories an original letter from our great Reformer, John Knox, to the Lord of Lochleven, dated 31st March 1570. As both of these documents, however, have been printed by the Bannatyne Club, it is superfluous here to insert them.

*Eminent Men.* - Among these we deem a place due in this Statistical Account to Joseph Mitchell, "the Poet of Ratho," who was born in this parish about the year 1684. His father was a mason, and, though in humble circumstances, with a laudable ambition not uncommon among the peasantry of Scotland, managed to give his son a university education. This was done probably with a view to the church, as appears from some allusions in his writings. The course of theological study, however, if actually commenced, was soon dropt, and Mitchell went to London for the purpose of pushing his fortune. Here he became acquainted (probably through the influence of Lords Lauderdale and Stair, as much as of his abilities,) with most of the literary characters of his day, and, among other distinguished persons, with Sir R. Walpole, who appears to have given him his most cordial support ever after. Like most poets he was poor, and often in a state of extreme indigence; occasioned by his imprudence and

extravagance. After a course marked by vicissitude, he died on the 6th of July 1738.

Besides several dramas published in his name, he printed by subscription, in 1724, two large octavo volumes of miscellaneous poetry. They embrace a variety of subjects, most of which are treated in the humorous strain, and display considerable abilities, though not by any means of the highest order. Not a few of them are representations of the poet's necessities, and are indeed petitions to the Minister of State for a place, if not for a pension. One of them is a petition addressed to the King, setting forth with considerable humour the former splendour of Ratho, with its present state of insignificance and decay, and soliciting the royal assistance to raise it to its former ideal dignity. The following lines, descriptive of the desolation of Ratho, may be interesting to the parishioners, as a specimen of the poem:

"Of ancient Ratho, reared with cost and pain,  
How few and wretched monuments remain!  
Sometimes the plough from fields adjacent tears  
The limbs of men, and armour, broke with years;  
Sometimes a medal, all effaced, is found,  
And mouldering urns are gathered from the ground.  
But who, ah! who can decent honours pay,  
Or separate vulgar from imperial clay?  
Destroying time and the devouring grave,  
Alike confound the coward and the brave!  
Distinction's lost! no marks of state adorn!  
And Ratho looks like Troy a field of corn."

The poet in prospect sees the place of his nativity restored, and although his wishes have not all been gratified, nor his prophetic anticipations realized, the two familiar lines with which he concludes one of his visions are not now inapplicable.

"Bridges and boats for pleasure crown the scene,  
And ne'er was Ratho known so sweet and clean.

*William Wilkie.* - Of William Wilkie, "the Scottish Homer," for some time minister of Ratho, a memoir has been written, with a criticism upon his works, by Dr Robert Anderson, and is engrossed in his edition of the British Poets. From this authority, it appears that Wilkie, who was a descendant of the family of Ratho Byres, was born on the 5th of October 1721, at Ecklin, a farm in the parish of Dalmeny, which was rented by his father. Discovering at an early age, a taste for literature and for poetry in particular, he was sent to the University of Edinburgh, where he distinguished himself in the various departments of study, and became acquainted with many of those who afterwards filled a prominent place in the literature of their country. Here he numbered among his associates Principal Robertson, Mr John Home, Dr Smith, Dr Ferguson, and Mr Hume. While prosecuting his studies, his father died, leaving him the stock and unexpired lease of a farm at the Fisher's Tryste, and the care of three sisters. This event did not paralyse the energies of his mind, nor divert the current of his inclinations; but he continued simultaneously the practice of agriculture and the pursuit of philosophical and theological knowledge. In 1752, he became connected with this parish, being appointed by the Earl of Lauderdale, assistant and successor to Mr Guthrie, the minister of Ratho, who, from age and infirmity, had become incapable of discharging his public functions, Here he remained till 1761, when he was translated to the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in the University of St Andrews. He died in 1772, at the age of fifty-one years.

He was a man of strong and original powers of mind, and of extensive acquirements in



general knowledge, the fruit of long and vigorous application. He shone particularly in conversation, as appears from the character given of him by Dr Robertson: "It seems agreed on all hands," says he, "that no man was equal to him in conversation and argument. I have heard Dr Wallace, the author of the Dissertation on the numbers of mankind, assert that nobody could cope with him. His knowledge in almost all things was deep and solid, and unanswerable; his reasoning was plain, even to a child. In shrewdness he had no rival. Both his manner and thoughts were masculine in a degree peculiar to himself. Dr Smith says it was an observation of the late Lord Elbank, that wherever Wilkie's name was mentioned in a company, learned and unlearned, it was not soon dropt. Every body had much to say in regard to him." [Like many other men of genius he appears to have been not more distinguished by his abilities than by his oddities of manner, and the peculiarity of his general habits. His successful practice of agriculture, and perhaps his excessive devotion to it, procured him the name of "the potatoe minister." It is mentioned among his many peculiarities, that he slept with an immoderate quantity of bed-clothes. Being one day on a visit to a farmer, a relation of his own, he consented, at his request, to stay all night, but begged to have plenty of blankets. His female friends in the family collected twenty-four pairs, and put them on his bed. When asked in the morning if he had had abundance of bed-clothes, he answered that he had just enough, and had slept well.]

The principal character in which he is now known to the literary world is that of a poet, and his fame in that character is not widely diffused. His chief work is an Epic poem in imitation of Homer, entitled the *Epigonaid*, founded upon the story of the seige of Thebes, related in the Fourth Book of the *Iliad*. We are told by the author of the last *Statistical Account*, that he left many valuable manuscripts, both scientific and miscellaneous, none of which that we are aware have been published since that time.

*Sir Robert Liston.* - The late Sir Robert Liston, K.G.C.B. who resided constantly for the last fifteen years of his life at Milburn in this parish, was born at Overton, in the parish of Kirkliston, in the year 1742. He studied originally for the church, but had his attention diverted from it to the civil service of his country, while a tutor in the family of Hugh Elliot, Esq. He acted at intervals, from 1774 to 1821, either as Secretary of Legation, or as Ambassador from this kingdom at the courts of Munich, Berlin, Spain, Sweden, the United States, Holland, and the Ottoman Porte; in all of which situations he displayed great diplomatic wisdom and address. He retired finally upon a pension in 1821, and took up his residence on his estate of Milburn, which he had previously purchased. Here he lived during the remainder of his days, improving and beautifying his property, and taking an active part in all the public concerns of the parish. His general intelligence, courtesy, and affability made his society be courted by the high; so that, besides the intercourse which he maintained with the neighbouring gentry, scarcely a foreigner of any distinction came to the metropolis who did not pay him a visit at Milburn. His public spirit and zeal for originating and forwarding general improvements, secured him the regard of the working classes, while the generosity and enlarged benevolence of his disposition endeared him to the poor of his neighbourhood. In 1832 he was seized with an affection of the head, which, while it appeared not to affect his judgment, or his bodily powers, deprived him almost completely of the memory of words. Though at one time capable of speaking with comparative ease and correctness, ten different languages, he appeared henceforth to have lost them all; and when he attempted to speak, after the first few words of English, his speech was only a confused jumble of sounds, which belonged to no language. In this state he continued for four years, enjoying a tolerable degree of health; and, so far as he could make himself understood, giving directions chiefly by natural signs about improvements

upon his estate, and the roads of the parish, which he had long superintended, till 1836. He died the same year at the advanced age of ninety-four, and was interred in the old church-yard of Gogar. The parishioners of Ratho, in testimony of their regard for his worth, and their respect for his memory, solicited permission to accompany his remains to the sepulchre, but the merited compliment, for private reasons, was declined.

*Sir William Fettes.* - Sir William Fettes, who died a few years ago, leaving his immense fortune for the erection of an educational establishment, to be called the Fettes Institution, was an heritor of the parish, and had his country house in it.

*Land-owners.* - The land of this parish is now very much subdivided. The following is a list of the proprietors, with the names of their estates, arranged in the order of their relative magnitude. The Earl of Morton, holding the lands of Dalmahoy and Addiston; William Wilkie, Esq. of Bonnington; William Davidson, Esq. of Hatton; the Heirs of the late John Bonar, Esq. of Ratho; Alexander Berwick, Esq. of Norton; William Hill, Esq. of Hillwood and Ratho Hall; William H. Brown, Esq. of Ashley; William L. Whyte, Esq. of Kellerstane; Mrs Liston of Milburn; the Heirs of Sir William Fettes; Edward Lothian, Esq. of Overgogar; Sir Alexander Gibson Maitland; James Sinclair, Esq. of Craigpark; Rev. Daniel Wilkie of Ratho Byres; Sir James Gibson Craig; Lord Meadowbank; David Wardlaw, Esq. of Gogar Mount; James M. Melville, Esq.

*Parochial Registers.* - These are neither of very old date, nor very complete from the period of their commencement. They consist of seven volumes, six of which are in small folio, and one in quarto; which last has the appearance of a mere scroll of the minutes of session. Two of the volumes form a register of baptisms and marriages, respectively from 1738 and 1741; to the present time. The rest contain the proceedings of the kirk-session in the administration of the discipline of the church. Their earliest entry bears the date of 1692, four years posterior to the Revolution. There is no record from 1721 to 1738, nor from 1760 to 1802. It appears from the earlier part of these records, that the catalogue of offences which was taken cognizance of, and made the subject of judicial procedure, was much greater than now. In some respects, a return to the old methods of procedure would be advantageous, in others the reverse.

Slander and neglect of church ordinances appear not unfrequently, as the subjects of investigation and correction. To remedy the latter, a committee seems at times to have been appointed, called the *Searchers*, whose duty it was to visit, during the time of divine service, the different parts of the parish where the neglect prevailed, to enter the houses of the inhabitants, to ascertain who were absent from divine service, with the causes of their absence, and to report to the next meeting of session. The report thus given in is termed "the Searchers' Report." A similar measure might not be without its advantages in many parishes at the present time.

*Antiquities. - Encampments.* - The South Platt hill is the site of an ancient encampment. The remains of it were to be seen about thirty years ago, when the ground was turned up, and the stones appropriated for building the present fences upon the Ratho Hall property. The camp, as described in a letter by George Reid, Esq. at that time proprietor of the grounds of which it formed a part, occupied about an acre of ground on the summit of the eminence, and

was surrounded with a ditch and rampart, formed with large stones mixed with black earth. There were also two circular enclosures, one on the east, the other on the west side of the main camp, of from 30 to 40 feet diameter, surrounded in like manner with a rampart of large blocks and black earth, and paved in the area with flags of freestone, which last must have been brought from a distance.

On the removal of the rubbish, the bones of some persons of large dimensions were discovered, all of which were enclosed in coffins formed with flags of freestone. One of these stones now forms a seat on the top of the hill, at the corner of the wood. Some large beads of a blue and yellow colour also were discovered; none of which are known to have been preserved.

At the time the improvements upon the hill were going on, a tradition existed of a woman's having been burnt here for witch-craft. This led to an examination of the spot specified as the scene of the superstitious execution, when a quantity of burnt ashes were found quite entire.

It is difficult arriving at any thing like a satisfactory solution of the nature of this and similar positions throughout the country, especially when not only history is silent in regard to the events there transacted, but when the demolition of the works has been conducted more with a view to immediate agricultural improvement than to the furtherance of scientific inquiry. We know from the remains of bodies found in the plains to the north, about Newbridge and Gogar Camp, (Henley), that these fields were the scene of not a few severe struggles, generally supposed to have been with the Norwegians; and this rising-ground may not improbably have been seized by them as a place of some strength, on their advance into the country after these engagements. This supposition is rendered all the more likely as the coffins found in Gogar Camp and on the Platt hill were of similar construction, and in both cases resembled those found at Largs, in Ayrshire, where it is historically known that the Norsemen buried their dead, slain in an unsuccessful engagement with the Scots under Alexander III. The quantity of black earth found on the hill, which must either have been the result of the decomposition of many dead bodies, or, what is perhaps as probable, the remains of the ashes of their camp-fires, as well as the substantial way in which the inclosures to the east and west of the camp were executed, apparently for increasing the strength of the works, shew that the position had been occupied for a considerable time.

*Kaimes' Hill.* - The Kaimes' Hill, which is in view of this post, is the site of another encampment of similar construction, and apparently of the same era. Of this encampment the remains are visible. The space occupied by it is about three acres in extent, and includes the summit, with a considerable part of the eastern declivity. The area of the camp is surrounded by a double fosse and rampart, founded in one place with stones and black earth, except on the north side where the rock is so precipitous as to form of itself a sufficient defence. The access to the camp is from the east, two large stones still marking what was the place of entrance. On the very summit of the hill there is a cairn of stones, concave in the centre, which is covered with turf greener than the ground around it. Toward the north-east, in a small valley immediately under the brow of the hill, there are to be seen, at least, ten circles formed with stones indented or laid in the ground. These, which are all within the line of the defences, and

in the most sheltered place of the encampment, are not improbably the remains of huts raised for the purpose of accommodating the sick and wounded during the period of the hill's occupation. At their extremity, is still a spring, which was, no doubt, of use to the army generally, and might, in conjunction with the shelteredness of the position, afford a strong motive for such erections in this particular spot. The appearance of the ground in some of these circles, a few of the stones being covered with a rich moss, and bearing some stalks of stunted nettles, render it possible that some bodies may be here interred. It might contribute to the advancement of antiquarian lore, if some of these circles were dug up and examined. The situation of this encampment, by whomsoever occupied, must have been a place of considerable strength, and of great utility, commanding, as it does, an extensive prospect on all sides, and consequently, not liable to the danger of sudden surprise.

*Old Chapel.* - In the memory of some now living, a part of a Gothic arch, supposed to be the remains of a chapel, was standing at Long Dalmahoy. A part of the ground in the immediate neighbourhood is of so black and deep a mould, that it is considered as the site of the burying-ground attached to the same chapel.

*Jougs.* - This consists of an iron collar attached to a chain, the extremity of which was fixed in the wall of a building in the centre of the village. This collar was, it is supposed, in feudal times, put upon the necks of criminals, who were thus kept standing in a pillory as a punishment for petty delinquencies. It would not be necessary in such cases, we presume, to attach to the prisoner any label descriptive of his crime. In a small country village the crime and the cause of punishment would in a very short time be sufficiently public. Possibly, however, for the benefit of the casual passenger, the plan of the Highland laird might be sometimes adopted, who adjudged an individual for stealing turnips to stand at the church-door with a large turnip fixed to his button-hole. [Since writing the above, we find that the jougs were originally attached to the church, and were used in cases of ecclesiastical discipline.] The jougs are now in the possession of James Craig, Esq. Ludgate Lodge, Ratho.

*Mansion Houses.* - The chief of these are Hatton House, a fine old baronial building, some of which is of very ancient date; Dalmahoy House, which was built about 130 years ago, but has subsequently received additions by different occupants; Ratho House, a very splendid building in the Grecian style, erected by the late John Bonar, Esq.; Milburn Tower, built by the late Sir R. Liston; Bonnington House, built in 1622; Norton, now finished, the property of Alexander Berwick, Esq. Besides these, most of the mansion houses of the different proprietors are tasteful and elegant in their appearance.

### III.- POPULATION.

There are no means of ascertaining the population of the parish at any very remote period.

In 1755, the return made to Dr Webster gave,	930
1792,           -       -       -	825
1811,           -       -       -	1008
1821,           -       -       -	1444
1831,           -       -       -	1314
1838, from a survey made for this Account by Mr Thomas Wallace, a member of Session,	1454
Of these 700 are males, 754 females.	

It appears from the above statements, that the population of the parish has fluctuated considerably between different periods. Since the year in which the last Statistical Account was compiled, till the last Government census, an interval of thirty-nine years, there was an increase of 489; and from 1831 to 1838, there has been an addition of 149. The former increase is to be ascribed to three causes, - the improvement in the agriculture of the parish, and the additional number of hands required for its operations; the cutting of the Canal, which has increased the facility of communication between this parish and the surrounding country, and the opening up of some stone quarries in the neighbourhood of the village. The latter increase, from 1831 to the present time, is to be ascribed to the continued operation of the same causes, together with the greater subdivision of the land in the parish, the building of new mansions by the proprietors, and the formation of establishments in connection with them. It is proper to mention that, in the census taken for 1838, two families are included, who had rented during summer the unoccupied mansions of two of the heritors.

Of the population above specified there are

In the village of Ratho,	-	-	-	-	539
of Bonnington,	-	-	-	-	100
country parts,	-	-	-	-	<u>815</u>
			Making in all,	-	1454
The number of persons under 15 years is					560
between 15 and 30,					386
30 50,					309
50 70,					168
70 and upwards,				<u>31</u>	1454

The average number of marriages for the last seven years is, - - - - - 12 <sup>2</sup>/<sub>7</sub>

The register is so imperfect as not to furnish a proper average on the head of births; and no account is kept of funerals.

The number of bachelors and widowers upwards of 50 years of age is,	-	-	-	-	23
That of unmarried women upwards of 45 is,	-	-	-	-	17
Number of families in 1831 amounted to	-	-	-	-	273
chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	-	-	184
trade, manufactures, and handicraft,	-	-	-	-	46

There are 3 insane persons, one of whom is kept by the parish in an asylum in Edinburgh; 1 person deaf and dumb; and 1 so blind as not to be able to gain a livelihood. The parish contains 1 nobleman, and 16 individuals in all, who hold land to the value of L.50 Sterling a-year and upwards.

*Habits and Character of the People.* - The habits of the people are cleanly rather than otherwise, and there is an increasing taste among them for flower-plots, shrubs, and other means of beautifying the exterior of their cottages. The food of the peasantry is generally vegetable and farinaceous, butcher-meat being used but occasionally, in which case it is boiled with broth for dinner. Enjoying few of the luxuries of life, the people are in general contented, as they are industrious, honest in their dealings, civil, respectful, and obliging in their manners. The cutting of the Canal had at one time a very injurious effect upon the character of the population, from the scenes of riot and dissipation among the Irish labourers, of which the village was the centre, and after the work was finished, from the number of Irish who took up their residence it. But time has produced a marked change to the better. Most of the families who at first settled have departed, and those that remain have come under the humanizing influence of good neighbourhood and Protestant institutions. Still, however, there is room for

improvement with not a few on the score of intemperance, which is the crying evil among the Scottish population.

#### IV. - INDUSTRY.

The parish of Ratho may be regarded as entirely agricultural, there being only a few families who are not either directly or indirectly dependent for their subsistence upon the cultivation of the soil.

The following may be regarded as a close approximation to truth in reference to the condition of the land.

Number of acres, standard imperial measure, which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage,	-	-	-	-	4978
The number of acres which remain constantly in pasture,	-	-	-	-	444
Number under wood,	-	-	-	-	<u>396</u>
				In all,	5818

*Rent of Land.* - The rent of land varies from 15s. to L. 4, 10s. and will amount on an average to L. 2, 12s. per Scotch acre. Rents, it may be remarked, have fallen considerably since 1808, the period when land was at its height, and have, besides, been generally converted from money into grain within the last fifteen or twenty years. Grazing is at the rate of L. 5 for a cow from Whitsunday to Martinmas; 5d. per week, or 10s. 10d. for the half year, is about the price required for pasturing a full-grown sheep.

*Rate of Labour.* - The rate of labour for day labourers is 10s. in summer, and 9s. in winter; females, at out-door work, receive 1d. an hour, or 10d. a-day; children from 6d. to 8d. a-day; farm-servants who are hired by the year receive their wages partly in kind and partly in money. They have for the year 6 bolls, 2 firloths of meal, 3 bolls of potatoes, the carriage of 4 carts of coals, and L. 16 in money. These different items, with their house, may be considered equal in value to L. 26 a-year. The wages of artisans are as follows: masons, 3s. a-day; wrights, 2s. 6d.; slaters, 4s.; blacksmiths, from 2s. 6d. to 3s. per day. The price of a substantial full mounted cart is L. 10; of a wooden plough, L. 2, 10s.; a pair of single wooden harrows, L. 2, 10s.; an iron plough, L. 3, 10s.; a pair of iron harrows, L. 3, 10s.

*Breed of Cattle.* - There are few cattle bred in the parish, but those which are reared are a cross between the short-horned and the Ayrshire; this species being considered by many to answer best both for feeding and dairy purposes.

*Husbandry.* - The rotation followed on the clay loam is, 1. fallow, with fifteen tons of manure; 2. wheat; 3. clover and rye-grass, pastured either with sheep or cattle for one or two years, or made hay the first year, and in this case broken up and made oats as after the two years pasture. The rotation adopted on the dry soft loam is, 1. potatoes or turnips after the soil is properly pulverized and quickens gathered, and thirty tons of good stable manure applied to the former, and twenty tons of police manure to the latter. 2. Wheat or barley; 3. clover and rye-grass pastured or made into hay, as on the clay loam; and 4. oats, which finishes the rotation.

*Draining.* - The system of draining formerly pursued was that of cross drains. These were all cut four feet deep, and a foot wide at the bottom, and filled with large stones. This system has now, however, given place entirely to that of furrow drains, which are cut two and a-half feet deep, and filled with fourteen inches of small stones, broken so as to pass through a four-inch ring. In some instances, tiles are made use of in the furrow drains, twenty-two inches

deep, with a layer of gravel above. The leading drains in both cases are from three to four feet deep, with a large tile in the bottom, and one foot of small stones on the top. In such parts of the land as have been furrow-drained, the subsoil plough has been used with great advantage, and seems to make a complete change upon a spongy damp soil.

*Leases.* - The general duration of leases is nineteen years; which may be considered short when an expensive drainage has taken place at the expense of the farmer.

*Farm Buildings.* - The farm buildings and enclosures throughout the parish are good, with the exception of the servants' houses, which generally, with a stinted economy, neither favourable to comfort or delicate feeling, have only a single apartment for the accommodation of a family. Most of the farm steadings are built of whinstone and edged with freestone. In two instances steam-engines have been erected for thrashing out the grain. These may be considered as an improvement in as much as, while they save the horses, they afford the farmer the use of a constant and unwearied power. Were the adoption of these becoming general, however, they would give to the country all the appearance of a manufacturing district, with its red chimney stalks and smoky atmosphere. As lovers of the country, and as desirous that it may long retain its distinctive properties, we deprecate their farther introduction.

*Improvements.* - Since the period of the last Statistical Account a very great improvement has taken place upon the surface of the parish. A considerable quantity of land, comprehending chiefly Ratho and Gogar moors, which were then in a state of nature, have been reclaimed and brought under the plough. Much has been done, too, in the way of draining on several properties, in some cases by the owner, in others by the tenant. The facility with which manure is now procured from Edinburgh by the Canal has contributed in no small degree to the fertility of the soil. One of the consequences resulting from this facility is, that three times the amount of green crop is now raised, compared with what was formerly.

There is here a distillery connected with the Ratho Hall property, and rented at present by the Messrs Buchan. It employs in superintendence and work eleven individuals. The quantity of whisky distilled is from 800 to 1000 gallons in the period, or about 42,000 gallons in the year. The spirit made here is much esteemed by competent judges.

*Quarries.* - Of these there are four of whin and one of sandstone. One of the former only is regularly wrought. On an average it keeps ten persons employed throughout the year.

*Produce.* [The writer is indebted for his information on the subject of Agriculture to Mr John Melvin, an extensive and most successful farmer in the parish.] - The average produce of wheat per Scotch acre is considered to be 7½ - bolls, or 30 bushels at 6s. 6d. per bushel, barley 6½ bolls, or 39 bushels at 3s. 4d.; oats 8 bolls, or 48 bushels at 2s. 10d.; potatoes, 30 bolls, equal to 6 tons, at L.2, 5s. per ton; turnips, 25 tons, at 6s. 4¾d. per ton; hay, 160 stone, at 8d. per stone.

546	Scotch acres of wheat at L. 9, 15s. per acre,	-	-	-	L. 5373	10	0
324	do. of barley at L. 6, 10s.	-	-	-	2106	0	0
869	do. of oats at L. 6, 16s.	-	-	-	5909	4	0
424	do. of hay at L. 5, 6s. 8d	-	-	-	2261	6	8
424	do. of potatoes at L. 13, 10s.	-	-	-	5754	0	0
297	do. of turnips at L.8,	-	-	-	2376	0	0
1265	do. of pasture at L 2, 12s.	-	-	-	3289	0	0
370	do. of permanent pasture at 15s.	-	-	-	277	10	0
	Gardens and orchards,	-	-	-	300	0	0

Produce of quarries,	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	0	0
Total yearly value of raw produce raised,	-	-	-	-	-	-	L. 28,146	10	8

## V. - PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Markets.* - The parish has no market-town within its bounds, nor is its tranquillity disturbed by any periodical fairs. At one time it was the seat of a regular cattle-market, but that has been discontinued for a considerable period. The nearest outlet for the agricultural produce of the district is Edinburgh, which is seven miles and a-half distant from the church.

*Villages.* - The principal village in the parish is Ratho. It is pleasantly situated upon a sloping declivity on the east side of the ridge which we have described as traversing the parish. It consists of a single street, with two rows of houses running from west to east, and bending at a right angle northward to the Union Canal. The latter part of this street was anciently called the Lud Gate or Lord's Gate, from its forming the way of access to the House of God. The houses are chiefly one storey in height; they are built of whinstone from the quarries in the neighbourhood, with free-stone lintels, and some are roofed with tiles, and others with slates. The village has been much extended and improved of late years by the erection of a number of neat cottages, and by the formation of dry drains and other alterations upon the street. A few very old huts on the south side, which still connect the present village with the olden time, are now in process of demolition, and their place will no doubt in time be supplied by others of more commodious structure.

The only other village now belonging to the parish is that of Bonnington, situated about a mile and a-half west of Ratho, on the table-land of the same ridge. It consists of about twenty small thatched houses, inhabited entirely by the labourers and farm-servants employed upon the estate of Bonnington. The former Statistical Account mentions also the village of Norton, of which nothing now remains but four cot-houses.

*Means of Communication.* - The village and parish of Ratho have the advantage of a post-office, from which there are two deliveries of letters every lawful day. The village being off the line of the mail-coaches, the bag is carried by a runner to the turnpike, and then delivered to the mail. The salary of the postmaster is L.10 a-year. Individuals travelling to the east or west may have the benefit of all the Edinburgh and Glasgow stage-coaches, which run upon the Uphall and Calder roads. The former of these, which is the chief thoroughfare between the two capitals of Scotland, touches the parish on the north for about a quarter of a mile; the latter divides it for a mile and a half from Addiston Bridge to Burnwynd.

The Union Canal, however, from its vicinity to the village, is of the greatest advantage to the people. The conception of this undertaking was first suggested by the successful completion of the Forth and Clyde Canal, and was executed as a means at once of facilitating the transport of heavy goods between Glasgow and Edinburgh, and of opening up the coal districts to the west for the benefit of the capital. It was begun in 1818 and finished in 1822, at an expense of nearly L. 400,000.

This work, originating in a laudable spirit of enterprise, has not realized the sanguine hopes of its projectors, and, like many other improvements, it has hitherto been beneficial chiefly to the public. At present, besides the conveyance of manufactures, it serves as a channel for the transport of manure from Edinburgh to the grounds upon its banks, and of coal



in return from the pits in Linlithgow and Stirlingshire. In these respects it has contributed materially to the improved cultivation of the country, and to the comfort in winter of the inhabitants of Edinburgh. For four years past, a class of swift boats has been established upon it for the special conveyance of passengers, which travel at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour. Of these there are three each day in summer, leaving Port Hopetoun and Port Dundas, at the hours of six, nine, and twelve. Three of the many bridges over this line of water are in this parish; and there are two over the Gogar Burn, one at Addiston, the other at Burnwynd.

*Railway.* - The line of the proposed railway between Edinburgh and Glasgow intersects the north-east side of the parish, and when formed, will afford an additional means of communication. The parish roads are about fourteen miles in length, and are maintained by an assessment upon the land of so much per ploughgate. They have been for many years in a remarkably good state. The parish is indebted for their superiority to the late Sir R. Liston, who, besides superintending the management of them, contributed most liberally beyond his legal proportion, to the expense of their improvement.

There is, besides the means of communication already specified, a carrier from Ratho to Edinburgh twice a-week, on Tuesdays and Fridays.

*Ecclesiastical State.* - The Church of Ratho is said to have been anciently dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and that this was the case, is confirmed by the fact, that a fountain in the immediate neighbourhood of the church still bears the name of the Lady's Well. Ratho was then a rectory, of which the patronage appears to have belonged to the lords of the manor. The living was early of considerable value, being rated in the ancient taxation at seventy merks. In 1444, when the College Kirk of Corstorphine was founded by the donation and mortification of Sir John Forrester of Corstorphine, the teinds and patronage of Ratho were made over to him by the Archbishop of St Andrews, as directed by a popish bull. By this means four prebendal stalls were endowed in connection with the College Kirk, [See Caledonia, and the old documents of the Lauderdale Family in the hands of Gibson-Craigs, Wardlaw, and Dalzel, W. S.] which are called in ancient documents half Dalmahoy, half Hatton, half Bonnington, half Platt, thus intimating their connection with this parish as the source of their revenue. The teinds of Ratho being thus in a great measure abstracted, it sunk, we presume, from the dignity of a rectory into a mere curacy. In 1617, upon the disjunction of the College Kirk from the Abbacy of Holyrood, with which it had been previously connected, and its erection into a separate institution, called the Parsonage and Vicarage of Corstorphine, the prebends to which we have alluded were appropriated for a maintenance to the ministers thereof, with the reservation of L.40 Scots, as a stipend to the minister of Ratho. In 1633, by an Act of Charles I., the ecclesiastical institutions of Corstorphine were again remodelled, and the four prebends were annexed to the College Kirk as before. The greater part of the teinds of Ratho continued to be thus applied, in all likelihood, till the Revolution, when the Presbyterian form of church government was finally re-established, and Ratho became a distinct parish, instead of being, as it had been during the reigns of Popery and Episcopacy, a mere appendage to the ecclesiastical institutions of Corstorphine.

The patronage and the haill teinds of the parish of Ratho, which had till 1671 been the property of the Forresters of Corstorphine, were then, with the exception of those of Dalmahoy

and Bonnington, disposed by James Lord Forrester to Charles Maitland of Hatton. The patronage still remains in connection with the estate of Hatton, but is at present vested in four trustees.

The present church is as conveniently situated as it possibly could be for the great majority of the population. It stands to the north of the village, on the opposite side of the Canal, in a reposing situation, and is surrounded by trees of ancient growth, through the embowering foliage of which it is dimly seen by the casual passenger. When it was built is uncertain, unless it was at the same time with the Dalmahoy isle, which is apparently of similar antiquity, and bears the date of 1683. It partook originally of the form common to the tasteless country churches of Scotland, being a long narrow barn-like building, with the pulpit in the centre, and recesses on either side, and in front of it, for the families of the principal heritors. A few years ago, during the ministry of the Rev. Dr Henderson of Glasgow, an addition was made to the south side of it, at an expense of L. 500 or L. 600, which, besides increasing the accommodation considerably, has improved most materially the external and internal appearance of the building. The church is now somewhat in the form of a cross; and affords ample accommodation for the population, being seated for about 700. The seats are allocated to the different heritors according to their valued rents, and by them subdivided among their tenants and dependents. It ought to be remarked, that the new part, as it was built not by a legal assessment upon the whole heritors, but by the subscriptions of a few, belongs to the subscribers and to those others who had seats upon its site. None of the sittings are let; those which are required for the tenantry of the different proprietors in the parish being occupied without rent by the villagers.

The church is a very pleasant one in summer, but, from the great number of public and private doors which it contains, it is intolerably cold in winter. An attempt was made to remedy this by a stove; but, from the defective principle upon which it is constructed, it has failed to produce the desired effect. The church-yard requires an addition to its extent, and some alterations, which would improve materially the enclosure of the sanctuary.

Belonging to the church are two benefactions by Richard Lord Maitland, a former proprietor of Hatton. The one consists of two communion cups of massive silver, bearing this inscription: "Given by Richard Lord Maitland in 1684, to the service of God, for the church of Rutha." The other consists of a baptismal plate and ewer, with the Lauderdale arms, and the inscription, "For the service of God, given by Richard Lord Maitland, to the parish church of Ratho, anno 1685." [It appears from the session records, that these cups were carried off by the Earl of Lauderdale to his estate in the south, at the period of the Revolution; from what cause does not appear, probably for their safe custody in these troublous times. One of the first minutes of the kirk-session on record contains the appointment of a committee for the recovery of the same. The committee, it appears, waited first upon Sir John Dalmahoy of that Ilk, to request his assistance in procuring their restoration, but he being in prison could give them no aid. A deputation of two is forthwith sent to Lauder to wait upon Lord Maitland, from whom, upon granting a receipt, they received the utensils, and since that time they have remained in the custody of the ministers and kirk-session.]

*Manse and Glebe.* - The present manse, which is a plain but commodious structure, is situated in the Kirktown hard by the church. It was built in 1803, during the ministry of the late Dr Duncan, whose name is kept in grateful remembrance by the people. Since the time of its erection, no alterations of any consequence have been made upon it. The offices belonging to the old manse still remain, and are fast hastening to decay.

The glebe consists of two separate portions of land. The one of these, which is of excellent quality, is about 3½ acres Scotch, exclusive of the garden, and the site of the manse and offices; the latter, or grass glebe, which contains about 4 acres, is a piece of swampy mossy soil, of little comparative value. Together, they are worth about L. 16 or L. 18. The stipend is 17 chalders of grain, half meal, half barley, with the exception of about 6 bolls, 3 fir-lots, 2 pecks, 2 lippies, of wheat, and 6 bolls, 1 firloft, 3 pecks, 3 lippies of oats. It is paid by the highest fiars of the county, and on an average of the last five years may be stated in money at L. 250, exclusive of L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements.

There is no place of worship in the parish save the parish church. Six-sevenths of the population belong to the Establishment. There are 1286 individuals in connection with the Established Church. Those belonging to other denominations amount in all to 168 persons. Of these, 132 are Dissenters or Seceders, chiefly in connection with the United Secession, and worshipping at East Calder, Slateford, or Balerno; 17, chiefly the family of the Earl of Morton, are Episcopalians; and 19 are Roman Catholics. Of those belonging to the Establishment, the number of communicants on an average of the winter and summer communions, is 420.

Divine service is not upon the whole so uniformly well attended as might be expected from the number of persons in communion with the church, and professing adherence to it. The state of the weather makes a much greater alteration in the attendance, than could be anticipated among a hardy agricultural peasantry, whose occupation habituates them to all manner of exposure. The practice of half-day attendance, which prevails among some of the better classes, has undoubtedly a most detrimental effect upon those who more immediately come under the influence of their example.

Since the institution of the General Assembly's four schemes, the religious contributions of the people have been chiefly directed into these channels. There is a collection made once in the year, for each of these, and the average amount of the whole may be about L. 14. The regular weekly collections for the poor have, on an average of three years, amounted annually to L. 44, 12s. These, however, it is to be remarked, are daily on the decrease.

*Education.* - There are, at present, 3 schools connected with the parish, all of which are in the village of Ratho. The chief of these is the parish school, which has for years been most efficiently taught by Mr James Gourlay. There attend it, upon an average through the year, about 85 scholars. The instruction imparted comprehends the common branches of reading, writing, and arithmetic, English grammar, and geography; with the higher branches of book-keeping, French, Latin, and Greek, and mathematics, when required. The fees, as fixed by the heritors and kirk-session, are as follows: 2s. 6d. per quarter for English reading; writing, 3s. 6d.; arithmetic, 4s. 6d.; Latin, 7s. 6d.; Greek, 9s. 6d.; French, 10s. 6d. The higher charge always comprehends the lower branches of instruction. For English grammar and geography no additional charge is made. The schoolmaster has the legal accommodation of house and garden; his salary is L. 34, 4s. 4½d.; the school-fees should amount to L. 40. Besides this, he may receive L. 9, 10s. a-year from his office as session-clerk, and the fees connected with it.

The other two schools are taught by females, and are chiefly to be considered as sewing-schools; the reading and writing taught in them, being chiefly intended to keep up the remembrance of what has already been acquired in the parish school. One of these is supported

partly by yearly subscriptions, which vary in amount, and partly by fees; the other by fees entirely. The number of children attending each is 22; the fee per quarter, 2s. 6d.

Besides the week day-schools, there are also 3 Sabbath schools in operation in the different parts of the parish, attended in all by about 100 children. One of these is in Ratho, another in Long Dalmahoy, and a third in Bonnington. The latter two have been instituted but lately, and promise to be of considerable advantage in the diffusion of religious knowledge and pious feeling.

From the statement made of the numbers attending the schools in the parish, that number being about 129, it may be thought that there is a considerable deficiency in this respect, considering the population under fifteen years of age. In explanation of this, however, it must be mentioned, that not a few in the outskirts of the parish attend private schools in the adjoining parishes, which are more contiguous to their respective residences. The only part of the parish that is at all inconveniently situated, as regards either school or church, is Long Dalmahoy, but the amount of the population is too small to warrant any separate erection. The distance, besides, is not extreme, being about two miles and a half by the nearest way of access.

The people, on the whole, in common with the inhabitants of Scotland, seem to be duly alive to the benefits of education, and many of them struggle hard in order to secure it for their children. With the wages of a labouring population, however, the difficulty is great, and many of them are compelled to rest satisfied with a much smaller amount of it than their sense of its importance would dictate. It is much to be desired that a more ample remuneration were allotted to the schoolmasters in the shape of salary, and that the fees, low as they are, were lower still.

Four pounds per annum are, according to the existing arrangement, allowed by the heritors for the education of eight poor children.

*Library.* - There is a library in the parish, consisting of between 300 and 400 small volumes, under the management of the kirk-session and a committee of the inhabitants. The books were purchased four years ago with money raised by subscription, chiefly among the heritors. At its first formation, it was intended for the benefit of the Sabbath scholars, and for a time confined to them; afterwards, however, it was considered advisable to make it parochial, and it is now open to the whole parish. The subscription is 1s. for children, and 2s. for adults in the year. The advantages which it offers have hitherto been made use of chiefly by the children attending the parish school. There are few adult subscribers. It is hoped, however, that the parents profit by the perusal of the books taken home by the children, as they are generally of a character from which the old as well as the young may learn.

*Friendly Societies.* - There are at present 3 societies of this description existing. One is termed the Ratho Yearly Society; and, as its name intimates, lasts only for a year, when it is dissolved and formed of new. It embraces three objects, - the saving of a portion of money for rent, and other purposes; the relief of casual sickness; and the diminution of the burden of expense consequent upon a funeral. For these purposes, each member pays 1s. 2d. a week; the odd pence, with the interest of the whole, forms a fund from which sick members are relieved, at the rate of 5s. a week for the first thirteen weeks, 2s. 6d. for the next thirteen, and 1s. 6d.

during the remainder of the year. In the event of a member's death, his family receives L. 2 for funeral expenses, and L. 1, 10s. are given on the death of a member's wife. What remains of the whole sum paid from November of the one year to the succeeding one, is divided among the members at the expiry of the year. There are 62 individuals members of this society. The affairs are conducted by a committee of twelve, exclusive of the treasurer.

*Masons Society.* - The Free Masons have a Friendly Society in connection with their lodge. This society numbers at present about 50 members, and has, besides the building appropriated to masonic meetings, a fund of L. 300. The entry-money paid by persons joining the fund is stated in the printed regulations to be L. 1, 1s., exclusive of what is paid by them as masons. This sum is now reduced. Besides the sum paid on entering, each member contributes to the fund 2s. per quarter, and in return; receives during sickness, 6s. per week for the first twelve weeks, 4s. for the next twelve, 2s. for the succeeding twenty-six weeks, after which he is put upon the superannuated allowance of 1s. per week during the continuance of his illness. L. 6 are given for the funeral expenses of a member. L. 2 of this sum may be drawn by him on the decease of his wife, and three only are then allowed to be drawn at his own death. A collection of 1s. is made from each member when the funeral money is taken in whole, 6d. when the L. 2 is taken, and other 6d. when application is made for the remaining L. 3. From 1st June 1837, to 13th August 1838, this society received L.40, 3s. 2½d., and paid out L 44, 16s. 6½d.

Another society, having similar objects in view, was instituted two years ago; but its operations have not yet commenced, nor are its articles embodied in a regular form.

*Savings Bank.* - A savings bank existed some years ago, which is now dissolved. At present the National Savings Bank serves the same purpose, and, from the confidence with which it is deservedly regarded, receives considerable contributions from the industrious among the people.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.* - The number of poor at present receiving regular parochial assistance is 26, being at the rate of one in every 57 of the population. The sum allowed to these varies from 2s. 6d to 6s. per month; - 4s. may be regarded as the average allowance to individuals. In addition to this, each pauper receives a cart of coals of 16 cwt. at the commencement of the year; and the more necessitous of their number half a cart additional in the month of March. Besides those receiving constant aid, a few receive occasional assistance in money, and many more in coals. This class amounted in 1835 to 19, in 1836 to 16, and in 1837-1838, owing to the severity of the winter, to 30. The permanent funds from which the poor are supported are, an assessment upon the heritors according to their valued rent, which has hitherto generally been levied at the rate of 2d. per pound Scotch valuation; the church collections, and the mortcloth dues. The assessment in 1835 was L. 59, the collections, L. 58, 4s. 4d., and mortcloth money, L. 1, 8s. 1886, assessment, L 71, 2s.; collections, L. 86, 11s. 2d; mortcloth dues, L. 2, 9s. 1887, assessment, L. 76, 0s. 8d.; collections, L. 29, 0s. 11d.; mortcloth dues, L. 5. The money, with which the coals is purchased, is raised by a collection at the church doors, and a subscription among the heritors and more wealthy of the people. The sum thus raised amounted last year to L. 34. In addition to the assistance afforded from these sources to the indigent, a considerable number are supplied with excellent broth twice a week,

at Dalmahoy House, by the liberality of its charitable proprietor. In the case of any extraordinary general pressure from the inclemency of the season, or of family or individual distress, a subscription is the common means resorted to, and it never fails in accomplishing the desired object.

We regret to say, when on the subject of the parochial funds, that there is not now the disposition there once was on the part of the people generally, to contribute to the collections at the church doors for behoof of the poor. The time was when scarcely an individual entered the sanctuary, old or young, rich or poor, master or servant, who did not previously cast his mite into the treasury. This laudable custom, however, proper and becoming as it is, has fallen very much with many into disuse. On the other hand, that reluctance to make application, or to receive assistance from the church, which was once so remarkable in Scotland, is here, as in other places around, fast disappearing, and, with some honourable exceptions, is almost extinct. The receipt of parish aid does not appear to be regarded as any degradation, either by the recipients or by those connected with them; and, indeed, the claims for admission upon the roll, are generally more than can with propriety be admitted. Necessity, however, it is believed, is the great impelling cause of such applications.

*Inns and Alehouses.* - There is no proper inn in the parish; there are, however, 8 public-houses, 7 of which are in the village of Ratho. This number is considerably greater than the amount of the population would justify. Their influence upon the habits of the people has never been considered of a beneficial kind. The practice, however, which is every day getting more prevalent, of sending for spirits, and drinking them in private houses, is infinitely more demoralizing, as in the latter case, the wives and children of the drinkers are not only witnesses to the evil, but participators in the sin. Every drunkard becomes thus the corrupter of his whole household.

*Fuel.* - Coals are our chief, it may be said our only fuel. Since the Canal was opened, our supply of that article has been derived chiefly from the Duke of Hamilton's pits at Niddry, in the parish of Polmont. The price which, three years ago, used to be as low as 9s. and 10s., has varied last year, from 11s. to 15s. per ton. These coals burn well, but are rather dusty, the ashes being white and very light. A small quantity is still brought from Benhar, whence the parish was formerly supplied almost entirely. The Benhar coals are generally considered of somewhat superior quality, but the extreme length of the carriage, the distance being eighteen miles, has thrown them much into disuse in this quarter.

*October 1839.*

