

society, might not the purpose be equally well attained by permitting the entails to be made upon money in place of land, and is there not reason to think that the public funds might be sufficiently permanent to become the subject of such entails?

A CITIZEN OF GLASGOW.

For the Monthly Magazine.

An Account of RAVENSTONEDALE, in the COUNTY of WESTMORLAND.

THE almost universal approbation with which statistical inquiries have been lately received, and their manifest utility in discovering the real state and nature of a country, and thereby directing to the different practical improvements of which it is capable, are considerations that have induced the writer of this article to submit to the public the following observations. It is also his intention, to extend his inquiries to the several districts of which this county is composed, and, if proper and authentic information shall be obtained, to continue his reports in some of the subsequent numbers of the Monthly Magazine.

Ravenstonedale, in all probability, derived its name from the great quantity of *raven* or *grey stones*, which abound in the southern extremity of the parish; though the late Dr. Burn, in his history of Westmorland, has traced it to a different origin. The river *Raven* however, from which he supposes the appellation to have been received, must certainly have existed in the Doctor's imagination only; as a river of that name is now wholly unknown. In a charter made in the time of Henry II. it is called *Ravenstandale*, which seems partly to confirm the derivation we have given; *stane* being still, as is well known, the provincial word for *stone*, throughout the counties of Westmorland and Cumberland. The extent of the parish is about seven miles from north to south; and at its greatest breadth, five miles from east to west. It is sixteen miles from Kendal, and twelve from Appleby: is bounded on the east by the parish of Kirkby Stephen; on the south by the parishes of Kirkby-Stephen and Sedbergh; on the west by the parish of Orton; and on the north by the parishes of Crosby Garret and Kirkby-Stephen.

The nature and quality of the soil have one grand division, formed by some rivulets that intersect and divide the eastern from the western part of the parish. These waters are also the boundaries which separate the various kinds of stone that are found here, and the disposition

and inclination of the different strata. On the east side of the parish and of these rivulets, the soil is generally upon a fine limestone, but in some situations a sandy loam may be observed. On the west-side, the soil, though of an excellent quality and scarcely inferior to the other, is nevertheless totally dissimilar: it lies upon a hard kind of stone, provincially denominated *rag*, which continues to some distance westward without interruption, and with little or no variation. The difference in the disposition of the strata appears to be very remarkable: on the one side, they incline to the east; whilst on the other, they uniformly verge to the west. As a map of this parish has not perhaps ever been made, it is next to an impossibility, to ascertain with any degree of exactness the number of acres that Ravenstonedale contains. The inclosed lands have, however, been computed to consist of about two thousand five hundred acres; but this computation seems to be erroneous, and to fall short of the precise number.

From its elevated situation, and the vicinity of the mountains by which it is surrounded, it might naturally be supposed, that the atmosphere of this part of the country could have little to recommend it, and that the climate in winter would be very severe. That this is really the case, the inhabitants have sufficient experience. Great falls of rain and snow are very frequent. But during the months of January, February, and March, the cold is perhaps most intense; and at this season of the year the hills are generally covered with snow, which renders the air very chill and piercing. It does not however oft happen, that there is rain here when the wind blows from the east; the clouds being generally dissipated and broken on the high ridge of mountains, which separate Westmorland from Yorkshire. In the year 1777, the small pox was very mortal, and a great number of people died, all of whom, one excepted, had the disease naturally; since that time inoculation has been more generally adopted, and its beneficial effects have been highly visible. The vaccine or cow-pox was also introduced during the last winter, and was proved to be a more mild and easy disease than the small-pox, and a complete preventative against the infection of that disorder. Nor has inoculation for the cow-pox been confined to the practice of medical men only. Many have been inoculated by others, with great success. And in some instances, parents themselves have inoculated their

own children, and always perfectly succeeded. The inhabitants of this parish are in general a healthy and hardy race of people, of a robust and muscular form of body, subject to no particular disease, and many of them attain to an advanced age. There is one person ninety three years of age, who nevertheless enjoys at this time a good state of health. And there are others so stout and healthy at the age of eighty five, or eighty-six, as to be able to perform a great deal of work. It cannot however be denied, but that where the person is formed by nature with a weak and sickly habit of body, this country is by no means suitable for his constitution.

It is generally believed, that very good free-stone might be procured on some of the lands belonging to the Earl of Lonsdale, but at present there are no quarries of this kind wrought. In the hill called Clouds, some small and inconsiderable veins of spar and lead-ore have been found. There are stones got in the parish, which are appropriated by the inhabitants to the uses of flooring and slating houses. Some of these stones are smooth, and will receive a polish, others are rough and contain veins of flint, and they are in general of a brown and darkish hue. Coals are brought from the Stanemore pits, a distance of eighteen miles, and sell at the rate of 5s. 6d. per cart load.* Peats also, which are got on the neighbouring common, are used for fuel by many families, and sell for 1s. 6d. the cart in summer, and for 2s. in winter.

According to Dr. Burn, whose history of this county was published in 1777, this parish contained 225 families, of which 59 were dissenters. The following is a copy of the late report made by the parish-officers on this subject :

Inhabited houses, in 1801, 224.—Uninhabited ditto 5.—Families 280.—Males 498.—Females 640.—Employed in agriculture, 232.—Employed in trades, 54.—Other classes, 846.—Total, 1138.

It appears therefore that since 1777 there has been an increase of 55 families ; and that the average number of persons composing a family, is $4\frac{1}{5}$ nearly. There are at this time in the parish, 43 families of Calvinist Dissenters, consisting of 172 individuals ; and 4 of quakers, making 17 persons. There are also a few methodists, but they have no meeting-house, nor any constant preacher. Accustomed

as I am to consider religion as the great

* The cart-load here mentioned, consists of 25 pecks of coals, and the peck contains 16 quarts, Winchester measure.

basis of morality, and of the happiness of mankind individually and collectively ; and more especially as the evils and calamities which have of late years pervaded and desolated Europe, appear to have originated from a contempt and dereliction of all religious worship ; it is with the utmost concern and regret that I behold the increasing infidelity of the present age, already extended to the most retired and sequestered situations. Formerly, and perhaps also at no great distance of time, the church and the different dissenting meeting-houses in the parish might have been seen attended on a Sunday by a very numerous and respectable assemblage of people, and this when the population of the place was evidently less than at present. But

Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.

Not to say worse, an apathy, or blameable indifference, respecting the sublime doctrines of Christianity and the rites and ceremonies of religion has pervaded the mass of the people. The church is very much deserted ; and at the distribution of the sacrament, which according to custom takes place six times in the year, there are seldom more than twenty persons present.

The farms are very small, few being above 60l. a year, and varying from that to 10l. and under. Indeed the number of farmers in this parish is few, in comparison of the number of proprietors of land, who live on their own estates, and follow husbandry ; there being generally reckoned three land-holders, or as they are here denominated *statesmen*, for one farmer. The number of yeomanry is however of late years much diminished, and the land is divided into greater portions, and has become the possession of a more opulent, but less numerous, set of people than formerly. To the man used to associate ideas of general plenty and prosperity with the increased affluence of a few individuals, and who knows not that wealth may possibly exist in a country, and nevertheless that misery and want may also exist in a still greater degree, a change of this nature will doubtless appear pleasing. But nothing is more certain, than that the comforts and conveniences of the people at large have decreased, in proportion as the influence and riches of a few have been augmented. The mode of cultivation in use, is probably not much different from that which was practised nearly a century ago. Men are naturally attached to ancient customs ; and when their local situation contributes to render their attachments more strong, it requires much time, before improvements

in agriculture of any considerable importance can be effected; since it is by slow and almost imperceptible degrees they will be communicated and adopted. And it must be from much experience and repeated observation, that the attentive agriculturist will learn to pursue that plan of cultivation which is most congenial to the soil and climate of his grounds, and best adapted to promote his own interest. Very little of the land in this parish is in tillage. Mr. Pringle in his *Agricultural Survey of the County of Westmorland*, published in 1794, says that in Ravenstonedale there are not sixty acres of corn. And I can very readily believe there would be no such number at that time; since at present, when the dearth of grain might be supposed a sufficient inducement to attempt the culture of this necessary article on every soil and in every climate, where any probability of success should present itself; and when more land is in tillage, than can be remembered at any former period; there are nevertheless not more than one hundred acres sown with corn. Those whose grounds are in tillage, take three or four crops of oats from the same land without intermission; and afterwards the land thus impoverished is left to recruit itself, without sowing upon it for this purpose any artificial grasses, as is customary in other countries. It seems astonishing that the coldness and moisture of the climate should be considered by the inhabitants as insurmountable difficulties attending the cultivation of corn, when it is well known, that in Norway, Sweden, and some other northern situations, where the cold is far more intense, and where the soil is in many places naturally unfruitful, they nevertheless grow great quantities of grain. The cause of superiority in the culture and production of corn in those bleak and dreary regions appears to be the use of a kind of seed that ripens at a very early period, and which requires not for so great a length of time the warmth and nutriment of the sun to bring it to perfection. And were the same kind of seed of universal request here, the crops would, I doubt not, be much more prolific than at present, and be also sooner ready for the sickle. It is not so much the elevation of the country, or the vicinity of the mountains, as many suppose, that hinders the corn from ripening and being productive, but the use of a grain which cannot attain to perfection until the year be far advanced, when the great falls of rain that generally happen at that season, destroy the hopes of the husbandman, and

render the crops of comparatively small value. With respect to potatoes, there are very few grown in this parish; and perhaps not more than two or three families plant a quantity sufficient for their own supply. The potatoes that are chiefly consumed here, are therefore brought from Appleby, for the carriage of which, in addition to the exorbitant price this article has lately fetched, and exclusive of impositions which are not unfrequent, they pay nine-pence for every eight Winchester pecks; insomuch that, during the last year, the Winchester bushel of potatoes was often sold for six shillings. It is impossible to assign any plausible or satisfactory reason, why an article that has been cultivated in almost every part of the country with the greatest profit and success ever since its first importation, and which is perhaps the most useful root that was ever imported into this or any other country, should be so much neglected in Ravenstonedale. It has been computed that an acre of ground planted with potatoes, will yield on an average three hundred and twenty Winchester bushels, which, if sold at the rate of two shillings per bushel, will leave 3*l.* for the rental of the land and other incidental expences. And if every landholder and farmer were to appropriate one acre of ground yearly to the raising of potatoes, than which nothing can be more profitable, there would not only be a quantity sufficient for the use of all the inhabitants, but a great provision for the support of horses and cows during the winter season would be also thereby effected.* Turnips also have been very little attempted. The general opinion of agriculturists, founded on I know not what foundation, is that they are a crop which will not succeed here. One person has this year sown a small field with turnip-feed, the greatest quantity of land that has perhaps ever been set apart for this purpose. Ravenstonedale is most remarkable for its excellent meadow and pasture-ground; and, in this view of it, perhaps excels every other parish in Westmorland and Cumberland. It is probable, that two-thirds of this district may

* Before quitting this subject, it is not perhaps either improper or unnecessary to notice the method by which potatoes are usually cultivated here. They neither dig nor plough the ground destined for this purpose; but having placed upon it the intended manure, plant the potatoes, and spread over them a light covering of soil. A method very reprehensible.

consist of meadow; and the rest which is not in tillage, of pasture-land. They generally reckon, that to pasture a cow five or six months will make her very good beef, and sufficiently fat for the market; and in some instances not so much time is allowed. Twenty yards of well got hay are also deemed fully competent for a like purpose, during the winter season: nor is corn or any thing else made use of in feeding cattle. The great price which fat cattle have fetched of late, has made the business of a grazier very lucrative, as some of those fed here have been sold for upwards of thirty guineas each. In instances however of this kind, the time required for fattening was generally much longer than is mentioned above; and a cow bought into the pastures for nine or ten pounds, is, after having remained there five or six months, usually estimated at eighteen or nineteen pounds. Sheep are commonly supposed to be sold from ten to sixteen shillings in advance, after pasturing. The number of sheep pastured here, does not probably exceed five hundred. They are denominated, from the great length of their wool, the long Scotch sheep, in contradistinction to the Cheviot-hill breed, the wool of which, though finer, is of a shorter nature. It is computed that four fleeces of those sheep will make a stone, and the stone sells for nine shillings and sixpence. When the sheep are fat, they weigh from ten to fourteen lbs. per quarter. Very good mutton is also sometimes killed off the common. Ravenstonedale, from its fine meadow and pasture-ground, is also noted for the excellent butter and cheese it produces. Much of this butter is carried into the counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and some of it

into Northumberland. Butter is therefore the cheapest article sold here. For some time past however, on account of the high prices of provisions, the profits of the dairy have been likewise very great, and the value of land has thereby much advanced. It may be said with certainty and propriety, that the rents and advantages arising from farming and the cultivation of land, are in a great measure obtained from the quantity and excellency of the butter and cheese which this parish produces. In most countries they wash their butter with water, but here they do not; and nevertheless, greater neatness and skill cannot be exhibited, nor butter of a more excellent taste and flavour be obtained. The land in this parish pays no tithes; the landholders having purchased them of the then lord of the manor, a predecessor of the present Earl of Londale. "In Ravenstonedale," says Mr. Housman, "where no tithes are paid, there are between 2000 and 3000 acres inclosed, four-fifths of which are let at the rate of four shillings to eleven shillings the acre, and the remainder at from twenty shillings to forty shillings." But this is certainly a mistake: the land lets in general for between thirty and forty shillings per acre, and some of it for more. The last year, some estates were let to farm at more than forty-five shillings per acre. The lands are seldom leased for a longer term than six years; and generally the leases are much shorter. This undoubtedly prevents all ideas of improvement, and the farmer, unless some agreement be previously made to the contrary, cannot be expected to advance the condition of the land he occupies.

(To be continued.)

MEMOIRS OF EMINENT PERSONS.

ACCOUNT of M. OESER, PROFESSOR of PAINTING, and DIRECTOR of the ELECTORAL ACADEMY of PAINTING at LEIPZIG, in SAXONY.

M. OESER, was born at Presburg, in Hungary, in 1717. He was destined to be a confectioner, but he never could find any relish in this sweet occupation. His first master in the arts was called *Kamauß*, who tormented him very much by employing him to copy prints, treated him often with boxes on the ear when he wished to follow his own ideas, and caused him thereby to run away from his apprenticeship. *Oeser* often related, in a humorous manner,

the pedantry of the old man, and his own youthful tricks. At Vienna, where he properly got his first instruction in the arts, he lived with an old good-natured uncle, with whom the young, sprightly, and ingenious nephew might do whatever he pleased. There he acquired by his productions, not only the esteem and friendship of the then living artists of distinction, particularly of the Director *Von Scupen* and of *M. Meytanz*, but likewise the favour and affection of many great men. The youth who, together with the greatest liveliness, was possessed of much amiable modesty, was quite surprised, when his *Sacrifice of Abraham*