

## **RATHRONAN:**

A parish, in the Shanid Division of the barony of Lower Connello, 4 miles (W.) from Newcastle, on the road to Shanagolden; containing 3102 inhabitants. This parish comprises 18, 153 statute acres, of which 17, 869 are apportioned under the tithe act; about 1000 acres are under tillage, 5000 meadow and rich pasture, and the remainder mountain pasture, plantation, and turbary. The land in the eastern portion is of good quality, being based on a substratum of limestone, and produces excellent crops under a good system of cultivation: the meadows and pastures are extremely rich; great numbers of sheep are fed on them annually, and the mountain districts afford good pasturage for numerous herds of cattle: there are not more than 300 acres of waste land, and much of the rougher kind is daily being brought into cultivation. The mountain range extends from the village of Ardagh to the confines of the county west of Arthea, where it joins the county of Kerry, a distance of more than 10 miles; the general formation is that of silicious grit and indurated clay or clunch, resting on a limestone base. Throughout the entire range are five several strata of coal, varying from 12 to 40 inches in thickness; but the two upper strata, not more than 16 inches thick, have only yet been worked, and that in a very inefficient manner; all the strata dip very rapidly. Nodules of ironstone are found in the rivulets and also embedded in the clunch; limestone is also abundant, and no district in Ireland seems better adapted than this for the establishment of iron-works. Flagstones of very large size are quarried in these mountains, and numerous escars are found almost exclusively of limestone. The principal seats are Glenville, the residence of J. Massey, Esq., and Cahermoyle, of W. S. O'Brien, Esq.; the woods around these seats are extensive and luxuriant, and are very interesting from their situation in a fertile valley destitute of all timber but what is on the demesnes; the plantations of Glenville are very extensive, reaching to the summit of the mountain. Athea, or Temple Athea, is the only village in the parish; it is very small but picturesquely situated, and is a station of the constabulary police. The living is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Limerick, and in the patronage of the bishop; the tithes amount to £133. The glebe house, towards the erection of which the late Board of First Fruits contributed a gift of £400 and a loan of £340, is a handsome residence, built in 1827; the glebe comprises 2 ½ acres. The church is a small but very neat edifice, in the early English style, with a square tower, and was wholly rebuilt in 1820, on which occasion the late Board of First Fruits advanced a loan of £500. In the R. C. divisions the eastern portion of the parish forms part of the union of Ardagh, and the western portion is a parish of itself, called Athea, where the chapel is situated. About 80 children are taught in two public schools. Within the grounds of Glenville are some chalybeate and petrifying springs. There are some remains of a very ancient church, and not far from the parish are the ruins of Ballyvohan castle.