

To the Atlantic Shore 1866

A

Handbook for Travellers

In

Ireland.

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1866

The right of Translation is reserved.

The Editor has endeavoured by personal visits and research to make this Handbook as trustworthy as possible. He takes this opportunity of offering his thanks to his many friends in Ireland for the help, co-operation, and hospitality so kindly afforded him during the progress of the work. He would also recommend the proprietors of Hotels, with a few exceptions, to offer more inducements to the tourist by an improved organisation of their establishments, particularly in the matter of cleanliness.

He will feel obliged for any reliable corrections, alterations, or additions, and requests that they may be sent to him, to the care of the Publisher, 60, Albemarle Street, London.

Although the following extract from a leader in the *Times* did not give rise to the *Handbook for Ireland*, which was nearly printed at the time it appeared, it furnishes at least a justification for such a guide-book, in pointing out how great attractions for travellers and visitors Ireland possesses, and how little they have hitherto been explored.

Extract from the 'Times,' Feb, 29, 1864.

“ There is nothing in these isles more beautiful and more picturesque than the south and west of Ireland. They who know the fairest portions of Europe still find in Ireland that which they have seen nowhere else, and which has charms all its own. One might suppose the island just risen from the sea, and newly beamed on by the skies—as if sea and land were there first parting, and the spirit of light and order beginning its work ; such is the infinite confusion of surge and beach, bay, headland, river, lake, grass ; of land and sea, sunshine in showers, and rainbow over all. Thackeray doubted, and any one may doubt, whether there is in all the earth a grander view than that over Westport to Clew Bay. But the whole coast west and south, indeed all round the island, has beauties that many a travelled Englishman has not the least conception of. The time will come when the annual stream of tourists will lead the way, and when wealthy Englishmen, one after another, in rapid succession, will seize the fairest spots, and fix here their summer quarters. They will not be practically further from London than the many seats of our nobility in the North-Midland counties were thirty years ago. Eighteen hours will even now take the Londoner to the Atlantic shore, and twenty will soon carry him to the furthest promontory of the island. There are those who will not welcome such a change upon the spirit of that scene ; but if we

see in the beauty of Ireland even a surer heritage than in hidden mine or fertile soil, why may we not hope that it will again cover her land with pleasant homes, and a busy, contented, and increasing people, such as we see in many other regions with nothing but their beauty and salubrity to recommend them ?”

May 1866

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Ireland is one of the most singular countries as to physical composition ; for whereas the usual arrangement of mountains is more or less in the interior, in this, case it is the reverse, the ranges for the most part constituting a belt or rim all around the seaboard edge, leaving the basin of the interior comparatively level. It must not, however, be inferred that there are no considerable heights in the interior, but merely that the general law is stated which seems to prevail over the country.

The Division of Connaught.

The district between Bundoran and Sligo is marked by a very characteristic range of limestone hills, which follow pretty much the contour of the coast, towards which it sweeps down in a fine line of escarpment. The salient points are Truskmore, Benbulbin, and King’s Mountain. They do not, however, run quite as far as Sligo, but when over Drumcliff Bay suddenly turn round to the E., and continue their course to Manor Hamilton and Lough Macnean. At Belmore Mount, overlooking Enniskillen, they make another sudden turn to the N., to join the high grounds of Church Hill, that run parallel with the W. shore of Lough Erne, and thus form altogether an irregular block of mountains, diversified with many tarns and lovely streams, particularly in the neighbourhood of Manor Hamilton and Lurgan Boy, where the river Bonet emerges from the picturesque valley of Glenade, in its course southwards to Lough Gill.

To the S. of the road leading from Manor Hamilton to Enniskillen the chain of limestone hills suddenly recommences with still more bold and romantic outlines, and occupies the district between Manor Hamilton and Lough Allen under the name of the Lackagh Hills. The principal escarpments of the chain are to the S.W. of Enniskillen, overhanging Florence Court and Swanlinbar, where they trend to the S.W., to die out gradually in the neighbourhood of Drumshambo and Carrick on Shannon. This portion of the range is particularly famous for containing the source of the mighty Shannon, that issues from a singular cavern or “ pot” in Legmonshena. There are also many other features characteristic of the carboniferous formation. The drainage of the largest portion of this block of mountain is provided for by Lough Allen, which may be said to be more or less surrounded by it, particularly on the N. and E. sides ; the ranges on the W., although practically part of the same system, being known as the Bralieve Mountains, which rise to the height of nearly 1400 feet (Cashel and Carrow). Notwithstanding the large area of the basin of Lough Allen, few rivers of any size enter it, save the Shannon and the Arigna, a fact which may be accounted, for by the proximity of the mountains to the lake. Returning northwards to Sligo, we find it occupying an advantageous position at the mouth of the basin of Lough Gill, which on the N. side is bounded by the outliers of the limestone ranges before mentioned ; and on the S. by the abrupt eminences of Slieve Slish and Slieve Daene. A most prominent feature in Sligo landscape is the truncated cone of Knocknarea, which occupies an isolated position over-looking Ballysadare Bay.

The next great batch of Connaught Mountains may lie defined by a diagonal line drawn from Ballysadare to Foxford, Castlebar, and Westport, and includes all the barren and wild district of Erris, Tyrawley, and Burrishoole. The ranges of the Ox Mountains and Slieve

Gamph extend front Ballysadare to the neighbourhood of Foxford, where they are rather suddenly brought up by Loughs Conn and Cullin. Their direction is from N.E. to S.W., and they attain a height of 1778 ft. at Knockalongy overlooking Screen, although their average is not more than 1200 ft. As they slope steeply towards the coast on the N., the rivers given off on that side are insignificant, the Easky, which runs past Dromore, being the only one worth mention ; but from the S.E. flanks issue the Owenmore, which has a northern course past Collooney and Ballysadare ; and the Moy, which for several miles flows in the opposite direction, but turns sharp round to the N. near Foxford, and becomes a tidal river at Ballina. From Killala Bay to Belmullet extends a long series of high bleak tableland (having an average of 700 ft.) through the centre of the district running N. and S., forming a sort of lofty ridge or backbone, which commences at Maumakeogh with an elevation of 1243 ft., and rapidly increases as it merges into the Nephin Beg range, a magnificent series of mountains overlooking Blacksod Bay, with the island of Achill on the W., and Clew Bay with the opposite cone of Croagh Patrick on the S. The principal heights are Slieve Car, 2369 ft. ; Nephin Beg, 2065 ft. ; and Cushcamcarragh, 2343 ft. ; which give several small rivers flowing through the wild district of Ballycroy into Blacksod Bay. This range is continued westward into the peninsula of Curraun (which indeed it altogether fills with the hill of Knockletteragh), and into the island of Achill, that contains some of the finest mountain-cliff scenery in the W. of Ireland ; such as the rugged mass of Slievemore, the precipices of Croghan, and the cliffs of Minnaun. Between Nephin Beg and Loughs Conn and Cullin, there is the still more lofty mountain of Nephin, 2646 ft., the rounded summit of which is visible for an enormous extent of country : and running S.W. from it towards Newport, are the hills of Berreen-corragh, and Buckoogh, not very much inferior in height. Notwithstanding the large scale of these mountains, very few streams, and these but of small size, issue from them ; some to drain into Lough Conn ; and some, as the Newport river, into Clew Bay. To the S. of Nephin is the parallel range of the Croaghmoyle Mountains, 1290 ft., intervening between it and Castlebar.

The next great group may be said to extend from Clew Bay to Galway Bay, and includes the principal portion of what is commonly known as Connemara ; the boundary on the E. side being the river Ayle, that runs from Castlebar into Lough Mask, and thence becomes the subterranean Cong River, which connects the latter with Lough Corrib.

For simplifying the arrangement, this group may be subdivided into the northern group, occupying the peninsula of Murrisk, and bounded on the S. by the inlet of the Killaries and the Errive River. The whole of the peninsula is occupied by a mass of mountain which does not appear to have any definite name. The N. is principally marked by the wonderful cone of Croagh Patrick, 2510 ft., which flings out its shoulders E. and W. ; while in the S., rising directly up from the Killaries, are the towering heights of Muilrea, 2688 ft., Benbury, 2610 ft., and Bengorm, 2303 ft. ; from whence a lofty line of hills follows the N. side of the valley of the Errive almost all the way to Westport. Between the Errive and Lough Mask is the range of the Partry Mountains, somewhat monotonous in their outline, which, as they approach their southern termination, become amalgamated with the great mountain system of the Joyce country, that occupies the northern portion of the peninsula, bounded respectively by the Killaries and Galway Bay.

Between the Killaries and the foot of Lough Mask, are Farrennamore, 2239 ft., and Ben-gorifif, 2039 ft. ; and further S., partly separating Lough Mask from Lough Corrib, are the ranges of Benlevy and Lugnabricka, at the foot of which flows the Bealnabrack, separating them from the Mamturk Mountains, and entering the arm of Lough Corrib at Maume. This latter range, of which Shanfolagh, 2045 ft., is the highest point, occupies the area between the valley of the Bealnabrack and the high road from Oughterarde and Clifden, and forms one of the most beautiful series of panoramas in that route, especially at the junction of the cross

valley of the Derryclare and Inagh Lakes. These last separate the Mamturk Mountains from the Twelve Pins, which may be considered as the centre of the mountain district of Connemara. Bunnabeola, of which Benbaun, 2395 ft., is the loftiest summit, is a series of 12 singular peaks rising close to one another, and throwing out a number of secondary ranges that extend for a considerable distance ; yet, taking the Twelve Pins as a whole, we find a distinct line of demarcation that contributes to give an air of independence and centralization to this magnificent group. On the N. it is bounded by the Gap and Lake of Kylemore ; on the S. by the Lake of Ballynahinch ; and on the E. by Loughs Inagh and Derryclare, at the foot of which is the singular little hill of Lissoughter, forming as it were the key to this cross-valley.

The remainder of the peninsula of which Clifden is the chief town consists of high rocky ground, relieved by some considerable hills on the seaward side, viz. : Rinvyle, between Ballinakill and the Killaries ; Urrisbeg, overlooking Roundstone on the S., with Cashel and Lettershanna, between Ballynahinch and the sea. The district between the high road to Oughterard and Galway and the sea, consisting of Connemara Proper and Iar Connaught, is nothing but a succession of lofty table-lands as dreary and as little known as any portion of Ireland. E. Connaught is comparatively free from mountain ranges, though it is by no means level like the plains of Westmeath ; but consists of rocky and poor ground, averaging from 100 ft. to 500 ft. in height. The range called Kesh Corrin, 1183 ft., and Carrowkeel, extends along the W. bank of Lough Arrow, and is there united with the Curlew Hills, over which the road to Boyle is carried ; it is, however, merely a continuation westward of the Fermanagh Mountains and the Bralieve Hills near Lough Allen. A range of rather high ground is also found extending from Claremorris to Castlereagh and Elphin ; and a second runs from Tuam eastward, crossing the Suck to Roscommon, between which place and Longford it rises at Slieve Baun to nearly 1000 ft. The only other remaining mountains worth mention in Connaught are to the S. of Loughrea, where a considerable block, called the Slieve Boughta, occupies the interval between Gort and the western shores of Lough Derg, extending from Portumna and Woodford to Scariff, at which point it crosses the boundary, and enters the co. Clare.

Munster

South of Galway rise the curious bare limestone hills of the Burren country, terminating in Black Head, and reaching a height of about 1000 ft. These slope southwards to Liscannor and Miltown Malbay, between which place and Ennis is the domical mountain of Slieve Callane, 1282 ft. To the E. of these hills is a low tract with lakes running from Ennis to Gort ; and eastward of that again rise the Slieve Boughta Hills, the greater portion of which have been mentioned as running into Galway alongside Lough Derg. The interval between these two groups is watered by the Fergus, which, rising near Kilfenora, flows past Castle Clare into the Shannon by a wide estuary.

Between Broadford and Killaloe rises the range of the Slieve Bernagh, separated from the Arra Mountains by the long, narrow channel of the southern portion of Lough Derg and the Shannon. Craig Mountain, 1729 ft. above Killaloe, is, next to Glennagalliagh, 1746, the highest point of the Slieve Bernagh, which is continued to the S.W. nearly to Six Mile Bridge, and separated by a narrow valley from the Cratloe Hills that rise immediately N. of Limerick. Divided from the Arra Hills by the valley of the Kilmastullagh River are the Silvermine Mountains, which are themselves cut off by another valley called Glen Collos from Mount Keeper (2278 ft.), visible for an enormous extent of country. The Slieve Phelim Mountains, a portion of the same group, are conspicuous features as the traveller passes along Limerick and Waterford Rly., and keep company with him the whole distance to Limerick Junction, stretching away to the N., and occupying a very large area between Nenagh, Tipperary, and Cashel. The greater number of the rivers that rise amidst these heights are insignificant, and

fall, after more or less meandering, into the Shannon ; though the eastern slopes, which overlook Thurles and Holy cross, send down tributaries to the Suir, which rises N. of the Devil's Bit Mountain, and runs through Tipperary, and the borders of Cork, Waterford, and Kilkenny, into the harbour of Waterford.

The only hills that remain to be mentioned in the county Clare consist of a series of irregular groups of no great height that run parallel with the Shannon towards Kilrush and Kilkee.

Route 19

From Athlone to Roscommon, Castlereagh, Ballina, and Belmullet.

The Great Northern and Western Rly. runs at present from Athlone to Castlebar, a distance of 72 m. ; passing through a very uninteresting and thinly inhabited country, although the first few miles are relieved by some charming views on the rt. of Lough Rea.

12 m. Knockcroghery (famous for its manufactory of tobacco-pipes) is the nearest station from whence to make an excursion to St. John's or Rindown Castle, about 5 m. to the S.E., occupying a promontory on the shore of Lough Rea. "Rin-duin," the point of the fort, is mentioned in the 'Annals of the Four Masters' as having existed in 1156, and is believed to have been an early stronghold of the Danish King Turgesius in the 9th cent. It was long in the possession of the O'Connors, from whom it was taken by the English in the 13th cent. As described in Weld's 'Survey of Roscommon,' this castle was built in the form of a P, the tail of the letter being occupied by a banqueting-hall, and the head by the keep, a massive tower, about 50 ft. in breadth, overgrown with ivy of extraordinary richness of growth. To the E. of the castle are the remains of a watch-tower, the whole being protected by a broad ditch, which formerly converted the peninsula into a promontory, and a wall 564 yds. long, with an arched gateway in the centre, and defensive towers at intervals. Near the castle are remains of a small early ch., of about the 13th cent. The pleasantest mode of visiting Rindown will be by water from Athlone, particularly as under the castle walls there is a snug little anchorage, known as Safe Harbour.

14½ m. Ballymurry.

18 m. *Roscommon* (anc. Rus-cho-main) (*Hotels* : Victoria; Royal) is a neat-looking country town (Pop. 2731), with little beauty of situation to recommend it, but containing two remains of its former greatness—the Abbey and the Castle. The former, in the lower part of the town, consists of a ch. 137 ft. long, "with a northern transept, in which is an aisle separated by 4 pointed arches, resting on massive round pillars ; over the principal entrance is a beautiful window, with an architrave decorated with pinnacles ; the windows in the choir are lancet-shaped and much mutilated. Under an arch in the N. side of the choir is a tomb with a mutilated effigy, said to be that of O'Connor, and on the base are 4 warlike figures representing ancient Gallowglasses." This O'Connor, said to be interred here, was the founder of the priory and King of Connaught in 13th cent. Seen from the railway the castle makes an imposing appearance on the side of the hill. The present building dates from 1268, and was the work of John D'Ufford, Justiciary of Ireland. It occupies a large quadrangular area, defended by a round tower at each angle, as well as by two similar ones projecting from the E. to protect the gateway. One only of these towers is roofed, and forms a lofty room, vaulted overhead, and said to have been a council-chamber. In the inner court is a rectangular building containing the state apartments. Roscommon Castle is, as far as extent goes, one of the finest in the kingdom, and, according to tradition, was in good preservation up to a later date than

most fortresses. It is said to have been inhabited up to the battle of Aughrim, in the reign of William III., when the fugitive Irish escaping from that engagement set fire to it.

1½ m. to the N. E. of Roscommon are remains (though small) of the Abbey of Deerane, probably dependent on that of Roscommon ; with the exception of a good window, they present nothing worthy of visit.

Conveyances.—Rail to Athlone and Castlebar.

Distances.—Castlereagh, 17 m. ; Athlone, 18 ; Ballinasloe, 25.

24 m. at *Dunamon* the Suck river is crossed by a long causeway bridge, and again, a little below, at Castle Coote. On the opposite side of the water is Dunamon Castle (St. George Caulfield, Esq.). The line now follows the valley of the suck, if such a sluggish stream can be said to have a valley, and, passing 31 m. 1. the village of Ballymoe, arrives at

35 m. *Castlereagh*, an uninteresting town of about 1500 Inhab., rather prettily situated on the Suck, which is here adorned with some good timber belonging to the demesne of the late Lord Mount Sandford, and now the property of T. J. Sandford, Esq. The antiquary may visit the circular cemetery of Cruachan or Rathcroghan, “ which is of a circular form, measuring 116 paces in diameter, and surrounded with a stone ditch greatly defaced. Within are small circular mounds, covering rude sepulchral chambers formed of stone, without cement of any kind, and containing unburnt bones. The monument of Dathi, with its pillar of red sandstone, is outside the enclosure, at a short distance to the E.”—*Petrie*. To show the celebrity of this cemetery, the Cpnnaught poet writes thus : —

“ There is not at this place
A hill at Venach na Cruachna,
Which is not the grave of a king or royal
prince.
Or of a woman or warlike poet.”

Conveyances.—Rail to Athlone, Castlebar, and Westport. Cars daily to Ballina and Sligo.

Distances.—Boyle, 18m.; French-park, 8½ ; Claremorris, 22.

The remainder of this route is performed by a car, which traverses a dreary country, as far as Lough Cullin, when it begins to improve.

52 m. Kilkelly.

59 m. Swineford, a poor little place, in the neighbourhood of which is Brabazon Park, the seat of Major Brabazon. At 61 m. Cloongullaun bridge the traveller crosses the Moy (anc. Muaidh), one of the most important rivers in the N.W. of Ireland. It rises in the Ox mountains, in county Sligo, and, flowing southwards from thence, receives the waters of the Owenaher and the Owengarve, and for a considerable distance divides the counties of Mayo and Sligo. Near Swineford it flows due W. for a few miles, and then to the N., keeping a parallel course with Loughs Cullin and Conn. Soon the road diverges—[that to the rt. direct to Ballina—the other runs to Foxford, and then falls into the Westport road.

Foxford is a small town of some 1200 Inhab., in the neighbourhood of scenery far superior to any that the traveller has yet met with. The hills begin to close in, and on the N.W. attain the height of 1095 ft. in the range of the Sieve Gamph mountains. Foxford is a place of some

antiquity, and was formerly the key to the district of Tyrawley, lying to the W. The Moy runs through the town, and is fordable at a point called Cromwell's Rock, where the Protector and his army are alleged to have crossed.] The remainder of the route follows the valley of the Moy, passing on rt. a few small loughs to

73 m. *Ballina* (anc. Bel-an-atha) (*Hotels* : Flynn's, tolerable ; Royal) (Route 22), a busy, dirty place, some 5 m. distant from the mouth of the Moy. The only historical events connected with it are the attack and capture of the town by the French who in 1798 landed at Killala, under Gen. Humbert. On this occasion the Rev. S. Fortescue, the rector of the town and a volunteer, was shot by a party in ambuscade. The Moy is here developed into a broad stream, and separates Sligo from Mayo ; the district on the rt. or Sligo side is called Ardnaree, and the communications maintained by a couple of handsome bridges. On the E. side is a large Roman Catholic chapel, worth a short inspection, together with the ruins of an ancient abbey, founded by St. Bolcan, with a well-designed pointed doorway.

The situation of Ballina is good, and the views of Nephin and hills on the W. of Lough Conn are very fine ; but the town itself is not particularly attractive. The fishery is, however, of great importance. At the falls weirs have been built by Mr. Little at a cost of 1500*l.* " Boat and attendance 5s. a-day. All fish retained at the weir or taken at the market price. The fish are small and plentiful, being mostly grilse, with an occasional salmon. A few good salmon are sometimes got in the spring."—*Angler's Register*.

Conveyances.—Car daily to Sligo ; car to Westport ; car to Belmullet, through Crossmolina and Bangor ; to Castlereagh ; coach to Athenry.

Distances.—Foxford, 13 m. ; Sligo, 36 ; Dromore, 15 ; Westport, 23 ; Castlebar, 22 ; Pontoon, 11 ; Crossmolina, 7½ ; Belmullet, 49 ; Killala, 8 ; Roserk, 5.

Excursions. —

1. Killala, Roserk, and Moyne.
2. Pontoon.
3. Nephin.

The route followed by the public car to Belmullet traverses the dreary districts of Tyrawley and Erris. The best way for the tourist is to skirt the coast, by which means he may pay a visit to Roserk and Moyne Abbeys. From Ballina the road keeps the l. side of the Moy, passing through the demesne of Belleek Castle (E. Howley, Esq.) and Belleek Abbey (Col. Knox Gore).

5 m. in a dell overlooking the Moy are the ruins of Roserk or Rosserick Abbey (Ross-Searka, the promontory of Searka), founded for Franciscan friars by the sept of Joyce. It is somewhat similar to Clare Galway—a cruciform ch., with a lofty tower rising from the intersection of nave and transepts. Of a similar (Dec.) character is the Abbey of Moyne, 3 m. to the N., which has a length of 135 feet, some good Dec. windows, and a slender tower. " It lies in a sequestered pastoral district, on the banks of the bay, watered by a small rill, which, dipping into the granular limestone, rises again under the ch. and supplies the convent. From the top of the tower, the ascent to which is both easy and safe, a good view is obtained of the building, the surrounding country, the bay, diversified by the island of Bartragh, and the accompanying ledges of long low white-crested sandhills."—*Fraser*, At the S. end of the island is Bartragh House (J. Kirkwood, Esq.).

9 m. *Killala*, an interesting little place, both as being the seat of a former bishopric, now consolidated with that of Tuam, and as the scene of the landing of the French under Gen. Humbert, in 1798. With two frigates, having on board 1100 men, this expedition sailed from Rochelle, with the intention of making a descent upon Donegal ; but, in consequence of adverse winds, the General was forced to land in Kilcummin Bay, a little to the N. of Killala, and proceeded to Ballina, where the unfortunate death of Mr. Forester took place.

The see of Killala is very ancient, having been founded by St. Patrick in the 5th cent. The cathedral is a plain building of the 17th cent., with later alterations, occupying the site of a much earlier ch., erected by Gobhan, an eminent architect of the 6th cent. The round tower, which is placed on an insulated eminence, is of the same date, but was struck by lightning in 1800, and considerably damaged thereby. Of contemporaneous date, and built by the same individual, are the towers of Kilmacduagh and Antrim. Killala was at one time a brisk little seaport ; but Ballina, with its superior advantages, has taken almost all the trade from it. The Owenmore is crossed by a fine bridge of 11 arches at Palmerstown, the property and former seat of the family of Palmer. The mansion was destroyed in the troubles of '98. On the rt. bank of the river is Castlereagh, the seat of E. Knox, Esq.

[1½ m. rt. are the ruined ch. of Rathfran and some earthen forts at Snmmerhill.

3 m. *Kilcummin*, containing the coll and burial-place of Cumin, or Cumean Fin, a saint who flourished in the 7th cent.]

18 m. *Ballycastle*, commands a splendid view of Downpatrick Head,, which rises to the height of 126 ft. about 3 m. to the N. The singular rock of Doonbristy, standing detached from the land, testifies to the violence of the Atlantic waves along this coast. The geological composition of this coast is that of yellow sandstone, both at the Head and the opposite promontory of Benmore, between which is a narrow slip of lower limestone, affording at Pollnamuck many typical shells and carb.. fishes. From Ballycastle to Belmullet the road lies through a country of wild desolate mountains,, seldom rising above 1200 ft., but as dreary and untameable as anything in Ireland. It forms the district of Erris, lying to the N. of the barony of Tyrawley, and is very seldom visited. The coast scenery, however, will well repay any pedestrian tourist, with whom time is no object. From Ballycastle the traveller may return to Ballina through the valley of Ballinglen, about 16 m. A little way from the village the road crosses the Ballinglen, which falls into the Bay of Bunnatrahir, and then keeps close to the N. coast, at the base of Maumakeogh 1245 ft., and Glencolry 1155 ft, to Bealderrig Bay, from whence it runs inland to the S.W., leaving the finest part of the coast without any road at all, save footpaths to the coast-guard stations at Porturlin and Portacloy.

From Bealderrig Bay, where we enter upon a district of primary rocks,, to Benwee Head, the coast offers a constant succession of grand scenes. “ Moista Sound is 4 m. W. from Bealderrig. It is a chasm about a cable’s length from one extremity to the other, so narrow that a boat’s oars must be reefed in passing through it. It is formed by a gigantic trap-dyke ; the trap rock has fallen out, leaving this chasm, the sides of which are absolutely vertical, the northern 350 ft. high, the other 450 ft, and on the southern side the cliff rises 350 ft. more, almost vertically, making 800 ft. ; but when in the Sound the upper portion is variable. The Arch is about 8 m. from Bealderrig, and near the coast-guard station of Porturlin. It is 30 ft. in height, and may be rowed through in perfect safety at half-tide and in moderate weather. It is also a trap-dyke ; here, however, the trap remains, excepting at the bottom, where, by its having fallen out, the arch is formed ; the keystone, as it may be termed, being about 600 ft. high, reaching to the top of the cliff. From hence to the lofty and nearly isolated promontory of Doonvinallagh, 10 m. W. from Bealderrig, is one succession of magnificent cliffs, headlands,

and bays. Near the northern extremity of the promontory, to the “ W. of the beautiful little harbour of Portacloy, is a cavern about 30 ft. high at the entrance, and wide enough for a boat to row in. It then expands into a spacious circular shape, with a lofty domical roof.”
—*Fraser*.

The Stags of Broadhaven, so conspicuous in all the coast views of Erris, and from the Donegal side, are 7 precipitous rocks, about 300 ft. high, 1½ m. to the N. of Benwee Head. This latter rises to 829 ft., and is well worth the ascent for the sake of the superb view over Achill, Blacksod Bay, and Ballycroy to the S., the Sligo and the Donegal coast to the N.E. ; but the pedestrian must remember that there is no accommodation of any sort nearer than Belmullet, which is at least 8 miles distant across country. The road from Bealderrig to Belmullet passes through a very bleak and uninteresting district, which requires the most delightful weather to render it at all agreeable. At 35 m. it crosses the Glenamoy river as it enters an inlet of Broadhaven, and at 42 m. the isthmus that intervenes between Lough Carrowmore and Belmullet Sound.

Passing through Derrycorrib, a village at the foot of Glencastle Hill,, and on the Glencastle river, the tourist reaches

49 m. *Belmullet*, 85 years ago a miserable collection of huts, and now a thriving little seaport. It is singularly placed on a strip of land 400 yards broad, intervening between Broadhaven on the N. and Blacksod Bay on the S. : a canal has been cut through it, so that vessels, which were formerly wind-bound for weeks in the neighbourhood of the Mullet promontory, can at once go through. There is a good market here ; it being the emporium for the greater part of Erris and Ballycroy. Belmullet is the key of the peninsula of Mullet, which extends N. as far as Erris Head, and runs S., gradually tapering away to Blacksod Point, exactly opposite Slieve More, in Achill Island. Thus, while one side of the Mullet is exposed to the fiercest storms of the Atlantic, the other looks upon two landlocked havens, Broadhaven and Blacksod, each of which would contain in security all the navies of the world. From these advantages it was at one time proposed to make Belmullet a western terminus for a trunk railway.

There is not much of interest in the long peninsula of Mullet, inhabited localities being few and far between. Binghamstown is a collection of wretched hovels in the neighbourhood of Castle Bingham, a square castellated mansion belonging to the family of that name, and landlords of the greater part of this district. As may be imagined, trees are a rarity, everything being open to the fierce blasts of the W. The traveller who has not made special arrangements with the hotel-keeper at Ballina may return by the mail car through Bangor, or he may by chance catch a sailing vessel or “ hooker” coasting down from Belmullet through Achill Sound to Westport or Galway.

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