

Mayo Topographical 1837 - Lewis

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A topographical dictionary of Ireland
Composing The
Several Counties : Cities ; Boroughs ; Corporate, Market, and Post Towns ;
Parishes ; and Villages ;
Embellished With
Historical and Statistical Descriptions
Engravings of the Arms of the Cities, Bishoprics, Corporate Towns and Boroughs ;
and the seals of the Several Municipal Corporations

By Samuel Lewis.

Second Edition
In Two Volumes
VOL. II.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY S. LEWIS AND CO., 13, FINSBURY PLACE, SOUTH.
M.DCCC.XLVII

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MAYO (County of), a maritime county of the province of CONNAUGHT, bounded on the east by the counties of Sligo and Roscommon, on the north and west by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the south by the county of Galway. It extends from 53° 28' to 54° 21' (N. Lat.), and from 8° 25' to 10° 5' (W. Lon.) ; and comprises an area of 1,363,882 statute acres, whereof 497,587 are arable land, 800,111 uncultivated, 8360 in plantations, 848 in towns and villages, and 56,976 under water. The population, in 1821, amounted to 293,112 ; in 1831, to 367,956 ; and in 1841, to 388,887.

At the period when Ptolemy wrote, the *Nagnatae* were the inhabitants of the whole of the county, with the exception of a small portion of its southern extremity, into which the *Auterii*, who were settled in the north-west of Galway, had penetrated. The city of *Nagnatae*, together with the rivers Ravius and Libnius, is supposed by some to have been in this county, but others fix its site in the adjoining county of Sligo. M. Vaugondy's map of ancient Connaught, published by Mac Geoghegan, furnishes the following names of the territories which composed it, and of their respective baronies ; Irrosdomnion, being the barony of Erris ; Calrigiamuighe-murisk-in-Amalgaid, and Hy-Fiachra-Aidhne, Tyrawley ; Coranne, Gallen ; Conmacne-Quiltola, Clanmorris and Kilmain ; Kierrige de Lough Nairn, Costello ; Hymalia or Umaille, Murrisk. In *Speed's Theatre of Great Britain*, published in 1676, the names of the territories, which appear to be taken from those of the ruling septs, commencing from the most northern, are. Arras Dondenell ; O'Dondey ; O'Mac Philben ; Mac William Burck ; Carew Mac Ville Uterhday ; O'Males ; Mac Jordan, baron of Exeter, near which territory is noted the forest of Kellelon ; and the barony of Akill, being the only baronial division mentioned. In the brief description annexed to the map it is stated " that Mayo, in the Roman Provincial called Magee, is replenished both with pleasure and fertility, abundantly rich in cattle, deer, hawks, and plenty of honey." O'Conor's map of Ireland, which professes to give the names and locations of the settlers at the commencement of the 17th century, mentions only the names of Mac William Burke, Jordan, Mac Philip, Mac Costello or Nangle, Dillon, and Fitzmorris.

The ancient chronicles state, that at the commencement of the 4th century the whole of Connaught was taken from the Firdomnians, a branch of the Firbolgs, who had held it till that time under the Milesians. The remote situation of the county has prevented it from being much noticed in the annals of the different revolutions which have since occurred. Shortly after the English invasion, De Courcy entered the province ; but it does not appear that he penetrated far westward, being driven out after a severe defeat by Cornelius Mommoigi, and Donald O'Brien, King of Limerick. Roderic O'Conor, the last of the independent sovereigns of Ireland, died in the monastery of Cong, on the verge of this county, in 1198 ; after which its history presents a blank until, in consequence of the assassination of William de Burgo, third earl of Ulster, (to whose ancestor, Hubert de Burgo, the greater part of the province, including this county, had been granted by King John,) Edmond de Albanach or the Scot, one of his kinsmen, ancestor to the earls of Mayo, renounced his allegiance to the English government. He threw off the English dress ; adopted the language and apparel of the native Irish ; and assumed the title of Mac William Oughter, or " the Further," to distinguish himself from another member of the family who had acted in the same manner in the more southern regions of the province, and had called himself Mac William Eighter, or " the Nearer." The county remained in an unsettled state, nearly independent of British rule, until the time of ELIZABETH, in the eleventh year of whose reign the whole province, which had hitherto been divided into the two counties of Connaught and Roscommon, was made shire ground ; the boundaries and subdivisions of this portion of it were defined, and at this time arose the present name of Mayo, from the village and monastery of Maio, situated on a river which falls into Lough Carra. The Mac Williams nevertheless continued to exert a powerful control ; for the annals of the town of Galway inform us that, in consequence of the disturbed state of the country in the neighbourhood of that town, numbers of Galway people took refuge with Mac William Oughter in Mayo, and were the founders of the several respectable families of Galway name which still hold large estates here. When Sir Henry Sidney, lord-deputy, visited Galway in 1575, several of the Galway exiles returned, and applied to him for protection ; and Mac William Oughter himself submitted by oath and indenture. This Mac William was father to the celebrated Grace O'Malley, better known in the romantic history of the times by the name of Grana Uile : she, however, was so far from being led to submission by her father's example, that it was deemed necessary to send a body of troops to storm her castle of Carrick a-Uile, near Newport ; and so spirited was the defence made by this singular woman, that the assailants, instead of accomplishing the object of their expedition, narrowly escaped being taken prisoners, which would have been inevitably attended with loss of life.

In 1586, the province was again visited for the purpose of confirming it in the habits of English law, by SIR RICHARD BINGHAM, who held a session at Donemony, in this county. One of the de Burgos, Thomas Roe, held out on this occasion against the royal authority, in a castle in one of the islands in Lough Mask, within sight of the governor : the under-sheriff, who was sent to reduce him to obedience, was wounded in the attempt, as was Thomas Roe himself, who died of his wounds. Two others of the de Burgos were afterwards executed for sedition, and for conspiring against Bingham's life. The composition then agreed upon by the people was, 10s. per annum for every quarter of land containing 120 acres. According to the return of a jury, the county comprised 1448 quarters, whereof 248 were exempted ; the rest paid £600 per annum, and contributed 200 foot and 40 horse for general hostings within the province, at their own expense, when required, and 50 foot and 15 horse for general service throughout Ireland. Before Sir Richard quitted the country, he had taken all the de Burgos into protection by an order from the government ; but, on his going to Dublin, they were instigated, through the promise of assistance from the Scotch, to revolt again ; on which he proceeded to Ballinrobe, where, having uselessly spent several days in endeavouring to bring them back to their duty, he hanged their hostages. He then marched to Ballintubber, and sent out his kerne and foot-soldiers into the woods and mountains with such success, that he forced the insurgents to submit in a few weeks, and drove away a booty of between 4000 and

5000 head of cattle ; after which, he defeated a body of 2000 Scots that had landed near Sligo to give them assistance. A third journey was made into Connaught in 1589, by Sir Wm. Fitzwilliams, lord-deputy, who then received the submissions of O'Flaherty, William the blind Abbot, and others of Mayo and Tyrconnell.

Although the county was visited with a large share of the confiscations consequent on the termination of the war of 1641, and on the restoration of the Stuart family, no remarkable event connected with that period occurred within its limits ; neither was it internally agitated by the military movements in the subsequent war between the rival kings in 1688. Its political aspect presents a perfect blank until the year 1798, when its tranquillity, which had remained undisturbed during the dreadful struggle that convulsed the north-eastern and south-eastern extremities of the island in the earlier part of that year, was broken by the unexpected appearance of a small French squadron on its northern coast, which landed near Killala a force of about 1100 men under GENERAL HUMBERT. The town, which was nearly defenceless, was taken after a trifling resistance ; the bishop of Killala, with his family, was made prisoner ; arms were distributed to all the country people who chose to accept them ; and the invading army, thus reinforced by a numerous though disorderly body of auxiliaries, proceeded to Ballina, the garrison of which fled on its approach. It thence advanced to Castlebar, through mountain defiles deemed impassable, and therefore left unguarded : here it was opposed by General Lake with 6000 men, but, after a very short resistance, the British army gave way on all sides, and left the enemy completely masters of the country. The French general now proceeded by Foxford and Collooney, where his advance was checked for a short time by the gallantry of a small detachment under Colonel Vereker ; and marched by Dromahaire and Manor-Hamilton, in Leitrim, till, having crossed the Shannon at Ballintra, near Lough Allen, his further progress was prevented by the main army of the British under the Marquess Cornwallis, to whom he surrendered, after a short resistance, at Ballinamuck. Castlebar, when evacuated by the French, was re-occupied by the British troops, who defended it successfully against an attack of a body of 2000 insurgents. Killala, which was still possessed by the latter under the command of a few French officers, was then attacked and taken by storm, with the loss of between 400 and 500 of its defenders, after having been 30 days in their possession. This scene of blood terminated by a court-martial, by which several of those who had been most forward in having recourse to French assistance were consigned to military execution.

The year 1820 was marked by very serious disturbances in this and the neighbouring county of Galway, arising from abuses in the levying of taxes, and county and parish rates : the insurgents took the name of Ribbonmen, and kept the country in alarm for some time by nocturnal depredations, but were finally suppressed by the power of the law. Two years afterwards Mayo suffered from famine, owing to a failure of the potato-crop ; but the horrors of so dreadful a visitation were much relieved by the prompt and liberal contributions which were forwarded on the first intimation of the extent of the calamity, from every part of England, through a committee sitting in London.

This county is partly in the dioceses of Elphin and Achonry, but chiefly in those of Killala and Tuam. For purposes of CIVIL JURISDICTION it is divided into the baronies of Burrishoole, Carra, Clanmorris, Costello, Erris, Gallen, Kilmain or Kilmaine, Murrisk, and Tyrawley. It contains the market and assize town of Castlebar ; the market and post towns of Ballina, Ballinrobe, Crossmolina, Clare, Foxford, Ballaghadireen, Swinford, and Newport ; the seaport, market, and post towns of Westport and Killala ; the small seaport of Belmullet ; and the post-towns of Cong, Hollymount, and Ballyglass. The largest villages are those of Baal or Ballagh, Ballycastle, Rathlacken (each of which has a sub-post), Minola, and Shrule. It sent four members to the Irish parliament, two for the county, and two for the borough of Castlebar ; but since the Union its sole representatives, in the Imperial parliament, have been the two members returned for the county at large. The constituency consisted in 1841 of 1064

voters, of whom 201 were £50, 94 £20, and 769 £10 freeholders : the election takes place at Castlebar. Mayo is included in the Connaught circuit : the assizes and general quarter-sessions are held at Castlebar, where the county prison and court-house are situated ; quarter-sessions are also held at Ballinrobe, Westport, Swinford, Belmullet, Clare, and Ballina, each of which towns has a court-house and bridewell. The local government is vested in a lieutenant, 28 deputy-lieutenants, and 109 other magistrates ; besides whom are the usual county officers, including four coroners. There are 46 constabulary police stations, having in the whole a force of a county surveyor, 9 sub-inspectors, 9 head-constables, 44 constables, and 226 sub-constables, with 10 horses ; the expense of whose maintenance in 1842 amounted to £13,688, defrayed by grand jury presentments and by government. Along the coast are 18 coast-guard stations ; 6 in the district of Westport, having a force of 6 officers and 52 men ; 6 in that of Belmullet, with 3 officers and 37 men ; and 6 in the district of Killala, with 6 officers and 50 men : each district is under the control of a resident inspecting commander. The county infirmary, at Castlebar, is supported by a government grant of £100 and by grand jury presentments of £500 per annum. The district lunatic asylum is at Ballinasloe ; and there are 22 dispensaries at Westport, Galway, Ballyhaunis, Cong, Erris, Ballina, Gallen, Carra, Burrishoole, &c., maintained by subscriptions and grand jury presentments in equal portions. The total amount of grand jury presentments, for 1844, was £39,56S. In the military arrangements the county is included in the Athlone district, and contains seven barrack stations ; two for artillery and infantry at Castlebar, one for infantry at Ballaghadireen, two for cavalry and infantry at Ballinrobe, and one for infantry at each of the towns of Westport and Foxford ; affording, in the whole, accommodation for 52 officers and 1104 men, with 99 horses.

The SURFACE of the county varies extremely, from the bleak and rugged mountain to the fertile plain. The baronies to the east of the lakes, and part of Tyrawley, are champaign and productive. In the flat country bordering on Loughs Mask and Carra are many miles of rocky ground which at a distance appears like an immense sheet of white stone, but on a nearer approach is found to consist of layers of projecting rock in parallel lines, rising from one to three feet above the surface, like flagstones pitched in the ground upon their edges, and all, however varying in shape, size, or relative distance, having the same direction : fissures of great depth are found in some of their narrowest interstices. The northern part of Tyrawley barony is level, and adorned with numerous villas and country seats. In travelling south from Kilcummin Head, the land by degrees swells into hills, the tops of which are covered with heath, while the sides and the valleys are green and remarkably fertile : these hills gradually change their character to that of the bleak and barren mountain which stretches in a continuous tract, sixty miles long and seven miles broad, from Erris in the west to the Ox mountains of Sligo, in the contrary direction. In this range no variety meets the eye from Nephin to Westport, except in the glen of Bohedon and the extensive woods that sweep along the windings of the Colnabinna river, the banks of which are fringed with verdure of exquisite hue. The whole western part of the county is overspread with an immense mass of mountain and bog, very difficult of access : the central parts of this wild country are occupied by a range of lofty mountains, commencing at Nephin, and extending in a north-western direction to Knocklettercuss, and in a western to Achill Island. This great mountain chain divides the country into two parts ; that between its western base and the sea is covered with bog, as is also the greater part of the eastern division ; besides which, all the gentle acclivities and mountain summits are covered with a thin stratum of black bog. No arable ground occurs in these districts, except in the narrow valleys of the rivers, and in irregular patches along the shore. There is another range of mountain commencing at Dunfeeny bay, and stretching along the northern coast to Broadhaven, beyond which is the peninsula of The Mullet, flat, and capable of cultivation except where covered with sand. The northern coast is particularly wild : the rocky cliffs which extend along its whole length are generally perpendicular, and in some parts the surface of the land at top overhangs the sea ; their average height is 400 feet. In

many places, the edge of the cliff is the highest point of the land ; so that the water which falls from the surface within 20 yards of the brow flows southerly, from the sea. Along the high bold coast to the west, as far as the Stags of Broadhaven, are caverns extending a great way under the surface, and vaulted overhead with immense flags. One of the most remarkable of these is nearly opposite the Stags, near Dunkechan ; it extends several hundred yards under the land, is roofed with stone, and is wide enough to admit several boats to enter abreast, which may be done in calm weather. But the greatest natural curiosities of the county are the caves of Cong, on the confines of the county of Galway, through which the superfluous waters of Lough Mask take their subterraneous course to Lough Corrib.

Nephin, 2639 feet in height, is, in magnitude and form, extremely grand, its summit being generally enveloped in clouds ; it is situated at the extremity of an immense bog, in the centre of which is Lough Conn, and is separated from the rest of the great chain by the deep glen of Kilnabreena. Its form, when viewed from the south or east, is conical, the sides steep, and frequently rocky and rugged, but the summit rounded, and covered with alpine plants. The regularity of its northern face is interrupted by a deep ravine, the precipitous sides of which disclose the internal structure of the mountain. From the western side of the glen of Kilnabreena rises the mountain of *Berreencurragh*, 2290 feet high, similar to *Nephin*, but more irregular and rugged. *Nephin-Beg*, another mountain in the same range, and of similar formation, is 1846 feet high. The mountains which form the western part of the great chain are also more rugged, and have peaked summits, particularly *Maam*, *Thomoish*, and *Croughletta*. The ridge of the Barnagee mountains lies south of *Nephin* : their northern side is extremely steep and abrupt. Three passes, about two miles distant from each other, lead through them to the plain country in the south ; the central and most important of these is called the pass of Barnagee. Through it the French force penetrated unexpectedly in 1798, in its march from Ballina, in consequence of which the king's troops were taken by surprise at Castlebar, and routed. The other passes are, that of Mosbrook, near Lough Conn, and Glan Island, on the side of Westport. The summit of the central pass, which is a very long and steep hill, commands a fine view of Castlebar and the adjoining plain, with Croagh Patrick rising in the distance.

The whole of the district south of the valley from Lough Conn to Newport, except the space occupied by the mountains of Barnagee, is thickly interspersed with hills of different forms ; those lying between Lough Conn and Loughs Carra and Mask stretching in accordance with the line between the former and latter lakes ; those proceeding to Clew bay taking their direction to the sea. The remarkable peak of *Croagh Patrick*, or the Reek, rises from the southern shore of Clew bay to an elevation of 2430 feet, embracing from its summit a magnificent prospect of the neighbouring bays and islands, with the amphitheatre of Erris, Burrenhoole, and Connemara. This mountain may be divided into two parts ; the base, composed of a group of undulating flat-topped hills rising to a considerable height ; and the Reek, which towers above them in the form of a cone. The romantic fables of the country have fixed on this as the spot from which St. Patrick drove all the venomous reptiles of the island into the sea : it is still a favourite place for devotional rites. The southern part of the barony of Murrisk rises into steep mountains, of which *Muilrea*, the highest in Connaught, has an elevation of 2680 feet.

The LAKES are numerous, and several are of large size ; the principal lie in a direction north and south from the borders of Galway to Killala. A small part of the northern portion of *Lough Corrib* is considered as belonging to the county : this lake is navigable, unless in very dry seasons, for boats of from 10 to 20 tons to its most northern extremity at Cong, a distance of about 30 miles from the sea. A narrow isthmus of high and rocky land, about two miles across, here separates it from Lough Mask. This latter lake is 10 miles long by 4 broad, with two arms about a mile distant from each other, stretching into Joyces' Country, the larger projecting four miles, the lesser three : the lake is navigable up the Ballinrobe river, within

1½ mile of Ballinrobe town. The gillaroo trout, which is remarkable as having a gizzard larger than that of a turkey, but never any roe, is found in it : both red and white trout are also taken. *Lough Mask* is 36 feet above the summer level of Lough Corrib ; and the former pours the whole of its redundant waters into the latter, through numerous caverns, beneath the isthmus above noticed : from these caverns the water emerges in some fountains near the village of Cong, whence it flows in a rapid stream, turning several powerful mills, until it mingles with the lower lake. *Lough Carra* is a very picturesque sheet of water, seven miles long by three broad, studded with woody peninsulas and islands : this lake assumes an appearance not observable in other collections of fresh water, its colour being greenish while that of others is invariably blue ; a peculiarity attributable to the shallowness of its water, which covers a bed of pale yellowish marl. *Lough Dan*, the next in order, is much smaller than any of the others in the range ; it is also called Castlebar lake, because its eastern extremity is close to the town of that name. *Lough Conn* is a fine piece of water, fifteen miles long by five broad, interspersed with islands on which are ruins of castles and of monasteries, and having its borders fringed with woods and ornamented with mansions and villas ; it communicates with the towns of Foxford and Crossmolina, and stretches within two miles of Ballina, and ten of Killala. At the south-eastern extremity of Lough Conn is *Lough Cullen*, sometimes called the Lower Conn ; it is separated from the former lake by a narrow strait, over which a bridge named Pontoon-bridge was built, on the formation of the new mail line to Sligo. An extraordinary phenomenon is visible here, in the alternate ebbing and flowing of the two lakes : the water is seen sometimes rushing with great force through the channel beneath Pontoon-bridge into Lough Cullen ; while at others it runs with equal force from this lake into Lough Conn, and this is often observable when the waters of the upper lake are much swollen by floods from the mountains, while the lower lake, or Cullen, is the natural outlet of the whole of this immense volume of water. The shores of both lakes being composed in many places of a fine red sand, the line of high-water mark can be distinctly traced several inches above the water ; and then in the space of an hour, without any apparent cause, the water rises again to the higher level in the one lake, while it is low water in the other ; numerous unsatisfactory conjectures have been stated relative to this extraordinary fact. Besides the lakes now mentioned there are many others ; the principal are Upper and Lower Lough Aile, Lough Urlor, Lough Samore, Lough Skye, Beltra Lake, Kerramore Lake, and other smaller lakes near Foxford, Manilla, Ballinrobe, Shrule, Annagh, Ballyhaunis, Ballagh, and Kinturk. In this county, as in that of Galway, are numerous turloughs, which in winter and wet seasons cover large tracts of land, and at other times afford excellent pasture.

The COAST is indented by numerous bays. The mouth of the *Moy* forms its north-eastern extremity ; this river has a bar, on which there are but three feet of water. *Killala Bay*, into which the Moy runs, admits vessels of ten feet draught only at spring tides, but small vessels can proceed as far as the abbey of Moyne. Two miles north from Killala is the low peninsula called Kilcummin Head, on which the French effected their landing in 1798. On the eastern side of the bay, in county Sligo, is the village of Inniscroan, the best fishing-place on the coast ; and near the town of Killala is a peninsula called Ross, between the inlets of Killala and Rathbran, which is curiously indented by the sea at high water. *Dunfeeny Bay* is of little importance for nautical purposes, but is remarkable for an insulated rock called Downpatrick Head, the perpendicular cliff of which affords five distinct sections of the horizontal strata of its formation. From this bay westward the coast is a precipitous cliff for many miles, confining within its interior an extensive uncultivated bog ; this lofty formation continues to *Broadhaven*, a bay seven miles in breadth at its mouth, by four or five in depth. The bay has two principal arms, the eastern of which receives two considerable rivers : the best entrance to the haven is less than half a mile in width, and the inlet within it winds for nearly seven miles to the isthmus which connects the flat and sandy, yet fertile, peninsula of the Mullet with the main land. Broadhaven is merely a fishing station, where open boats only are used : flat-fish is abundant. The northern end of the peninsula is precipitous and rugged ; and near it is the

narrow and rocky cove of Portnafranka. Its south end terminates with a considerable hill of red granite, which opens into *Blacksod Bay*, a spacious haven with good shelter and water sufficient for any number of ships, which penetrates inland for several miles, until it meets the isthmus of Belmullet, by which it is separated from Broadhaven.

Clew Bay forms a noble and well-sheltered expanse of water, fifteen miles long and seven broad. Its entrance is screened, through one-third of its breadth, by Clare Island ; and the inner or eastern extremity is occupied by a vast multitude of small islets, which, with the adjoining creeks and inlets, form a variety of safe roadsteads and harbours, capable of admitting vessels of every class. These islands are composed of a deep loamy soil on a limestone substratum ; many of them are accessible at low water by foot passengers. The towns of Newport and Westport are built at the inner ends of two of the inlets, and are provided with quays, to which vessels of ten feet draught may approach at high water. The islands and channels on the Westport side of the bay are protected by a very singular natural breakwater of shingle and boulder stones, which stretches from the entrance of Westport harbour to the southern shore under Croagh Patrick. There are in this line of beach six navigable openings, the most important of which, leading to Westport, is marked by a small lighthouse built by the Marquess of Sligo. Clew bay possesses many picturesque and attractive features. Among the most striking are, the lofty conical peak of Croagh Patrick, and the lofty mountains of Erriv and Benabola, on the south ; those of Nephin and Cartinarry, together with the hills of Achill, on the north ; on the east the two flourishing ports above named, with the fine domain of the Marquess of Sligo ; and in the west Clare Island, rising majestically to check the fury of the Atlantic. The southern horn of this bay is BuiNaha, or the Yellow head ; whence the shore is wild and uninteresting, until it reaches *Killery Bay*. This bay, which separates the counties of Mayo and Galway, penetrates eleven miles into the interior between steep and lofty mountains, and is uniformly about half a mile in breadth, being throughout an excellent harbour for large ships, though occasionally subject to squalls from the hills. Off the coast of the county are numerous Islands, the most remarkable of which, exclusively of those in Clew bay, are Achill and Achillbeg, Clare, Caher, Innisbofin, Innishark, Innisturk, Darilan or O'Darilan, Ox, Inniskeamore, Inniskeabeg, Cahir, Innisdallow, Ballybeg, Innisgort, Innisbeg, Innistegil, Annagh, Barnach, Inniskeragh, Eagle Island, and Innisglora. Many of them are large, and thickly inhabited. Eagle Island, situated off the Mullet, and about one league southwest from Erris, or Urres Hea, has two lofty lighthouses, erected in 1836.

The SOIL in the champaign country is chiefly a dark-brown sandy and gravelly loam, on a limestone bottom ; in some parts it is light and moory. In the districts in which bog prevails are ridges of limestone-gravel, called escars, in some places three miles long, $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile broad at the base, and from 30 to 60 feet high : they spontaneously produce many varieties of trees, which, however, seldom attain any size, in consequence of their exposure when young to the cattle. The rocky pastures in which oak and hazel brushwood grow spontaneously are excellent for fattening. The tendency to produce rich grass also shows itself in many parts of the mountainous regions. On passing the junction between the primary and secondary rocks, a striking improvement in the appearance of the verdure is observable ; some of these secondary hills contain limestone, and the water is so strongly impregnated with this mineral, that calcareous depositions are found in large quantities. The sand along the shores of Broadhaven and Blacksod bay is mostly silicious ; yet with a slight manuring of sea-weed, it produces excellent barley and potatoes. In these districts the inhabitants are much annoyed by the drifting sand, which is reduced to such a degree of comminution, as to penetrate even into the works of watches. Marly gravel, the substratum of all the hills, was observed, when removed for the purpose of covering roads, to change the growth of the spot it fell on from heath to grass ; the discovery of which quality led to its liberal use in reclaiming the summits of hills, and moory tracts, hitherto nearly unprofitable.

Wheat is grown in the southern and champaign parts ; potatoes, oats, barley, and flax, in the more elevated districts. But the greater portion of the latter division is under pasture, as the grass is found to be suitable for rearing young cattle, though it is not rich enough to fatten them. The farms in the grazing districts are in size from 100 to 500 acres. The general term of a lease is one life, or 21 years ; a non-alienation clause is common ; and latterly another has been occasionally introduced, by which a stipulated allowance is to be made to the tenant out of the reserved rent, for every acre of land reclaimed. The manures are, limestone-gravel, especially for reclaiming bog and mountain ; limestone, which is very general, and used wherever a supply of fuel for burning it can be had ; composts of bog-mould and farm-manure ; and, near the sea-coast, shell-sand and weed. Paring and burning are very prevalent, notwithstanding the penalties inflicted on the practice by act of parliament ; the land, when so treated, produces tolerable crops for a few years, but is afterwards barren for a considerable length of time. When burning has been repeated three or four times, it has been found necessary to renovate the soil by a coat of bog mixed with earth or farm-rubbish. In reclaiming bog, which is done by limestone-gravel to the thickness of an inch, or by white marl, it is observed that when the heath dies, as it does in about three years, daisies and white clover show themselves, indicating that the land is fit for tillage. The plough is an implement little used in the boggy and mountainous parts ; the long narrow spade, which generally supplies its place, is called a “ loy.” In Erris, a spade of still more unusual construction is found to answer best in light sandy soils ; it consists of two iron blades, each about three inches broad, with a space of an inch and a half between them, fixed on a two-forked shaft like two loys. The old and clumsy agricultural implements are rapidly giving way to those of a more improved description ; the slide car is nearly extinct even in the mountains. Yet still the cottiers’ implements are mostly limited to the spade and sickle ; and the manure is carried to the field, and the produce to market, in wicker panniers on horses’ backs, or on the shoulders of women. In general, the ploughing is too light, and the sowing too late in the season ; hence, the harvest of every kind of crop requires the farmer’s attention simultaneously. Wheat is cultivated to some extent, but potatoes and oats are the main crops ; green crops are more frequent than formerly ; flax is raised only on the headlands, or corners of a field, for domestic use. The favourite breed of horned-cattle is a cross between the old Leicester and the native stock ; but the native cow is still preferred in the upland districts. The sheep are not equal to those of the adjoining counties. In the mountains a useful hardy race of horses is found ; in the lowland districts, the horses are remarkably good for the saddle, and of superior action. Pigs do not enter into the rural economy of the small farmer to the same extent as in other counties. Dairies are neither numerous nor extensive, the rearing of young cattle being the more general occupation. The fences are dry stone walls formed by collecting the numerous loose stones off the land, but in Clanmorris and Kilmaine they are good ditches faced with quicksets. Draining and irrigation are little practised, though the soil and the command of water are favourable to both.

So late as 1675, the county was well wooded, and had three extensive forests, at Barnagee, Cappough, and Liscullen ; but even the vestiges of these have been swept away, and the last extensive wood of the county, that of Glanmurra, on the shores of Killery bay, was felled in the winters of 1778 and 1779. Natural oaks grow on all the hills in the Barnagee mountains, and are kept down only by the browsing of the cattle. It has also been ascertained that bogs, of an altitude too great to admit of profitable cultivation, are capable of producing timber by planting and fencing. The most remarkable range of woods at present is round the base of Croagh Patrick mountain, following the windings of the Brackloon river. The Marquess of Sligo has planted to a large extent, and with great prospect of remuneration in the neighbourhood of Westport. In general the baronies of Tyrawley, Burrishoole, Gallen, and Costello, are nearly bare of timber ; in Murrisk it abounds, chiefly on the Marquess of Sligo’s property ; also in Clanmorris, which exhibits some woods of fine full-grown timber ; but in Carragh the plantations are few.

The whole of the mountains in this county, in a GEOLOGICAL point of view, are of primary formation ; but rocks of secondary formation are frequently found overlaying the primary at the base of the mountains. The secondary formation, on the northern range, is red sandstone covered with slate-clay, which alternates with floetz sandstone ; as also, limestone alternating with slate-clay : to the south is the old red sandstone covered with floetz lime-stone. A line drawn from the southern shore of Achill, and continued along the southern base of Coraan mountain, would very nearly pass along the junction of the primary and secondary formations. The primary rocks pass by a narrow isthmus between the secondary rocks at Castlebar, to the shore of Clew bay, and join the primary range, which commences at Croagh Patrick and proceeds thence into Joyces' Country. No secondary rocks are met with between Achill Head, on the west coast, and Balderric on the north. Near this latter point the secondary formation commences, and it continues without interruption along the coast by Downpatrick, Killala, and Sligo, to Ballyshannon. From the junction at the sea-shore near Balderric, the edge of the primary country takes a direction nearly south to Croghan mountain, at the base of which, in the bed of the Owenmore, the old red sandstone appears overlaying mica-slate. From Croghan the junction of the rocks may be traced to the northern base of Nephin ; and thence, crossing Lough Conn, it proceeds along the northern base of the range of primary mountains from Foxford to Ballysadare. The great mountain chain commencing at Nephin, and extending in a north-western direction by the valley of the Owenmore to Coraan mountain, is entirely composed, except at Nephin-Beg, of mica-slate and granular quartz rock. Nephin mountain, the strata of which are fully disclosed by fissures, is formed of mica-slate, of very variable proportions ; the stratification is for the most part nearly vertical, but irregular. The composition of Nephin-Beg is very similar to that of the larger mountain. The western part of the county between Achill Head and the north coast, is for the most part a low plain of bog on a bottom of mica-slate, backed by mountain ranges of quartz rock. In the island of Achill the rocks are chiefly quartz ; in the adjoining peninsula of Coraan, conglomerate sandstone. In the peninsula of the Mullet the country is mostly covered with silicious sand ; on the western shore, where the rocks are visible, they are more crystalline than the mountains on the east. Upon the whole, this part of Erris much resembles the islands of Coll and Tiree in the Hebrides. At Dunfeeny bay, the alternating beds of sandstone and clay-slate are covered by almost innumerable alternations of thin beds of black shale and black limestone : many of the beds of black shale contain balls of clay ironstone ; some so carbonaceous as to soil the fingers very much, and to emit a dense black smoke when thrown on the fire.

The old red sandstone at the base of Croghan mountain, is covered by series of rocks of slate-clay and floetz-sandstone alternating ; and though no beds of coal have been discovered, there is reason to think that those series belong to that formation. The existence of this mineral is also shown by a variety of indications, in the mountains of Derinkee, near Westport. The iron-ore, the sandstone, the ochre (which is found in abundance and of good quality), and the ferruginous scum on the lakes and rivers, all seem to point out the existence of coal : in Slieve Carne, in Clanmorris barony, are also many indications of it. The character of the Limestone which alternates with the clay-slate, along the north-eastern coast, from Balderric to Ballyshannon, is very peculiar : the beds rarely exceed two feet in thickness ; some are of a dull-black colour, and contain no marine remains ; others are almost wholly composed of muscle shells. *Iron-ore* is found in abundance on the lands of Cross in Erris, and at Tallagha in the same barony ; it is also met with in abundance in the bed of Clonoure river, and in the Deel river, where it is found in small lumps of a beautiful red colour. Iron-works erected by Sir George Shaen near the Mullet, and more lately on the Deel by Mr. Rutledge, were discontinued from the want of fuel. *Manganese* is abundant in several parts, but the richest deposits are in the neighbourhood of Westport, and in the vale of the Owenmore ; *Clay* fit for porcelain and every other description of earthenware is found in inexhaustible beds, and cargoes of the finer sorts are shipped for England. Fullers-earth and pipe-clay are

also abundant, and very good ; clay for bricks abounds in every barony. Slate-quarries on an extensive scale have been worked near Westport : freestone of a good colour, very compact and easily wrought, is abundant in several places ; and grey marble, beautifully marked, and susceptible of a fine polish, is plentiful in the barony of Murrisk. Excellent hones are procured in the hill of Bocca.

Linen is extensively manufactured, chiefly in the cabins of the poor, many of which, particularly in the mountainous districts, are furnished with a loom : the cloth is generally sold grey, and sent elsewhere to be bleached, although there are two extensive bleach-greens near Westport, and another at Turlough. At Ballyclare is a very extensive manufactory of linens, unions, diapers, and sheetings : friezes, flannels, and woollen stockings, are made in all parts ; the chief markets for the sale of them are Castlebar and Westport. A manufacture of straw-plat for hats and bonnets has been introduced. Kelp is made on all parts of the coast. The increasing demand for grain, chiefly oats for Liverpool, aided by the establishment of corn-buyers in the seaports, has given rise to a considerable export trade, for which Killala, Ballina, Newport, and Westport are the chief marts.

Along the whole coast are remarkably fine FISHING banks : the principal, extending between Innisboffin and Achill, is abundantly supplied with all kinds of white-fish, particularly mackerel, gurnet, and herrings. North of Achill Head is a sand-bank stretching to Blacksod bay, affording turbot and other flat-fish in the greatest abundance. Beyond this, lies the Inniskealing bank, extending eight leagues to sea ; it is usually fished from May to August. The great *Sun-fish* bank, so called from being frequented by the sun-fish or basking shark during spring, is about thirty miles off the coast, and is supposed to be a ridge of elevated submarine land extending from the Blasquets, in Kerry, to Erris Head. The best season for the fishery is during the last week in April or first in May ; the fish come hither from the north, and are seen from Tory Island to the Blasquets. In fine weather they show themselves in the morning and evening, in considerable numbers, and are easily assailable ; but at this season the uncertainty of the weather and the heavy swell often baffle the fishers. Should a fine day or two occur, from thirty to forty may be killed ; but on the death of a few, the rest retreat suddenly to the south, being warned off, the fishermen say, by the smell of the blood : should any stragglers remain, they are so lean as to be scarcely worth killing. They are taken with a harpoon, so constructed as to keep fast hold when it has penetrated the body of the fish. The animal, before it is disturbed, lies quietly on the surface, making no effort to escape till pierced to the quick. Many fish, however, are struck without effect, in which case the spears and line are lost. Indeed, the whole appears to be an unprofitable business : the outfit of the number of boats engaged in it cannot be estimated at less than £2000 in the season, to compensate for which, the value of the fish caught even in a favourable year, has never been above £1500 ; the loss of time of so many people, at an important agricultural season, should also be included in the estimate. The fishing is now chiefly followed by the few decked-vessels that can stand out waiting for good weather.

The whole fishing trade, with this exception, is carried on in open boats : not a single decked-vessel is employed between Killala and Newport, or between Westport and Galway, and but few half-decked. The deficiency is owing partly to the poverty of the district ; partly to the want of harbours, without which decked-vessels cannot load or unload ; and partly to the construction of open boats being most convenient for carrying on the coasting-trade in turf, in which those residing on the shores are engaged in the intervals between the fishing seasons. The number of boats, both for sailing and rowing, is very great. The northern coast of Connaught is scantily supplied with harbours ; the principal are those of Killala and its vicinity. The greater part of Killala bay is a good turbot-bank, and round-fish abound under Kilcummin Head and the deep cliffs to the westward ; the village of Inniscroan, or Enniscrone, is accounted the best station. The whole western coast is furnished with bays, inlets,

and coves, of every description, for the reception of the fishing-craft. Killery harbour is one of the best fisheries for herrings ; but this branch has been much crippled by the restrictions of the fishery laws.

Herrings have been known to set in to some of the bays in vast shoals, yet, from the want of salt, they were left to rot on the shore in heaps ; and the wretched fisherman, whose little stock had been expended in fitting out his sea equipage, witnessed his own ruin with abundance apparently within his grasp. To obviate this calamity, salt is now stored at Clifden, Westport, and Belmullet. The white-fishery commences in Lent ; spiller lines are used from Ash-Wednesday : the bait for cod and haddock is the slug found in the strand ; muscles and whilks are unknown, as are crabs and scollops. Great numbers of *Turbot* come into Killala bay in August, appearing to follow the sand-eel found in great abundance in the strand. *Mackerel* comes in June and July, in shoals which refuse the bait and are taken by the seine ; but in August they separate, and draw near the shore, when they are caught by hand- lines baited with sand-eel. The white-fish caught at sea are principally *Cod*, *Haddock*, and *Ling*. *Pollock* is caught at all seasons round the headlands. The deep-sea fishing commences in May, when small-fish bait begins to be plentiful ; the herring-fishery commences in May, and continues till August, but further out this fish is found at all seasons, and of large size ; the winter fishing is carried on from November to Christmas. In spring, the in-shore fishers apply themselves to tillage and to the manufacture of kelp. The *Salmon* fisheries are numerous and important : that of Ballina is the best in Ireland except Coleraine. There are also very valuable fisheries at Belclare, Louisburgh, and Killery, where vast quantities of salmon are annually taken ; and smaller fisheries at Westport, Newport, Burrishoole, and Goolamore.

No RIVERS of any importance rise in the county or pass through it. The *Moy*, which separates it from Sligo, after receiving the waters of Loughs Cullen and Conn, flows in a broad stream by Ballina into the bay of Killala. The bar has deep water after great floods, but is dangerous from its liability to shift. A few years since, it was passed by vessels drawing 14 feet water ; it is now often fordable in dry summers : sloops, however, ascend to within a mile of Ballina. It has been proposed to form a lock at Belleek Castle, by which vessels of heavy burthen might come up to the town, if a passage were cut through the limestone ledges that obstruct the navigation. *The Blackwater*, also called the Shrule, which for a short distance forms the boundary between Mayo and Galway, has an underground course for three miles near Shrule ; after its re-appearance it falls into Lough Corrib. *The Aile*, which is navigable for boats of six feet draught for a distance of five miles from Lough Mask, also disappears for some time, after having sunk under a stratum of limestone. *The Castlebar* river is navigable from Lough Conn for the distance of four miles : the *Lung*, which flows into Lough Carra, admits boats from the lake, which ascend the river about three miles. The other rivers are little more than mountain streams : the principal are, the *Owenmore*, falling into Blacksod bay, and remarkable for the quantity of water it sometimes carries from the mountains ; the *Deel* ; the *Robe* ; the *Erriv* ; and the *Carnamart*.

The greater part of the county to the west of the lakes was nearly destitute of roads previously to 1798. No way existed of travelling through Erris but on foot ; or if a horseman attempted the journey, he required the aid of six or eight guides on foot to cast the horse at every swamp, fasten his legs, and haul him over by ropes. The journey from Ballina to the coast could not be accomplished in less than three days, and, if the rivers were swollen, required a much longer time : the expense for guides, in money and refreshments, was more than that now required for a carriage and post-horses from Castlebar to the Mullet, a distance of 56 miles, which may be performed in a day. A carriage road has been made along the banks of the Owenmore : one branch proceeds from Castlebar, another from Crossmolina ; the former is level and well laid out, the latter labours under the defects of the old country

system. After passing the mountains, a new line branches off to Belmullet, and thence along the western side of Blacksod harbour. Other lines of road are now completed from the same point to the western side of Broadhaven ; others to Coraan and Achill : by the former a communication is opened to the north coast and Killala ; the latter unites with a new line from Newport to the extremity of Achill. A new and level line of road has also been made from Killala to Ballina, Foxford, and Swinford, by which the produce of the interior of the country may be conveyed to the sea. There is a very excellent line from the head of the Killeries to Westport, being a continuation of the level line from Clifden through the wilds of Connemara and Joyces' Country ; thus opening a direct communication between Castlebar, Westport, and these districts of Galway. A mail line has been opened between Castlebar and Ballina, crossing the narrow channel between Lough Conn and Lough Cullen, by Pontoon bridge : another line has been opened from Killala, round the northern coast.

There are four ancient round towers in the county, at Killala, Turlogh, Meelick, and Baal or Ballagh. *The Monasteries* were numerous, and of high repute for sanctity and wealth. The principal were, Burrishoole ; Ballintubber or Tubberpatrick ; Ballynasmall ; Urlare or Orlare ; Ballyhaunis, which was inhabited by a fraternity of friars in 1641; Cross ; Strade ; Ballinrobe or De Roba ; Mayo, which was afterwards the residence of a bishop, and gave name to the county ; Ballina ; Crossmolina ; Moyne ; Rathbran or Rafran ; Rosserick ; and Bofin, in the island of Innisbofin. Among the MILITARY ANTIQUITIES the most ancient is that at *Downpatrick* or Dunbriste, built on a neck of land forming a cliff three hundred feet high projecting into the sea ; at about the same distance in the sea stands a rugged perpendicular rock of equal elevation with that on the main land, of a triangular shape, contracting gradually from a large base, to the summit, where it is about sixty yards round, and on which are the ruins of a building. The strata, and indentations of surface, in the cliff on the main land and in the insulated rock, correspond in shape and colour. Near the extremity of the neck of land, a strong grouted wall has been built across the point from sea to sea. The appearance of the whole seems to indicate, that the island was at one period attached to the main land but was dis-severed from it by some convulsion of nature ; and the name Dunbriste, which signifies “ the broken rock,” confirms this supposition. The place is one of peculiar veneration ; the people resorting to it do penance around several stone crosses on Good Friday, at which time a priest is in attendance. *Rockfleet Castle*, a small square building on the shore, about three miles west of Newport, is said to have been built by the celebrated Grace O'Malley, already mentioned, who was so singularly attached to the sea that all her castles were erected on the coast ; and tradition states, that when she slept on shore the cable of her own barge was always fastened to her bedpost. *Ballylahen Castle*, in Gallen barony, was built by one of the Jordan or Dexter family, who built ten others for his ten sons ; they are all small square buildings with a very few contracted windows, a description applicable to most of the castellated structures so numerous scattered throughout the county. *Inver Castle*, on the eastern side of Broadhaven, was the principal fortress in Ennis, and seems to have been a structure of great extent and strength ; many ruins of inferior note are to be seen in this barony. The castle of *Ballinglen*, built in a valley of the same name, in Tyrawley, has on its top an altar, which gives to that part of the building the name of the Altar-room. *Deel Castle*, built by the Burke family, stands roofed and entire, within four miles of Ballina, on the estate of the late Colonel Cuff. In Castle Island, in Lough Conn, are the ruins of a fort in which O'Conor is said to have confined his brother, after depriving him of sight, for having rebelled against him. *Purt-nakally Castle*, about a mile from Downpatrick, is remarkable for the total want of windows, although the walls yet standing are upwards of twenty feet high. The other remains of castles are not marked by any features sufficiently important to entitle them to particular notice ; they were chiefly built by the Burkes, the Barretts, and the Jennings. The principal modern mansions of the nobility and gentry are noticed in their respective parishes.

The condition and appearance of the PEASANTRY differ much in different parts. In the districts about Westport and Newport, the people were formerly in comfortable circumstances, uniting the occupations of a farmer, weaver, and fisherman ; but for several years the change in their circumstances for the worse has been very great, which is attributed to the decline in the linen trade here, the subdivision of farms, and early and improvident marriages. The peasantry, particularly in the pasturing districts, where extensive farms are held in common, live in villages ; detached cabins are only occasionally to be met with. Their habitations are built in some parts of uncemented stone, in others of sods or mud on a stone foundation : they are roofed chiefly with bog timber, which is never of sufficient size to furnish rafters except for the smallest cabins : the price of foreign timber prevents its general use. The cabins, hence, have an appearance even more miserable than those in other parts of Ireland. In the mountainous districts, and on the borders of the bog, the habitations are peculiarly wretched, indicating the greatest poverty. In Gallen, the houses are built of dry walls dashed with mortar, and have generally a chimney and two partitions, besides a recess called a hag, sunk in the side wall opposite the fire, which contains a bed, and is screened by a straw mat hung up for a curtain. The fuel is universally turf ; the food, potatoes, oaten bread, milk, and herrings ; and the clothing chiefly a dark-coloured frieze manufactured by the people themselves, with thicksets and cotton occasionally. The women were formerly clothed in home-made stuffs, flannels, and friezes, and, like those of Galway, the short jacket and petticoat were of red flannel or frieze ; the jacket has in most instances given way to a cotton gown, but the deep crimson petticoat is still worn throughout the greater part of the county. The Irish language is generally spoken by the old inhabitants ; but young people almost every where speak English, and many of the children, even in the mountain districts and along the sea-shore, are unacquainted with the Irish language. Every village has its code of laws, established by the inhabitants : differences which cannot be accommodated in this manner used to be referred to the proprietor of the estate, or his agent ; but now they are generally carried to the sessions. This rude system of village law is said to give rise to much strife and pertinacious litigation. A place is shewn near Dunmore town, in Addergoole parish, where, after a violent fall of rain accompanied with a dreadful and unusual noise, the workmen at a turbary perceived the bog, to the extent of ten acres, floating after them till it spread over a piece of low pasture which it entirely covered to the extent of thirty acres. Mayo gives the titles of Earl and Viscount to the Burke family.

A topographical dictionary of Ireland : comprising the several counties; cities; boroughs; corporate, market and post towns; parishes; and villages, with historical and statistical descriptions embellished with engravings of the arms of the cities, bishopricks, corporate towns, and boroughs ; and of the seals of the several municipal corporations ... (1837)

Author : Lewis, Samuel, d. 1865

Volume : 2

Publisher : London : S. Lewis

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center

Book contributor : Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center

Collection : allen_county; americana

Notes : No TOC

Source : Internet Archive

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October 24 2011