

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVINCE OF CONNAUGHT.

THIS Province is bounded on the north and west by the sea; its north eastern limits are marked by a line from Donegal Bay by Lough Melvin to Lough Hilly; from the middle of this lake on the west to the west of Ballyntagauran, and midway between Killeshandra and Carrigallen to Bruce-hill, and thence to the river Cromlin. This line separates Connaught from Ulster. The course of the Cromlin and the Shannon, as far as to the middle of Lough Derg, marks its limits towards Leinster on the east; and an irregular line thence, through the Baughta mountains to Galway Bay, parts it on the south from Munster. Connaught contains five counties; viz, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon and Galway; they are subdivided into baronies and parishes. According to the census of 1821, the number of houses and inhabitants in each county was as follows, viz.

	<i>Houses.</i>	<i>Inhabitants.</i>
Galway.....	55,669	314,748
Leitrim	19,123	105,976
Mayo.....	53,940	297,538
Roscommon.....	38,289	207,777
Sligo.....	24,246	127,879
	191,267	1,053,918

It also contains 42 baronies, 296 parishes, and 2,630,309 acres Irish plantation measure.

THE COUNTY OF GALWAY is bounded on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the north by Mayo, on the north east by Roscommon, on the east it is separated from the King's County and Tipperary by the river Shannon, and on the south it is bounded by Clare and Galway Bay, the largest bay in the island. This county is the second in size in the kingdom, its extent being little less than Cork; it is unquestionably the most considerable county in Ireland. Its greatest extent from north to south is about 43 Irish miles, and from east to west about 76 Irish miles. Its surface comprises 989,959 acres Irish plantation measure, including bogs, mountains and waste. It contains sixteen baronies, excluding the town and liberties of Galway, which constitute a distinct county in themselves. The baronies are, Ross, Ballynahinch, Clare, Donamore, Ballymoe, Killyan, Tyaquin, Kilconnel, Athenry, Moycullen, Clonmacowen, Longford, Dunkellin, Leitrim, Loughrea, and Kiltartan. These baronies, together with the Isles of Arran attached to this county, are divided into a hundred and sixteen parishes. The soil is generally composed of a light limestone gravel, which rears numerous flocks of sheep, and herds of light black cattle. The surface in many places is much encumbered with rocks, consequently rugged, and unfavourable to extensive agriculture. The mineral productions are rich lead ore, north east, and in the vicinity of Tuam; crystals near Donaghpatrick; pearls in Lough Corril; and marbles of superior beauty west of the lake. The most considerable rivers are the Shannon, the Suck and Blackwater; the Clare, Galway and Dunmore rivers are also of considerable magnitude and impetuous in their career. Besides these there are other numerous streamlets flowing in all directions.

THE COUNTY OF MAYO is bounded on the south by Galway, on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the north by Sligo and the sea, and on the east by Roscommon. Its extent from north to south is about sixty miles, and from east to west about fifty. Its superficies comprises 790,600 acres Irish plantation measure, including bogs, mountains and waste. It is divided into nine baronies, Kilmaine, Curra, Burrishoole, Morisk, Clonmorris, Costello, Gallen, Tyravley, and Erris, which contain sixty-eight parishes. The principal lakes are Loughmask, Carra, Raheens, and Loughconn, besides numerous small lakes. The most extensive rivers are the Moy, the Guishenden, the Deal, the Owenmore, the Awenmore, the Robe, with many other fine streams undistinguished by particular names. Near the sea the county is mountainous; above Lough Mask rises the lofty Mambrasna, and Mount Nephin above Lough Conn; but these high protuberances afford pasture, and the valleys near the sea are well cultivated; in the interior the soil, mostly fertile, consists much of limestone and

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limestone gravel. Abundance of iron ore is found in various parts with ochres, granite, coal, and slate of a superior quality in the Derinky mountains; in the barony of Morisk, beautiful black marble without speck, and manganese; so that adventure and industry are only wanting to render this a highly opulent county.

THE COUNTY OF LEITRIM.—This county at the north eastern extremity of the Province, has Donegal Bay on the north, it is bounded eastward by Fermanagh and Cavan, on the south by Longford in Leinster, and westward by Sligo and Roscommon, from the latter of which it is parted by the Shannon. Its greatest extent from east to west is about forty-six miles, and its greatest breadth about sixteen. It embraces a surface of 255,950 acres Irish plantation measure, including bogs, mountains and waste. It contains five baronies, namely, Mohill, Dromahaire, Leitrim, Carrigallen and Ross-Clogher, which are divided into seventeen parishes. Lough Allen is encompassed by high mountains, and is more than thirty miles in circuit. Like most hilly countries, the valleys are fertile, and profusely watered with streamlets of different magnitudes. The surfaces of the mountains are barren, but to compensate for this want of fertility of exterior, their bowels are amazingly rich in minerals. The mountains of the barony of Ross-Clogher in the north are pregnant with copper; clays of almost every tinge and of various specific qualities abound north of lake Allen. There are many mineral spas, mostly chalybeate, but some are sulphureous.

THE COUNTY OF SLIGO.—Donegal Bay and the sea confine this county on the north; Mayo on the south west; Roscommon on the south east, and Leitrim on the north east. Its extent from north to south is about 32 Irish miles, and about 30 miles from east to west; its surface comprises 247,150 acres Irish plantation measure, including bogs, mountains and waste. It contains six baronies, Lency, Coolavin, Corran, Torrighrill, Carburry, and Tyreragh, which are divided into thirty-nine parishes. Sligo has a great diversity of surface; mountains, lakes, rich lands, and inclosures contrasted with dingy bogs and commons, with some small woods scattered in different parts, relieve the eye from the painful monotony of many of the counties of Ireland. Its principal lakes are Lough Gill, Temple House Lake, Lough Talla and Lough Arrow. The two last are remarkable for large high-flavoured trout. The most considerable rivers are the Sligo, the Bonnet, the Owenmore the Unshion, the Cooloney, the Eskey, and the Moy which for many miles separates Mayo from Sligo. This county is rich in minerals. Silver and copper are found west of lake Arrow, and on the coast in the barony of Tyreragh is a stone, which bears a high polish, called serpent stone, from figures which it exhibits resembling the skeletons of those animals; copper and tin are found in the western part of the same barony; and fine clays and talc near Drumleer, thirteen miles south east of Sligo.

THE COUNTY OF ROSCOMMON is separated from the counties of Longford and Westmeath, by the river Shannon on the east; it is bounded by Galway on the south and south-west; on the west by Mayo; on the north by Sligo, and on the north east by Leitrim. Its greatest extent from north to south is forty-seven Irish miles, and about twenty-nine Irish miles from east to west where broadest; its surface comprises 346,650 Irish plantation acres, including bogs, mountains and waste; it contains six baronies, Moycarne, Athlone, Roscommon, Ballinac, Ballintober and Boyle which are divided into 56 parishes. Roscommon has some bog; the residue consists of a good soil, and in most instances exceedingly rich and capable of any culture. The whole extent of its eastern boundary is watered by the Shannon, and the river Suck, for a considerable distance, divides it from the county of Galway. Lough Key is a small lake of this county joined by two rivers to Lough Gara and the Shannon; it is pleasantly interspersed with numerous other streamlets, which direct their course to the river Shannon. There are no lakes of considerable magnitude in this county, although it abounds with small fresh water collections sufficiently extensive to diversify the surface and multiply its beauties. Two miles from Kilkelly is a very beautiful glen, at the bottom of which runs a rivulet, the declivity on each side being ornamented with stunted ash trees, whitethorn bushes and evergreens, which give it a most romantic and agreeable appearance. About the middle of it there is an echo which repeats a sound seven times loudly and distinctly. The mineral productions of Roscommon are exceedingly valuable, not only from their quality, but also from their contiguity to navigation. Iron ore and coal are found between Lough Key and the Shannon and Lough Allen; ochres eight miles north of Lough Key, and marble between Lough Ree and the Suck, exhibiting the petrified skeletons of animals, and bearing an exquisite polish.