

COLERAINE, county of Londonderry, Ireland; partly in the parish of Killowen and barony of Coleraine, and partly in the parish of Coleraine and barony of the north-east liberties of Coleraine; a sea-port and post-town, a municipal and parliamentary borough, and the seat of a Poor-Law Union, is distant 145 miles N. from Dublin. The population in 1851 was 5920, exclusive of 342 inmates of the Union workhouse. Coleraine returns one member to the Imperial Parliament. The paving, lighting, &c., of the town are under the care of 21 town commissioners. Coleraine Poor-Law Union comprises 20 electoral divisions, with an area of 112,366 acres, and a population in 1851 of 43,021.

Coleraine is situated on both banks of the river Bann, at a distance of 4 miles from the sea. The principal part of the town is on the right bank, and consists of a central square called the Diamond, with several leading streets diverging from it. The bridge connecting this portion of the town with the suburb of Killowen or Waterside on the left bank of the river is a stone structure of three arches, 288 feet long and 32 feet in breadth, erected at a cost of 14,500*l*. There is a great thoroughfare by this road between the northern parts of the counties of Antrim and Londonderry. The parish churches of Killowen and Coleraine stand in the respective divisions on either side of the river. There are also two Roman Catholic chapels and six meeting-houses of various denominations of Dissenters, an Endowed school, a National Model school, and a savings bank. The old court-house and town-hall stands in the centre of the Diamond. There is a new market-place with a commodious market-house. The town is lighted with gas. Vessels of 200 tons burden can ascend the river to the quay; but the principal maritime trade of Coleraine is conducted from the harbour of Port Rush, 5 miles distant on the coast near the embouchure of the river. At Port Rush is a harbour formed by two piers of 800 feet and 650 feet in length, inclosing an area of 8 acres, with from 15 feet to 20 feet of water at the wharfs. The customs duties of the Coleraine district in 1856 amounted to 8050*l*.: the excise duties amounted to 40,644*l*. The number and tonnage of vessels belonging to the port in 1856 were ten vessels of 233 tons aggregate burden. The entrances and clearances at the port in the coasting and cross-channel trade in 1856 were:—Sailing vessels, inwards 120, tonnage 6080; outwards 44, tonnage 1365: steam vessels, inwards 121, tonnage 29,966; outwards 51, tonnage 11,365. In the foreign and colonial trade there entered 9 vessels of 1922 tons, and cleared 4 vessels of 1790 tons. The principal trade is the manufacture and bleaching of linens and the salmon-fishery. A fine description of linen manufactured here is known as 'Coleraines.' The annual sales of linens are estimated at 600,000*l*. The fisheries (of salmon and eel) are the property of the Irish Society, who farm them out at an annual rent of 1200*l*. Upwards of 300 persons are employed as water-bailiffs in the protection of the Bann and its tributaries. Fairs are held on May 12th, July 5th, and November 3rd; markets are held on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. There are tanneries, bleach-grounds, paper-mills, and soap and candle works. Quarter sessions of the peace for the county of Londonderry are held here in rotation; and petty sessions fortnightly. Coleraine in the Presbyterian Church arrangement is the seat of a Presbytery of the General Assembly, consisting of 16 congregations.

Coleraine is remarkable in early Irish history as the place in which Patrick found a Christian bishop already located on his first progress through the northern parts of Ireland. A castle was built here in 1213 by Thomas Mac Uchtred, a Scottish adventurer. One of De Courcy's followers, called De Sendall, also erected a castle very soon after the conquest. The present town stands on the site selected by the Irish Society in 1613. It was at first fortified by an earthen wall with bastions. The place held out against the rebels in 1641. In 1683 the whole customs of the port amounted to only 18*l*. 9*s*. 8*d*. The neighbourhood is rich and well cultivated. A fall of the Bann over a ledge of rock of 12 feet high, at the Cutts, about a mile above the town, adds considerably to the picturesque interest of the environs.