

LONGFORD, an inland county of the province of Leinster in Ireland, bounded on the north-west by the county of Leitrim, on the north-east by the county of Cavan, on the south-east by the county of Westmeath, and on the south-west by the county of Roscommon, from which it is separated by a part of Loch Ree and the river Shannon. According to the map of Ireland published under the superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, it lies between $53^{\circ} 29'$ and $53^{\circ} 56'$ N. lat., and between $7^{\circ} 19'$ and $7^{\circ} 56'$ W. long. According to the map of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, it extends from the Leitrim boundary at Gulladoo Loch on the north to the Westmeath boundary on the south, 29 statute miles, and from the Shannon at Tarmonbarry bridge on the west to the Inny near Loch Kinale on the east, 22 miles. Its area, according to the same map, consists of—

	Acres	r.	p.
Land . . .	255,734	1	10
Water . . .	13,675	0	23
Total . . .	269,409	1	33

or 421 square statute miles nearly. In 1831 the total population was 112,558.

The general slope of the surface is westward and south-westward towards the Shannon, except in the north-eastern angle towards Cavan, where the county embraces a small portion of the basin of Loch Erne. This district, forming the immediate basin of Loch Gownagh, is separated from the remainder of the county by a slightly elevated tract upon the south, and by a series of hills of low elevation on the west. The latter eminences range from 200 to 400 feet above the level of the lake, and form the eastern front of the Cairn Clonhugh group. Loch Gownagh is a very irregular piece of water extending from north to south five miles and a half, and from east to west nearly five miles, but from its being rather a collection of lakes communicating by narrow channels than one sheet of water, it does not in all cover more than about 3000 acres, of which 2278 acres are within this county. Its chief feeders are small streams running from the surrounding hilly country. There are several pretty wooded islands in the lake, and the shores are picturesque and in some places finely planted. The Cairn Clonhugh hills, extending about ten miles from north-east to south-west, occupy the greater part of the district between Loch Gownagh and the Shannon. The chief heights are Crott on the north-east (686 feet) and Cairn Clonhugh near the opposite extremity of the group (912 feet). The general character of these hills is tame and pastoral. They form the southern boundary of the district of Drumlish, a bare tract extending along the southern border of Leitrim, and watered by the Ballinamuck, or Clonard river, which rises from Loch Annagh, in the north of the Cairn Clonhugh hills. Ballinamuck is a small place, and much of the surrounding country is moory and barren: the surface improves towards Drumlish, which is a place of some trade in grain. The angle included between the Shannon and the river Rint, which flows southward out of Leitrim [LEITRIM], is much encumbered with bog. Between the western termination of the Cairn Clonhugh hills and the Shannon is an open well-cultivated tract, in which the thriving town of Newtown Forbes is situated. Newtown Forbes lies about two miles eastward from the Shannon, which here spreads into a lake three miles long by from a mile and a half to half a mile in width, called Loch Forbes. The intermediate flat, being about two miles every way, is occupied by the extensive plantations of Castle Forbes, the seat of the Earl of Granard. The south-eastern slope of the Cairn Clonhugh hills forms one side of the immediate valley of the Camlin, a considerable river, which, taking its rise in the extreme east of the county, skirts the low range bounding the basin of Loch Gownagh on the south, whence

flowing through the small lakes of Killeen and Ballinlough, it runs in a westerly direction, by a winding course of upwards of twenty miles, to the Shannon, which it enters two miles south of Loch Forbes, at Tarmonbarry. The country through which the Camlin flows is open and well improved. The southern bank of the river in particular is beautified by numerous seats and well planted demesnes. On the more elevated portions of the plain, between the sources of the river and Loch Gownagh, is the town of Granard. A little lower down the river is St. Johnstown. Nearer the Shannon is Longford, the assize town of the county, principally situated on the southern bank of the Camlin. Between Longford and the Shannon, the Camlin receives two considerable streams from the south, of which the Keenagh river is the larger. The district intercepted between the Keenagh and the Shannon, which along the south-western boundary of this county expands into the extensive lake of Loch Ree, is very flat and boggy. The arable portion of this district towards the Shannon is low, and along the shores of Loch Ree, which here forms the boundary of the county, is liable to extensive winter-floods. These inundations materially alter the appearance of the coast-line of the lake, submerging several large peninsulas and converting others into islands.

Next to the district of Ballinamuck, this is the least productive part of the county. Along the shore of Loch Ree there are however some handsome demesnes and good tracts of pasture-land. The towns are Cloondara, or Richmond Harbour, at the terminus of the Royal Canal, which traverses this part of the county in a direction nearly parallel to the Keenagh river; and Lanesborough, at the head of Loch Ree, where the Shannon is crossed by the road leading to Roscommon. An inlet of Loch Ree, running about four miles eastward from the main sheet of the lake, bounds this part of the county on the south. Near the shore, in this direction, are the small lakes of Derry and Derrymacar, the latter of which in winter becomes a portion of the enlarged sheet of Loch Ree. The level of Loch Ree in summer is 122 feet and in winter 129 feet above the sea at low water. At the head of the above-mentioned inlet is the confluence of the Inny, which, next to the Suck, brings down a larger body of water than any other tributary of the Shannon. Its sources are in the county of Cavan, where the streams which feed Loch Sheelin have their rise: issuing from Loch Sheelin, it passes through Loch Kinale at an elevation of 212 feet above the sea, in the eastern extremity of Longford; thence, forming for a few miles the boundary between Longford and Westmeath, it enters the latter county, where it expands into the beautiful lake of Derrevaragh; passing from which, through Loch Iron, it again becomes the county boundary for a few miles; then, running under the line of the Royal Canal at Quin's Bridge Aqueduct, near Abbeyshrule, it cuts off a small portion of the extreme south of Longford, and flowing westward, by Ballymahon, enters the Shannon at the head of the eastern inlet of Loch Ree. The valleys of the Camlin and Inny are separated by a low table-land, which rises into only one conspicuous eminence of 650 feet at Slieve Goldry. The remainder of this plain, especially towards the Inny, is much diversified by low ranges of eskers, similar in structure and direction to those of the south of the county of Leitrim. On the side of this plain, towards the Inny, are the towns of Ballymahon and Edgeworthstown. The neighbourhood of Ballymahon is the most highly improved part of the county, being in all respects similar to the rich plain of Westmeath, of which it is a continuation. The only striking natural feature in this part of the line is Glen Loch, a sheet of water about a mile and a half in length, south of Edgeworthstown. The stream issuing from it runs southward to Loch Iron and the Inny. There are numerous other small lakes throughout the county.

The Shannon, between the points where it becomes the boundary of the county, has a coast-line, including windings, of about fifty miles. Above Loch Ree there is no navigation by passenger-boats. The trade-boats plying on the line are barges of from thirty to fifty tons, drawing from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet water. The freight, including tolls, is one penny per mile. The total amount of goods carried in both directions, in the year 1835, was 9770 tons, of which 6700 tons consisted of grain. The Inny offers peculiar facilities for navigation; but as yet there has been no attempt made to remove the slight obstructions which prevent the ascent of boats. The Royal Canal, entering the county at first

nearly parallel to the Inny, turns northward at Ballymahon, from which its course is parallel to that of the Keenagh river. At Abbeyshrule, near where it enters the county, its elevation is 223 feet above the level of the sea, and at Cloondara, at its terminus, 139 feet. The intermediate descent of 84 feet is distributed over seven locks. A branch of six miles in length, on one level, is carried from the main line near Killashee, across the Keenagh and Ardagh rivers, to Longford town, where it terminates in a small basin. Fly-boats for passengers have recently been established along the entire line to Dublin, which perform the trip from Longford to Dublin in fifteen hours. The time required by the slow passenger-boats is twenty-two hours. The principal goods conveyed on the Royal Canal are grain, potatoes, pigs and black cattle, turf, bricks, and small quantities of iron from the Arigna works, downwards; the return trade is chiefly in coals, merchandise, and manure. The trade-boats carry from forty to sixty tons, and draw $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet water. The total number of passengers conveyed by fly-boats on the canal, for the year ending 1st of May, 1837, was 18,130, and by slow passenger-boats 28,320. At the time of this return the fly-boat system had not been extended beyond Mullingar. In the year 1837 the number of live pigs conveyed to Dublin by this canal was 34,349; of casks of butter, 3638; of tons of corn-meal and potatoes, 26,024; of tons of merchandise, 6247; of tons of coal and manure, 14,559; of tons of turf, 21,724; and of tons of stones, sand, flags, and bricks, 16,127: making a total tonnage of 84,683 tons, producing a total amount of toll of 10,964*l.* 16*s.* 5*d.* The country is in general well opened with highways, which are kept in good repair by the county.

The climate is not so genial as that of the midland counties in general. There is a considerable extent of wet and marshy surface.

Geology.—The entire district south of the Camlin consists of the floetz limestone of the central plain, with the exception only of two patches of sandstone, one extending across the bed of the river Inny round Ballymahon, and the other constituting the mass of Slieve Goldry, and spreading northward to near the town of Longford. The immediate valley of the Camlin on its southern bank, and the entire tract extending northward from it to the county of Leitrim, consist of clay-slate, constituting a portion of the grauwacke formation of Cavan. Between the western extremity of the clay-slate field and the limestone, which crosses the bed of the Camlin near its junction with the Shannon, and occupies the level country round Newtown Forbes, a belt of yellow sandstone and conglomerate intervenes: this last formation is in connection with a tract of a similar character in the south of the county of Leitrim. The eskers, or low gravel region, which occur so frequently throughout the southern and south-eastern parts of Longford, are also similar in character to those of the last-mentioned county. They contain large quantities of fine calcareous sand and marl. Marly clay also underlies many of the boggy tracts, in some places to a thickness of ten feet between the bog and the limestone rock; but in general the thickness of this bed of clay is one foot only. The average depth of the bogs is thirty feet: they contain the same vegetable matter and subsoil, and are reclaimable by the same means as those of the other midland counties.

A small tract, similar in character to the millstone-grit formation [LEITRIM], occurs near Loch Gownagh. The iron-stone is said to be equal to the best Swedish ore, and to be associated with coal-shale; but the traces of coal in this district ought probably to be referred to the detritus of the coal-tract of Loch Allen. Lead ore has been found in the quarries in the limestone district, and exposed in the beds of streams, but no workings have hitherto been attempted. Marble is raised in the vicinity of Ballymahon: it is of a deep grey colour, and polishes well.

Soil, &c.—From the great quantity of bog and surface-water in the western part of the county, the soil in this district is not equal to that of the tract sloping towards the valley of the Inny. Here the characteristics of the limestone plain are found in a rich vegetable mould, producing either heavy grain crops or sweet fattening pasture. The rest of the county is chiefly grazing land. Great quantities of butter are made by the farmers and cottiers. Pigs are reared in great numbers. The feeding of sheep is not much attended to. The returns of the sale of grain in the several market-towns are defective. About 15,600 barrels of oats are

annually sold in the market of Granard, and about 2600 barrels at Edgeworthstown. At Ballymahon and Longford are also brisk markets for the sale of wheat, oats, and barley.

The condition of the working population is very low. Sixpence per day, for eighty working days in the year, is the amount of wages stated for agricultural labourers in this county, in the Appendix to the Report of the Commissioners to inquire into the Condition of the Poor in Ireland. The people live almost entirely on vegetable food: they are nevertheless strong and healthy; but want of regular occupation and inefficient return for their occasional employment has added to a spirit of recklessness, the effects of which are apparent in the criminal returns.

The linen manufacture is carried on with some activity in the neighbourhood of Newtown Forbes, where the first Earl Granard took pains to introduce it. The manufacture of coarse flannels and friezes for home consumption is also attended to throughout the county. In 1831 there were in Longford 4 brewers, 104 coopers, 12 hacklers of flax, 15 tanners, and 553 weavers of linen and woollen fabrics.

The only seats of the nobility are Castle Forbes, the residence of the Earl of Granard, and Longford Castle, of the Earl of Longford. Carrickglass, the seat of the Lefroy family, near Longford, on the Camlin river, has an extensive demesne; so also have Cloonfin, Lissard, Fox Hall, Doory Hall, Castlecore, and Newcastle, which three last are in the vicinity of Ballymahon.

Divisions, &c.—Longford is divided into the baronies of *Longford*, on the north-west, containing the towns of Longford (pop. in 1831, 4516), Drumlish (pop. 574), and Newtown Forbes (pop. 537), and the villages of Cloondra (pop. 214) and Ballinamuck (pop. 163); *Granard*, on the north-east, containing the town of Granard (pop. 2069), and the villages of Abbeylara (pop. 316), St. Johnstown (pop. 255), and Bunlahy (pop. 299); *Ardagh*, on the east, containing the town of Edgeworthstown (pop. 1001) and the village of Ardagh (pop. 142); *Abbeyshrule*, on the south, containing only hamlets; *Ratheline*, on the south-west, containing the town of Ballymahon (pop. 1081), and the villages of Lanesborough (pop. 390) and Keenagh (pop. 396); and *Moydow*, on the west and centre, containing the village of Killeshea (pop. 351.)

Prior to the Union, Longford sent ten members to the Irish parliament; two for the county, and two for Longford, Lanesborough, Granard, and St. Johnstown, respectively. The representation is now limited to two members for the county. In 1837 the constituency consisted of 1388 voters. The assizes are held at Longford, and general quarter sessions at Longford and Ballymahon.

The constabulary force on the 1st of January, 1836, consisted of 4 chief-constables, 23 constables, 117 sub-constables, and 5 horse; the cost of supporting which establishment was 5482*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.*, of which 2678*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.* was chargeable against the county. The number of persons charged with criminal offences, who were committed to the county gaol in the year 1836, was 607, of whom 557 were males and 50 females, being in the proportion of one criminal offender in 185 of the entire population. The district lunatic asylum is at Maryborough, in Queen's County. The proportion paid by Longford towards the expense of its erection is 4987*l.* 8*s.* 3*d.* The county infirmary is at Longford, and there are dispensaries at Granard, Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, and Keenagh. There are barracks at Granard and Longford, together affording accommodation for 400 men and 200 horses.

Longford town is incorporated by charter of 26th Nov., 20th Car. II. The governing body consists of the sovereign, bailiffs, and burgesses; there is a seneschal's court with jurisdiction to 200*l.*, but no corporate criminal jurisdiction nor borough gaol. The paving and cleaning of the town are under the control of commissioners acting under the 9th Geo. IV., c. 82. The town is not lighted. Longford is principally built on the southern bank of the Camlin: the county court-house and gaol, and the barracks, are on the opposite side of the river. The town is handsome, and has an appearance of cheerfulness and business. There have been extensive stores erected at the basin which terminates the Grand Canal on the southern side, in which direction several new streets are laid out. The Earl of Longford has recently built a butter-market and shambles. There are branches of the Bank of Ireland, the National Bank, and the Agricultural and Commercial Bank, established here.

Lanesborough has also a charter of the 17th Car. I., but

the governing body has not exercised any corporate functions since the Union. Its situation, with a bridge over the Shannon, is favourable to trade, and it has a brisk market for agricultural produce. Great quantities of eggs pass through Lanesborough by the Royal Canal to Dublin and the English markets.

St. Johnstown is incorporated by charter bearing date 5rd April, 3rd Carl. I.; but there are now no traces either of the corporate jurisdiction or of the lands bestowed for its establishment.

Granard, erected into a borough by charter of Charles II. in 1678, is a well-built town, consisting chiefly of one wide street, about half a mile in length. The remains of old Granard, a place of great antiquity, are still traceable a little distance to the west of the present town. A lofty earthen fort, the summit of which is 593 feet above the level of the

sea, and about 150 above the surrounding plain, stands at the eastern extremity of the present town, and commands a fine prospect over the extended plains of Meath, Westmeath, and Longford.

Ballymahon and Edgeworthstown are rather large villages than towns. Both are centrally situated, and have brisk markets for grain.

The village of Ardagh, containing 142 inhabitants, gives name to a bishop's see in the province of Armagh. The see, which was founded in the sixth century, was united to the bishopric of Kilmore in 1658; and that union being dissolved, was afterwards, in 1742, annexed to the archiepiscopal see of Tuam, the archbishop holding it as a suffragan of the primate. By the provisions of the Church Temporalities Act, the see, on the demise of the present archbishop of Tuam, is to be reunited to Kilmore.

Population.

Date.	How ascertained.	Houses.	Families.	Families chiefly employed in agriculture.	Families chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, and handicraft.	Families not included in the preceding classes.	Males.	Females.	Total.
1792	Estimated by Dr. Beaufort .	10,026	..	..	..	..	..	..	50,100
1813	Under Act of 1812 .	16,346	..	..	..	..	..	..	95,917
1821	Under Act 55 Geo. III., c. 120	18,987	21,650	..	..	..	53,215	54,355	107,570
1831	Under Act 1 Will. IV., c. 19 .	19,418	20,438	15,461	2,553	2,424	55,310	57,248	112,558

History and Antiquities.—The territory at present constituting the county of Longford was originally a portion of the kingdom of Meath, and as such was included in the grant of Meath by king Henry II. to Hugh de Lacy, from whom it came through his son Walter to a female heiress, one of Walter's two daughters. Owing to the negligence of her descendants, who lived in England, the territory was lost to the absentee owners. On the erection of the district into a separate county, in the 11th of Elizabeth, it retained few or no traces of ever having been under the authority of the English law or government. The O'Farrells, who almost exclusively inhabited it at this time, consented, on the 11th Feb., 1570, to surrender their interest, and take back their lands on English tenures. On the 12th of April, 1615, a commission was appointed by king James to inquire into his title to the territory. An inquisition was accordingly taken, by which it was found that, under a proviso in the grant of Elizabeth, the crown was entitled by virtue of the act of absentees. On the 5th of August in the same year a commission was issued empowering the Lord Deputy and others to dispose of the estates, so found to be in the king, to patentees. In the distribution which followed the natives had a preference. Upwards of 13,000 acres were assigned to members of the O'Farrell family, and of the entire residue of the county only 17,904 acres were allotted to the new-comers, the remainder being parcelled out among the old inhabitants. The rent reserved to the crown on the new grants was 3d. per acre. The plantation did not take effect to any great extent, as in 1641 the entire county appears to have been seized back by the O'Farrells, excepting only Longford Castle and Castle Forbes. The confiscations which ensued extended over nearly the entire county, and introduced almost a totally new proprietary.

The remains of the old town of Granard possess considerable interest when taken in connection with the neighbouring rampart of Duncra, which runs from Loch Kinale to Loch Gownagh, a distance of nearly eight miles. This work is in all respects similar to the Dane's Cast [Down], and probably formed part of the division between the antient kingdoms of Meath and Ulster. On the island of Inch-Clorin, in Loch Ree, are the ruins of seven churches, and the foundation of a round-tower. An abbey was founded here, about A.D. 540, by St. Dermid. There are the foundations of another round-tower at Granard. The Lord Richard Tuite, A.D. 1205, built an abbey at Granard in honour of the Virgin, which was afterwards rifled by the Scots, under Edward Bruce, in 1315. In 1541 Richard O'Ferrall, the last abbot, was made bishop of Ardagh. The abbey at Longford was one of Patrick's foundations. O'Ferrall, or O'Farrell, prince of Annaly, founded a very fine monastery on the site of this abbey, A.D. 1400. The church of the friars is now the parish church. Abbeyshrule was another rich foundation of the same family. In Loch Ree, besides

the seven churches of Inch-Clorin, were the monasteries of All saints, founded by St. Kieran in the year 544, and Innisbofin, founded by a nephew of Patrick about the year 530, on islands bearing these names respectively. There are remains of all the preceding, as also of the religious houses of Moydow, Clonebrone, Clone, Derg, and Innismore, a foundation of St. Columba's, on an island in Loch Gownagh. A few castles are still partially standing; the principal ones are at Castle-Forbes, Granard, Tenallick, Castlecor, Ratheline, and Ballymahon.

The county expenses are defrayed by grand-jury presentments. The amount levied in 1835 was 12,606l. 9s. 2d., of which 4162l. 18s. 5d. was for roads and bridges; 2209l. 6s. 2½d. for public buildings, charities, salaries, &c.; 2678l. 13s. 10s. for police; and 3556l. 10s. 8½d. for the repayment of loans advanced by government.

(*Transactions of the Geological Society*, vol. v.; *Report of the Railway Commissioners for Ireland*; *MSS. in the Library of the Royal Dublin Society*; *Cox's History of Ireland*; *Parliamentary Reports and Papers*.)