

WATERFORD, the capital of the county of Waterford, is situated on the river Suir, in 52° 16' N. lat. and 7° 8' W. long. It is a county of a city, and includes in the boundary of the county 9478 acres on both sides of the Suir. The city itself is entirely on the south bank of the river, and is about a mile long. A noble quay extends the whole of this length along the bank of the river, from which the city rises gradually. The situation is very fine, but the greater part of the streets are dark, dirty, and mean-looking. Waterford is about 12 miles from the sea, and vessels of 500 tons burden can lie by the side of the quay, but larger ships anchor about six miles lower down, opposite the village of Passage. The river is crossed at the upper end of the city by a very long wooden bridge, which opens in one part to allow vessels to pass. The bridge was designed by Lemuel Cox, an American, and was built about 1795. The river here is nearly a quarter of a mile wide; the opposite banks are very beautiful, rising gently with green wooded hills.

The town and suburbs occupy about 883 acres. In the county of the city there are twelve parishes, three of which are entirely agricultural, and nine partly agricultural and partly occupied by the town and suburbs. In December, 1831, the total number of houses in the county of the city was 3719, of which 3376 were in the city and suburbs, and of these latter 1000 were thatched. The number of houses of 10*l.* rent and upwards was 1671. The population of the county of the city, in 1821, was 28,679; in 1831 it was 28,821. The population of the city and suburbs, in 1831, was 26,377, the country part of the population being 2444. Upwards of 20,000 were Roman Catholics.

Waterford has been an improving town for many years, but it will be seen that the increase in population has been very small. It has probably been kept down by emigration. Very few new houses are built. In the worst parts of the town the misery is described as frightful; five or six families are sometimes found living together in a hovel, entirely without furniture, and with nothing but straw to lie upon.

The principal public buildings are—the cathedral, an elegant modern structure; the bishop's palace, which is of hewn stone, with a double front, and commands an extensive view across the river into the county of Wexford. There are three parish churches, four Roman Catholic chapels, and places of worship for the Quakers and other sects. The other public buildings are—a court-house, an exchange, a custom-house, a theatre, an assembly-room, barracks, and a gaol. Among the charitable institutions are a house of industry and an hospital for the poor.

Waterford, before the Reform Act, returned one member to parliament. It was an open borough, and the constituency consisted of 900 freemen and 80 freeholders. It now returns two members. The number of electors in 1834 was 1473; the number registered from Feb. 1, 1835, to Feb. 1, 1843, inclusive, was 1532, of whom 34 were 50*l.* freeholders, 22 were 20*l.* freeholders, 2 were 10*l.* freeholders, 19 were 40*s.* freeholders, 16 were 20*l.* leaseholders, 5 were 10*l.* leaseholders, 3 were rent-chargers, 791 were 10*l.* householders, and 640 were freemen. It first sent members to the Irish parliament in 1374.

The government of the city is vested, by the charter of Charles I., in a mayor, 18 aldermen, 18 assistants, a recorder, and two sheriffs; and the aldermen, assistants, recorder, and sheriffs form the council. The corporation possess considerable estates in the county of the city.

The constabulary force in Waterford consists of one sub-inspector, one head-constable, eight constables, and 45 sub-constables. The total expenditure for the force for 1839 was 2054*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.*

The assessments in the town only were, in 1830—church

cess, 720*l.*; ministers' money, 248*l.*; lighting cess, 770*l.*; the total amount raised by these assessments being 1738*l.*, from about 1800 ratepayers. The grand-jury cess levied on the county of the city, in 1830, was 4348*l.* 14*s.* 10*d.*, but the amount of this assessment varies considerably in different years.

The commerce of Waterford is chiefly with England, and consists for the most part of agricultural produce, butter, pork, &c., and, since the introduction of steam-vessels, of live-stock. The exports from Waterford, in 1835, were—corn, meal, and flour, 1,503,854 cwts.; provisions, 202,048 cwts.; potatoes, 20,000 cwts.; sugar, 165 cwts.; copper-ore, 48,000 cwts.; feathers, 1040 cwts.; wine, 5402 gallons; beer, 170,000 gallons; cotton manufactures, 180,200 yards; calf-skins, 6400; cows and oxen, 4410 head; horses, 342 head; sheep, 3996 head; swine, 74,097 head; the estimated value of which was 1,743,545*l.*, which, added to other articles estimated at 77,700*l.*, gave a total estimated value of 1,821,245*l.*

The imports for the same year (1835) consisted of a great variety of articles required for purposes of trade and general consumption, the total estimated value of which was 1,274,154*l.*

According to a Return to the House of Commons, dated March, 1842, the number of vessels above 50 tons burden, registered at Waterford, was 115, the total burd*e*n of which was 19,309 tons. The net receipt at the Custom-house, during the year ending January 5, 1841, was 183,510*l.* 15*s.* 3*d.*; the net receipt for the previous year was 161,752*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.*

There is a packet-station at Waterford for conveyance between Waterford and Milford daily; the number of packets is five, which are kept up at an average expenditure of about 14,000*l.* a year, the amount received from passengers being about 1700*l.* a year.

In 1835 there were seven steam-engines in Waterford, equal to ninety-horse power, for manufacturing purposes. In 1836 there were 339 cotton power-looms.

The amount of excise duty on malt, collected in Waterford in 1836, was 9840*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.*, for 76,182 bushels of malt.

There are two banks in Waterford—the Provincial Bank of Ireland, and the Branch Bank of Ireland. There is also a savings-bank, in which the number of depositors on the 20th Nov., 1842, was 3469. The expense of management for the year 1841-2 was 276*l.*, including 242*l.* salaries. The smallest sum on which interest is allowed is 15*s.* In some English savings-banks interest is allowed on 2*s.* 6*d.*

The newspapers are—the Waterford Weekly Chronicle, the Waterford News-Letter, weekly; the Waterford Mirror, three times a week; and the Waterford Mail, twice a week.

In 1840 an act was passed for a railway between Limerick and Carrick-on-Suir, passing through Waterford; but the act was not carried into effect, and has expired.

Waterford was originally founded by the Danes about A.D. 850, and it was their chief possession in Ireland for some centuries. In 1170 it was taken by assault by Strongbow, earl of Pembroke; and in the following year Henry II., when he passed over to take possession of Ireland, then newly conquered, landed near Waterford, and paid a visit to the town, which was afterwards restored and enlarged by Strongbow. Waterford received its first charter from King John, who resided there for some time; and subsequent kings, on account of its steady adherence to the English, gave it several other charters and privileges, especially Henry VII., for its opposition to Simnel and Perkin Warbeck. All its charters however were seized and annulled by James I., on the ground of the nonconformity of the chief magistrates, and Waterford remained without a charter from 1617 to 1626, when a new and more extensive one was granted by Charles I., which is the one now in force. The immunities granted by this charter were very great, and included, among others, an exemption of the freemen from the duties of poundage. Waterford was unsuccessfully besieged by Cromwell, but was afterwards taken by Ireton.

Curraghmore, the magnificent domain of the marquis of Waterford, is in the neighbourhood of Waterford; it contains 4600 acres. The Clyde, a fine full stream, traverses the park; the timber is of the best and largest kinds. The mansion is not worthy of the domain.