Richard Arthur Herbert Townsend [259]



Shorecliffe



Extract from Samuel Lewis' Topographical Dictionary 1837

SCHULL, a parish, in the Western Division of the barony of WEST CARBERY, county of CORK, and province of MUNSTER, 11 1/2 miles (W. S. W.) from Skibbereen, on the road to Crookhaven; containing, with several inhabited islands in Roaring Water bay, 15,252 inhabitants, of which number, 385 are in the village. It is exceedingly wild and uncultivated, and appears in the earlier periods of Irish history to have been regarded as of very great importance from its numerous defiles and strongholds amidst its rocks; and in later times, from the erection of several castles by the various native sects, which from their situation and great strength would appear to have been impregnable. The castles of **Dunbeacon** and Dunmanus, on Dunmanus bay, were built by the sect of O'Mahony; the former to protect the boundary and pass between their territories and those of the O'Donovans. The parish forms the eastern portion of a peninsula extending from Dunmanus Bay, on the north, to Roaring Water Bay on the south, and comprising 84,000 statute acres, of which 24,204 are applotted under the tithe act, and valued at £7898 per annum. The surface is rocky and very uneven, rising in some parts into mountains of considerable elevation; the highest in a chain extending from east to west is Mount Gabriel, 1145 feet above the level of the sea; the whole are of the schistose formation, in some places passing into all the varieties of transition rock. About one-third of the land, consisting principally of small patches between the rocks, is under tillage; but the system of agriculture is in a very backward state, and spade husbandry is in general practice. There are some tracts of mountain which afford tolerable pasturage to numerous herds of young cattle; but the greater portion presents only a bare rocky surface, and appears to be wholly irreclaimable. There are also considerable tracts of bog, producing a good supply of peat, part of which might be reclaimed at a moderate expense. The principal seats are Ardmanah House, the residence of Major J. Wynne; Lemcon House, of R. E. Hull, Esq.; Rock Cottage, of J. O'Callaghan, Esq.; Gortnagruach, of R. Swanton, Esq.; Audley Lodge, of Capt. Forster, R. N.; Greenmount, of Capt. Long; Ballydehob Cottage, of the Rev. J. Barry, P. P.; and Ardirivema, of the Rev. L. O'Sullivan. The islands within the limits of the parish are Long island, Goat island, Castle island, Horse island, Dunmanus, Ballydehob, Carbery island, the Three Calves, and the islands of Carty and Moan. The largest of these is Long island, but the most valuable is Horse island, abounding with copper ore of good quality, which is found also in other parts of the parish. Some very extensive mines have been opened on the summit of Cappach hill by the proprietor, Lord Audley; they were subsequently worked by the Irish Mining company, but are now rented by the West Cork Mining company, who have for a time suspended their operations here while they are working the mines in Horse island, about a mile and a half distant; the ore found at Cappach and Horse island is very pure. The same company, in 1835, opened very extensive slate quarries at Audley's Cove and at Tilemuck, in this parish, in which 500 men are constantly employed; the slate is of excellent quality, compact, hard, and durable; and great quantities have been already sent to London and other English markets, where it is in great demand. Trials for copper ore and slate have also been made with success in various parts of the parish, the working of which will be highly beneficial, by providing constant employment to the dense population of this wild and hitherto almost unknown portion of the country. The mines and quarries now in progress are situated close to the shores of Roaring Water bay, upon a small creek called Audley's Cove, from which their produce can be readily shipped for any British port. The bay is accessible to vessels of 600 tons' burden; and the harbour of Skull is well sheltered, the ground level, and the water in the anchorage averaging from three to four fathoms; the entrance is perfectly safe, and at all times practicable, there being only one rock, which is situated nearly in the centre, and is dry at two hours' ebb. A new line of road parallel with the shore, and leading from Skibbereen to Rock island and Crookhaven, has been constructed, which will materially benefit the trade of the place. The village contains 79 houses, several of which are modern and well built. A fair for cattle, sheep and pigs is held at Skull on the 5th of January, and fairs are also held in the village of Ballydehob. A constabulary police force is stationed here and also at Ballydehob; and there are coast-guard stations on Long island and at Skull, which latter is a detachment from the station at Crookhaven, in the district of Skibbereen. A manorial court is held at Lemcon, every third Monday, at which debts under £5 are recoverable; there is also an ecclesiastical manor belonging to the bishop of Ross, for which a court is held occasionally; and petty sessions are held at Towermore every alternate week. The living is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Cork, and in the alternate patronage of the Crown and the Bishop: the tithes amount to £850. The glebe-house is a handsome residence, and the

glebe comprises 63 3/4 acres. The church, towards the repairs of which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have recently granted £207, is a small plain edifice, erected in 1720. At Ballydehob is a very handsome church, in the later English style, erected in 1829 as a chapel of ease, at an expense of £600, a gift from the late Board of First Fruits; divine service is also performed in three schoolrooms in the parish. About 340 children are taught in six public schools, of which three are supported by the rector; and there are nine private schools (in which are about 230 children), a Sunday school, and a dispensary.