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## NOTES ON AN IRISH LAKE DISTRICT.

By O. J. R. HOWARTH.

IN September of 1904 I intended, while travelling in Connemara and the south of the county Mayo, to make soundings in certain of the small loughs west of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask. Owing mainly to the prevalence of high winds, I was unable to carry out my programme fully, but I have thought my few observations might be recorded in view of any future organized work in this district.

My soundings were made along sections between defined points, and have been plotted on the 6-inch Ordnance map. I went prepared to sound, photograph, and compile notes on the structure of the lake-basins. My sounding-lines were similar to those used by Dr. Mill and Mr. Heawood in the English Lake District, and the lead weighed  $4\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. I had covered it with a netting of tarred cord, with a view of minimizing the risk of damaging the paint of boats; this had the unanticipated result that the lead nearly always came up coated with the sediment of the bottom.

For the purpose of the few general notes which follow, the northern, southern, and western boundaries of my district may be taken respectively as Clew bay, Galway bay, and the coast between these inlets. This is perhaps the most striking portion of the western lake region of Ireland. From the south shore of Clew bay rises the isolated quartzite cone of Croagh Patrick, 2510 feet in height. A gently undulating area of bog, with a few small loughs, extends south from it to the Mweelrea and Sheefry groups. These are of various Silurian rocks, and separated by the Bundorragha river, draining Loughs Cunnel, Glencullin, Dhulough, and Finn, south to the Killary harbour, a fine hill-bound inlet of the Atlantic. Evidence of glacial work is abundant in the moraines along the Killary and in the striated rocks about Dhulough. South again the bogs reappear, and then from their midst the Twelve Pins or Bens rise sharply like an island, bold quartzite hills reaching 2556 feet of altitude. A chain of considerable loughs, Inagh, Derryclare, and Ballynahinch, winds about their base on the east and south; westward they sink more gently to the sea. The eye travels south from them towards Galway bay over a remarkable boggy tract sown with small loughs, the connections of which are largely below the surface. A few low hills appear towards the bay. East of the Pins (the bog intervening) the quartzite Maamturks and Corkogemores extend towards Lough Corrib, and east of the Killary are the table-topped Partry mountains and other hills extending to Lough Mask.

The lakes of this district seem to fall into two broad divisions, which may be called bog-loughs and mountain-loughs. The first class, of which the largest examples are the Inagh-Ballynahinch chain, are

irregular of outline, studded with islands when of any great extent, and obviously shallow, with flat or gently sloping shores. In this class a subdivision must be made, for the lakes of which the Ballynahinch chain are examples really occupy the boggy bottoms of broad valleys between hills, while the innumerable little loughs in the south-west of the country are merely pools in the plain bog occupying no defined valleys. The only examples of mountain-loughs exceeding a mile in length are Dhulough, Nafaoey, Fee, and Kylemore. Of these, Dhulough I have already located; Nafaoey lies among the hills east of the Killary; Fee is rather over a mile south of the Killary, and Kylemore lies south-west of this, between the Pins and Leamna-haltia mountain. Islands (other than mere rocks), where occurring in all the loughs, are thickly covered with stunted trees and shrubs, and the same is true in a modified degree of a peninsula on the north shore of Lough Fee and two on the south shore of Nafaoey; whereas wood is almost wholly wanting elsewhere in this district, except in rare artificial plantations. My soundings are confined to Dhulough, Glencullin, and Nafaoey.

*Dhulough*, which lies north-west and south-east, is 1 mile 1470 yards in length. It is oblong, and its extreme breadth of 800 yards is found in the upper part, but two-thirds of the distance down it narrows to 800 feet by the incidence of two rocky points opposite one another. East and west the hills fall sharply into it, the slope easing very slightly, and there is no beach except in one or two small bays. At the upper end there are beaches of very small rock fragments, and a short stream falls in from Lough Glencullin, about 230 yards distant in a straight line. The surface levels by the Ordnance map, from calculations in November, 1896, are, of Dhulough 108·5 feet, and of Glencullin 128·2 feet, but a former calculation made the latter figure 136. I was told that the level varied greatly. I dare say the eastern flank of Mweelrea is exceptionally rainy, as the mountain directly faces the sea, and from the midst of a storm at Dhulough, with a westerly wind, I often saw clear sky to the north.

At the lower end of Dhulough the shore is low, for the Bundorragha river flows out and the Glenummera enters from a valley between the Sheefry mountains and Ben Creggan. The beach here is sandy. On the east side the shore-line is partly artificial, being built up to carry a road. Besides the streams mentioned, a minor one enters the lough at the north-west corner from the fine cliff-bound glen under Ben Lugmore, where a bog obviously occupies the bed of a drained tarn; and several fall in from the Sheefry, which has many springs. In the north-eastern angle is an island, which is omitted in the 1901 revision of the 6-inch Ordnance map.

The name Dhulough signifies black lake, and from the hills the water has a curiously dark appearance. As in all these loughs, it is not

clear, and bubbles brown under the oar. There is very little vegetation in the lough. The bottom I found to consist of a dark-brown grit or disintegrated peaty matter, with one notable exception, for at the sounding of 121 feet on the west side towards the middle the lead brought up a fine bright yellow slime. The line of greatest depths, indicated by the broken line on the map (Fig. I.), appears to swing regularly towards the steeper shore. The sections (Fig. II.) reveal a continuation of the sharp slope of the hills, with a tendency, best marked at the southern end, to an almost flat floor at depths about 100 feet. The deepest soundings (164 and 150 feet) fell naturally about the middle of the upper and wider part of the lough. No considerable shallow bank was observed except at the north-western corner, where one is formed, I think, by the deposits of the torrent from Ben Lugmore. The two main streams entering the lough, namely, that from Glencullin and the Glenummera, form no deltas or shallows. The Glencullin stream is cleared by its course through that lough, while the Glenummera comes down through a flat-floored valley, and enters Dhulough by a deep quiet channel several hundred yards in length. There are, it is true, slight banks of sand to right and left of its mouth, but the first sounding marked from the point A (Fig. I.) outward was 61 feet.

*Lough Glencullin* lies west-north-west and east-south-east, is about 1340 yards in length, and nearly 600 yards in extreme width. It differs greatly from Dhulough; in fact, here, I think, the two types of bog-lough and mountain-lough exist side by side. The form is irregular, two considerable bays occurring at the lower end. The main stream enters at the top through a deep and tortuous channel, having descended from Lough Cullen in a series of cascades. An offshoot of the stream from the glen under Ben Lugmore runs into the southern bay. There are two islands in the lough, and a considerable bed of tall reeds at the upper end. The shores are either boggy or rocky, but a slight beach of small fragments occurs at the upper end. Although my soundings were made only on two sections in the upper part, I see no reason to suppose, from the general appearance of the lough, that any depth greatly exceeding my deepest sounding of 27 feet would be found elsewhere.

*Lough Nafoeey* lies almost exactly west and east at an elevation by the ordnance survey of 93.7 feet. It is about 100 feet over  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length, and about 50 feet over half a mile in extreme width. Abrupt flat-topped hills flank the straight valley of which it occupies part to north and south, reaching 1800 to 2000 feet on the north, and 1500 to 1900 feet on the south. The lough is oblong and rather regular in form, except that the southern shore is broken in the lower and wider half by one considerable peninsula, with a rocky island off it, and by one smaller one (at the point C in the diagram, this projection being a slight elevation almost insulated by marshy ground).



Most of the south shore is bordered by a patch of igneous rocks in the midst of the Silurian. Striated rocks show an ice-flow approximating to a line down the existing valley. The Owenbwee or Fooey river enters at the head through a flat alluvial valley, another smaller stream comes down from the south-west in a pretty cascade and enters close by, and a third stream enters from a considerable glen just below the south-western corner. The only other streams of consequence entering the lough are two on the north side. The river Finny flows out at the foot through a boggy valley to Lough Mask. At the upper end there is an extensive beach of fine sand, and a similar but slighter one about the mouth of the eastern stream on the north side; elsewhere the slight beaches which occur are of rocky fragments. The flanks of the igneous hills on the south are strewn with large detached boulders, a number of which have fallen into the lough, forming, off the shore between the peninsulas, a regular line of reefs, with deep water round them. As far as my soundings went west of the large peninsula, the deepest part of the trough and the sharper slope is on the south side, which accords with the relative slope of the flanking hills. At the upper end, however, I expect the case would be opposite. My deepest sounding was 148 feet in my uppermost section, but I anticipated deeper water above. On the lower sections the floor of the trough appeared almost flat, as in Dhulough.

I have alluded to the sandy beaches at the head and on the north shore of the lough. The main stream through the alluvial valley at the head flows over a sandy bed, but how far the sandbank continues beneath the surface of the lake I am of course ignorant. Such a bank is, however, exceedingly well developed off, and mainly east of, the eastern stream on the north side. Here a depth of only 12 feet was found 300 yards from the shore, after which the slope becomes sudden; it may be even more sudden than the section indicates, for this was one of the interesting questions which came before us and had to be left uninvestigated. Another was that the western stream, from an immediately adjacent glen, brings down no such deposit, although rapid and of considerable volume; its mouth is rocky, and there is practically no shoal water off it.

I am indebted to Mr. E. Heawood for his practical interest in this work both before and after its execution.

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### LIEUT. BOYD ALEXANDER'S EXPEDITION THROUGH NIGERIA.\*

THE following communication has been received by the Secretary from Lieut. Boyd Alexander; it is dated "Lake Chad, October 30, 1904:"—

"A good deal has happened since I last wrote to you from Lokoja

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\* See *Journal*, vol. 24, p. 589. Since the above letter was written, the regrettable news of Capt. Claud Alexander's death has been received.