

BRUFF:

A market and post-town, and a parish, in the barony of Coshma, 11 ½ miles (S.S.E.) from Limerick and 105 ¼ (S.W.) from Dublin; containing 2932 inhabitants, of which number, 1772 are in the town. This appears to have been a place of importance at a very early period; a castle was built in the town and another at no great distance from it by the De Lacy family, in the reign of Henry 3rd. This family subsequently became tributary to the Fitzgeralds, and held the castle under the princes of Desmond, in all whose misfortunes they largely participated, especially during the reign of Elizabeth. On 4 April, 1600, a severe engagement took place here between Pierce De Lacy, governor of the castle, and some troops from the garrison of Kilmallock, under the command of Captain Slingsby, in which the former was defeated with the loss of 300 men; and on 18 April the Lord-President obtained possession of the castle, in which he placed a garrison of 140 men. In 1641 this place was the scene of a sanguinary battle between the English forces and the insurgents, in which the latter were victorious, and committed acts of great cruelty. In 1762 the Whiteboys assembled here in great numbers and committed outrages; and in 1786 they again visited the town, and on 15 July in that year, they burnt several houses and destroyed much valuable property. In 1793 a large body of the Defenders made a desperate effort to seize the town, but were repulsed by the 34th. Regiment of foot and many slain on both sides. In 1822 the Rockites assembled here in great numbers, and made an attempt to burn the church and several private houses, but were frustrated by the active and judicious exertions of the neighbouring gentry, aided by a large body of the military stationed in the town. The town, which, with the surrounding neighbourhood, was formerly the property of the Hartstonge family, and now forms part of the estate of the Earl of Limerick, is situated on the River Dawn, or Morning Star, and on the road from Limerick to Cork: it consists of one principal street and several smaller streets and lanes, and contains 314 houses. The market is on Friday; and fairs are held on 24 May, 23 July, 18 October and 28 November. A stipendiary magistrate resides at this place, which is a chief constabulary police station; and the quarter sessions are held here in January and June, and petty sessions every alternate Wednesday. The court-house is a large commodious building, and there is also a small but well-regulated bridewell.

The parish comprises 1264 statute acres, as apportioned under the tithe composition act: the land is of the best quality, producing abundant crops, though the system of agriculture is by no means good; the greater portion is meadow and pasture land, all resting upon limestone, which is extensively quarried for building, repairing the roads, and for agricultural uses. The principal seats are Rockbarton, the elegant residence of Lord Guillamore, near the town; Caher, of Lieutenant-Colonel O'Grady; Kilballyowen, of the De Courcy O'Grady; Uregare House, of Mrs. Gubbins; Green Park, of R. Ivers, Esq.; and Miltown, of G. Gubbins, Esq. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Limerick, and in the patronage of the bishop; the rectory is impropriate in the Earl of Kenmare. The tithes amount to £180, of which £120 is payable to the impropriator and £60 to the vicar. The church, a large edifice in the early English style, with a tower surmounted by a lofty octagonal spire of stone, contains an ancient monument of the Hartstonge family in rather a neglected condition: the chalice bears a curious inscription in Latin, recording its formation and the changes which it has undergone. The glebe-house, a neat little residence about a

half a mile from the town, is situated on an excellent glebe of 8 ½ acres, for which the vicar pays a rent of £25.6.11. per annum. In the R.C. divisions this parish is the head of a union or district, comprising also the parishes of Tullybracky, Grange, Meanas, Manister, and part of the parishes of Uregare, Glenogra, and Dromin; and containing three chapels, situated respectively at Bruff, Grange, and Meanas. The first is a handsome building, in the early English style, erected in 1833; the interior is well arranged, and the altar, of scagliola marble, is embellished with a very beautiful painting of the three Marys, by J. Haverty, Esq., a native artist; the building was commenced by the late R.C. incumbent, the Very Rev. Dr. Ryan, and completed by the R.C. dean of Limerick, the present parish priest. The male and female parochial school, in which are 20 boys and 20 girls, is chiefly supported by the vicar, by whom it was instituted in 1831. There are two pay schools, in which are about 200 children, and a school for adults. A few fragments of the ancient castle are still remaining; and not far distant are the foundations of an ancient friary. To the north-west of the town are some traces of Templebodeen, or Templeen, said to have been erected by the Knights Templars in 1284; foundations of buildings are frequently discovered.