According to some authorities, the *Brdini,* and to others, the *Scoti* were the earliest known inhabitants of this district. It was afterwards distinguished by the name of Kineal-Evgain, or Tyr-Owen, and was the territory of the O’Neills, descendants of Neal of the Nine Hostages, king of Ireland, and virtually sovereigns of the greatest part of the north of Ireland for several centuries after the Eng­lish settlement under Henry II. In a writ of Henry III., the head of the sept is styled king of Kenihιm or Tiroen. The chief scat of the family was at Dungannon, which, though several times taken and sacked by the English forces in their attempts to reduce the country to obedience to the royal authority, continued to be so until the close of the reign of Elizabeth, when it was burned by Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone, to prevent its falling into the hands of Lord Mountjoy, who then commanded the queen’s forces in Ireland. The insurrection of 1641 may be said to have had its commencement in this county, by the cap­ture of Charlemont Fort and Dungannon by Sir Phelim O'Neill; and in 1646 the parliamentary forces under Ge­neral Munroe received a signal defeat from Hugh Roe O’Neill at Benburb. During the greater part of the war between King William and King James, this county was in the possession of the forces of the latter, and suffered much from the partisan warfare carried on there, chiefly by the townsmen of Enniskillen. It was also here that the voluntecr convention of Dungannon assembled in 1782, and passed a series βf resolutions expressive of their opi­nion of the right of the Irish parliament to make laws in­dependently of that of Great Britain.

The surface is much varied, mostly hilly, with but little levcl ground. In the north it rises into the mountain range of Sperin, forming the boundary between the county and that of Londonderry. Its greatest elevations are Mullaghcarne, 1590 feet; Straw Mountain, 2085; Muinard, 2064 ; and Sawell, 2236. South of these is the lower ridge of Slievekirk, Slievemore, and Munterlony, whose highest point is 1432 feet. Mullaghcarne, north of Omagh, is 1778 feet high ; Slieve-Gallion, in the north-east, 1730 ; Croagh, west, 1260 ; the mountains south of Clogher, which form its boundary towards Monaghan, 1265 feet. Two mountains, detached from the main group, and si­tuate on each side of the Mourne river, are distinguished by the popular names of Bessy Bell and Mary Gray. The former name has been supposed to owe its origin to the pagan rites celebrated on its summit to the god Bel or Beal ; for the latter no conjecture has been ha­zarded. The eastern districts are chiefly flat, declining towards Lough Neagh. The valleys, several of which are very romantic, serve as the channels to the minor streams, whose confluence forms the river Foyle. The principal arc, the Mourne, Munterlony, Owenrcagh, Owen- kelloe, Derg, from Lough Derg in Donegal, and the Dennet. The Foyle forms a small portion of the west­ern boundary, the Blackwater a considerable part of the southern, and the Ballinderry of the north-eastern. There are but few lakes, and those very small. Lough Fae, at the foot of Slieve-Gallion, and Lough Creevy, are the largest.

The substratum of the northern mountainous district is mica slate, interspersed with primary limestone in small de­tached portions. To the north-west is yellow sandstone with conglomerate, which shows itself also in the central part near Omagh, and again in the south-west, where it plunges into Fermanagh. A bed of granite, enclosed in crystalline greenstone trap, extends from Slieve Gallion nearly to Omagh. The formation across the county from Lough Erne to Lough Neagh is the old red sandstone and sandstone conglomerate. In the south and south-east the carboniferous or mountain limestone appears ; and near the borders of Lough Neagh are lyas, green sand, and chalk,

with new red sandstone. In the sandstone formation in this part, fossil fish have been found, with the characteristic features of their various species strongly marked. Near Cookstown a great number of organic remains has been discovered. Coal is raised in large quantities in the east­ern part, between Dungannon and Lough Neagh, in a dis­trict formed of a collection of low bills, not more than a hundred feet in perpendicular elevation, with steep sides and flattened summits. There are two principal fields; Coal Island, measuring about eight miles by three, and comprehending an area of 1200 acres ; and Annahone, about a mile each way, and containing 500 acres. The coal, which is of the bituminous or blazing kind, like that of the west of Scotland, burning rapidly, and with a bright abundant flamc, rests upon beds of fire-clay, sandstone, or blue clunch. The shale has impressions of vegetable sub­stances, among which are reeds of very large dimensions. The quantity of coal raised is abundant in proportion to the extent of the field ; but it is difficult to be worked, from the greatness of the angle formed by the layers of coal in many places, which increases the difficulty of drainage, and also from the soft nature of the bottom or flooring, which re­quires many precautions to prevent the passages from clos­ing. Indications of coal have been perceived at Drunquin, to the north-west of Omagh, but no practical advantage has yet been taken of the discovery. Iron ore and potters clay are found in the coal districts. A range of escars ex­tends across the southern part of the county, from near Dungannon to Five-mile-town ; and the ridges are in some places as regularly arranged as if formed by the hand of man. There are many small bogs dispersed through the county.

The soil in the parts adjacent to Lough Neagh is alluvial, of considerable depth, and based upon limestone. The low­lands along the Blackwater are extremely fertile, well tim­bered, and afford many prospects of great beauty. The valley of the Foyle, which belongs to this county, is also very fertile. The mountainous tracts to the north have a shallow soil, resting either on a tenacious clay, or on bog, which impedes the passage of the water, and renders the land moist, cold, and unproductive. Much of the central parts present tracts of unprofitable bog and heath. The southern districts are well wooded.

The progress of population during the last hundred years is as follows, according to the authorities stated :

Year. Authority. Number.

1760 De Burgo 76,278

1792 Beaufort 159,000

1812 Parliamentary census 250,74 6

1821 Ditto 261,865

1831 Ditto 302,943

the proportion of population to the entire surface of the county is, according to the latest of these statements, as 1 to 2Ί2, and to the entire of the cultivated land as 1 to 1∙63. There is therefore one individual to somewhat more than every two acres of land in general, and to every 14/5ths of an acre of productive land. According to the returns of the Commissioners of Public Instruction in 1834, which, being taken by dioceses instead of counties, afford but an approximation to strict accuracy, the total population was 312,500, of which 69,320 were members of the established church, 69,620 Protestant Dissenters, and the remaining 173,560 Roman Catholics. The proportions of the differ­ent persuasions, the total population being taken as unity, arc therefore 0∙222, 0∙223, and 0∙555 nearly ; whence it appears that the Roman Catholic population is more than equal to that of the Protestant, which also is almost equally divided between the established church and the Dissen­ters. The number of children receiving instruction in pub­lic schools, according to the population returns of 1821,