coalfield, the summits being capped by the Millstone Grit series; while on the south, bounded by a fault, rises the Old Red Sandstone range of the Curlew Hills. Lead was mined at Ballysadare, and the clay-ironstone from the east of the county was at one time smelted.

*Industries.—*There is considerable variety both in the character of the soil and in the agricultural advancement in different parts of the county. In some parts it is a light sandy loam resting on a freestone bottom, and in the lower districts a rich and deep mould prevails resting on a substratum of limestone. Owing to the moist­ness of the climate cattle feeding is found to be the most remunerative method of farming, as may be gathered from the increasing or well- maintained numbers of cattle, sheep and poultry. Oats and potatoes are the principal crops, but the acreage devoted to them decreases, and the proportion of tillage to pasturage is roughly as 1 to 3½. Coarse woollens and linens are manufactured for home consumption, and there are tanneries, distilleries, and breweries in the principal towns. A considerable general trade is carried on at the ports of Ballina (on the Moy) and Sligo. The fisheries on the coast are valuable, and there are important salmon fisheries at the mouths of the rivers. The town of Sligo is the chief centre.

The Sligo branch of the Midland Great Western railway enters the county from the S.E., with a branch S.W. from Kilfree to Ballaghaderreen in county Mayo; the Limerick and Sligo line of the Great Southern and Western enters from S.W. ; and the Sligo, Leitrim and Northern counties, from Enniskillen (county Fermanagh), and Manor Hamilton (county Leitrim), from the N.E. These lines unite at Collooney and share the railway from this junction to the town of Sligo.

*Population and Administration.—*The population (94,416 in 1891, 84,083 in 1901) decreases at a rate considerably above the average of the Irish counties, and emigration is heavy. Of the total about 90% are Roman Catholics and about 7% Protestant Episcopalians. About 88% is rural population. The county town is Sligo (pop. 10,870) ; Ballymote and Tobercurry (or Tubbercurry) are small inland market towns. The county is divided into six baronies. Assizes are held at Sligo and quarter-sessions at Ballymote, Easky and Sligo. For parliamentary representation the county has since 1885 formed two divisions (North and South), each returning a member. The county is mainly in the Protestant diocese of Kilmore, and in the Roman Catholic dioceses of Ardagh, Achonry, Elphin and Killala.

*History.—*The county was created by Sir Henry Sydney in 1579. On Carrowmore, between Sligo and Ballysadare, there is a remarkable collection of ancient stone monuments (see Sligo, town). At Drumcliffe (5 m. N. of Sligo) are the only round tower remaining in the county and a beautiful Celtic cross' 13 ft. in height. The principal monastic ruins are the abbey of St Fechan at Ballysadare, with a church of the 11th or 12th century; the abbey of Sligo; and a remarkable group of buildings on the island Inishmurray, which include a cashel or walled enclosure; three oratories, one of which contains an oaken figure in ecclesiastical garb; two holy wells; and also altars, pillar stones, inscribed slabs (one of which is unique among those of its kind in Ireland in having an inscription partly in Latin), and several examples of beehive cells. This settlement is associated with Molaise, a saint of the early 6th century (not identical with the Molaise of Devenish in Loch Erne), and the remains still attract pilgrims, who revere the oaken figure mentioned as an image of the saint, though it is more probably the figurehead of a vessel.

**SLIGO, a** municipal borough, seaport and market town, and the county town of county Sligo, Ireland. Pop. (1901) 10,870. It lies at the head of an arm of Sligo Bay on the north-west coast, on the river Garvogue, 134¼ m. N.W. from Dublin by the Midland Great Western railway. This company shares with the Great Southern and Western and the Sligo, Leitrim, and Northern Counties railways the line to Collooney Junction, 6½ m. S., from which the former runs S. to Limerick and the latter E. to Ennis­killen. The situation of Sligo is beautiful; the bay is separated from the fine Lough Gill by less than 4 m. of a richly wooded valley, with flanking hills exceeding 1000 ft. in elevation. Sligo takes rank with Galway and Limerick as one of the three principal ports of the west coast of Ireland. Regular communication by steamer is maintained with Liverpool and Glasgow, and a con­siderable export trade is carried on in grain, flour, pork and cattle; while coals, iron, timber and provisions are imported. There is a depth on the harbour bar of 16 ft. at low water, and there are commodious quays and basins. Harbour commissioners control the port. Brewing, flour-milling and saw-milling are the chief industries, and there is an important butter-market. Monthly fairs are held. Sligo is a centre of salmon and sea­fishing industries.

The Dominican Abbey, founded in 1252 by Maurice Fitzgerald, Lord-Justice, is one of the finest monastic ruins in Ireland. It was partly destroyed by fire in 1414 and again in 1642. Three sides of the cloisters remain, and the lofty quadrangular tower at the junction of the nave and chancel is entire. The east window is of the date of the original structure. The principal modern church is the Roman Catholic cathedral (1869) for the diocese of Elphin in the Norman style with a finely sculptured doorway. There is also a Roman Catholic college.

A castle was built at Sligo by Maurice Fitzgerald in 1242, which in 1270 was taken and destroyed by O’Donnel; in 1310 it was rebuilt by Richard, earl of Ulster, and was again partly destroyed in 1369 and 1394. Of this and the walls with which the town was fortified there are no remains. Early in the reign of James I. the town received a market and two annual fairs; in 1613 it was incorporated and received the privileges of a borough; and in 1621 it received a charter of the staple. In 1641 it was besieged by the Parliamentary forces under Sir Charles Coote, but was afterwards evacuated, and occupied by the Royalists till the termination of the war. In 1688 it declared in favour of James II., and, after being captured by the Ennis­killeners, was retaken by General Sarsfield, but ultimately surrendered to the earl of Granard. The borough was dis­franchised in 1870. Under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 it retains its mayor and corporation, but the latter has practically the status of an urban district council.

The country neighbouring to Sligo presents fine coast scenery, west coast of Ireland, while inland it is wild and mountainous. Three m. S.W. of the town, on Carrowmore, is a remarkable collection of megalithic remains, including cromlechs, stone circles, and burial cairns, which has been taken to mark the site of the traditional battle of North Moytura. On Knocknarea (1078 ft.), south of Sligo, is a huge cairn, which tradition sets down as the burial-place of Queen Mab (Meave of Connaught). Five m. N. of Sligo is Drumcliffe, with its round tower and Celtic cross. Rosses, on Sligo Bay, is a favourite resort. Sligo is a centre for salmon and trout fishing.

**SLING** (from Μ. Eng. *slingen,* to fling, throw with a jerk, Icel. *slyngva,* cf. Ger. *schlingen,* to twist), an implement for casting missiles, also from its resemblance in form to the implement, a hanging loop used as a support for a wounded limb, a chain with hooks used for raising or lowering heavy goods or objects, &c. The sling as a weapon is probably the earliest form of device known to mankind by which an increase of force and range was given to the arm of a thrower of missiles. Sling stones from the stone age have been frequently found (see Arms and Armour). The form of the weapon is of two kinds; the sling proper consists of a small strap or socket of leather or hide to which two cords are attached; the slinger holds the two ends in one hand, whirls the socket and missile rapidly round the head and, loosing one cord sharply, despatches the missile; the other type is the staff sling, in which the sling itself is attached to a short staff, held in both hands. This was used for heavier missiles especially in siege operations during the middle ages. There are many refer­ences to slings and to slingers in the Bible; the left-handed slingers of Benjamin were famous (Judges xx. 16). The Assyrian monuments show the sling of the ordinary type and slingers were used in the ancient Egyptian army, but not before the 8th century b.c. The sling (Gr. *σφevδbvη,*Lat. *funda)* is not men­tioned in Homer; Herodotus (vii. 158) speaks of the slingers in the army offered by Gelon to serve against the Persians; it seems to have been a weapon chiefly used by barbarian troops. The Acarnanians, however, were expert slingers (Thuc. ii. 81), and so also were the Achaeans, who later invented the sling which discharged a shaft with an iron bolt head (Livy xlii. 65, from Polybius). In the Roman army by the time of the Punic Wars the slingers *(funditores)* were auxiliaries from Greece, Syria and Africa. The Balearic islanders, who were in Hannibal’s army, were always famous as slingers. In medieval times the sling was much used in the Frankish army, especially in defending trenches, while the staff-sling was used against fortifications