



Extract from Samuel Lewis' Topographical Directory 1837

COBH or COVE, commonly called the COVE of CORK, a sea-port, market, and post-town, partly in the parish of CLONMELL, but chiefly in that of TEMPLEROBIN, in the Great Island, barony of BARRYMORE, county of CORK, and province of MUNSTER; containing 6996 inhabitants. By way of Passage, crossing the ferry, it is only 9 1/2 miles (E. S. E.) from Cork; but overland, by way of Foaty, it is 14 1/4 miles from that city, and 133 miles (S. W. by S.) from Dublin. It is situated on the north side of Cork harbour, in lat. 54° 51', and lon. 8° 18' 45". The progress of Cove has been very rapid. So recently as 1786 it was a small village, consisting of a few scattered houses inhabited by the tide-waiters and pilots of Cork, and some miserable cabins occupied by fishermen; at present it is a large and handsome town, comprising nine large and several smaller streets. The great increase of its population principally arose from its convenient situation for the shipping in Cork harbour, in which, during the French war,

600 sail of merchant vessels have been at anchor at one time, and 400 sail have left the harbour under convoy in one day. These great fleets always lay immediately in front of the present town, and many of them within half a cable's length of the shore. It has also been greatly benefited by the erection of Carlisle and Camden forts; Martello towers on Great Island, Haulbowline, and Ringaskiddy; and by the bomb-proof artillery barracks on Spike Island. In addition to this, Haulbowline was fortified and made the ordnance depot, and the Lords of the Admiralty made it the only naval victualling depot in Ireland; and Rocky Island was excavated and made the chief gunpowder magazine for the southern part of the kingdom. It was also the place of embarkation for troops ordered on Foreign Service, and the station of an admiral. The great expenditure of money for these works, and for the supply of provisions and other requisites for the shipping in the harbour, caused many persons to settle here, and the number was increased by the visits of invalids and persons of fortune, who were attracted by the salubrity of its climate and the beauty of its situation in the finest harbour in Europe. Cove is built on the side of a clay-slate hill, on the south shore of Great Island, which rises from the water's edge, and being very steep, the streets, which are parallel to the shore, rise tier above tier, and being backed by the high grounds of the island, present a very picturesque view from the entrance to the harbour. The principal streets are nearly level, and those that connect them wind so gradually as greatly to diminish the apparent steepness of their ascent. The houses in the main streets are mostly large and well built of stone, and many of them faced with slate; the streets are all wide, clean, well paved, and abundantly supplied with water from springs in the clay-slate. The principal market is on Saturday, but there is one held daily, which is abundantly supplied with fish, vegetables, meat, &c. A large and handsome market-house, consisting of a centre and wings, was erected by the late J. Smith Barry, Esq., in 1806: the centre is appropriated to the sale of fish and vegetables, the west wing to the storing and sale of potatoes, and the east wing is fitted up as shambles. The post is daily and yielded revenue of £977 when the last return was made to parliament. There is a constabulary police barrack; and a chief coast-guard station, the head of the district, which includes Cove, Ballycraheen, Poor Head, the lighthouse, East Ferry, Cork, Crosshaven, and Robert's Cove. Petty sessions are held every week; and there is a small prison of two cells for the temporary confinement of offenders. Near the western entrance to the town is a large and handsome pier, erected in 1805, at a cost of £20,000, and connected with it are very capacious quays. Here is a building called the Boarding Station, occupied by tide-waiters and other custom-house officers of Cork. The views round Cove are extremely beautiful. Beyond the harbour, on the east, are Rostellan, Castle-Mary, and the vale of Cloyne, with its ancient cathedral and round tower; to the south is the capacious bay, with its numerous ships, noble entrance, lighthouse, and forts; on the west is Ringaskiddy with its Martello tower, Carrigaline with its noble estuary, and the broad entrance to the Lee; and on the north are the high lands of Great Island, which shelter the town of Cove in that direction. Near the town are several elegant mansions, marine villas, &c, which are more particularly noticed in the article on Great Island. The celebrated regatta of Cove takes place in July or August: the prizes are numerous and valuable, and many of the best yachts in Ireland, with some from England and Scotland, attend its celebration. Near the custom-house quay is a splendid edifice in the Italian style, built by the Yacht Club and occupied by its members during the regatta season. The parish church of the union of Clonmel and Templerobin is on an elevated site in the centre of the town: it is a large and elegant edifice, in the early English style of architecture, with stained glass windows, and was built in 1810, by aid of a loan of £2000 from the late Board of First Fruits. Near it is a R. C. chapel, which was enlarged in 1835. There is also a small place of worship for Wesleyan Methodists. The parochial schools are large neat buildings, erected by subscription on land given by Lord Middleton, who is an occasional donor; they are under the Kildare-place Society, but are supported by subscription. An infants' school has existed here about three years, and is supported by subscription: a school-house is being built for it near the parochial schools; and a very large building for a national school is also in progress of erection, partly at the expense of the National Board, and partly by a bequest of £25 per annum left by W. Lynch, Esq., in 1831. There are a fever hospital and a dispensary, and a military bathing hospital for the province of Munster. There is a parochial alms-house for twelve poor Protestants, each of whom receives 2s. 6d. weekly from the Sunday collections in the church, with coal and clothing during the winter, from a bequest of £100 by the late Miss Spratt. A Benevolent Society, and a loan fund for poor mechanics, have also been established