

**THE PHYSICAL GEOLOGY
& GEOGRAPHY
OF IRELAND**

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The Physical Geology & Geography of Ireland by Edward Hull

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EDWARD HULL

**THE PHYSICAL GEOLOGY
& GEOGRAPHY
OF IRELAND**

THE
PHYSICAL GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY
OF
IRELAND

SKETCH
GEOLOGICAL MAP
OF
IRELAND



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INSCRIPTION.

To the Right Hon. the EARL OF ENNISKILLEN, D.C.L., F.R.S.

MY DEAR LORD ENNISKILLEN,

To you who have taken so honoured and leading a position amongst the Geologists of Ireland, and have contributed so largely to the advancement of Palæontology, especially in the department of Ichthyology, I venture to inscribe this little volume, with feelings of the highest esteem and regard.

I remain, my dear Lord,

Your faithful servant,

THE AUTHOR.

5 Reglan Road, Dublin:
October 31, 1877.



INTRODUCTORY.

IRELAND has been designated by a distinguished German naturalist 'The Land of Giant Stags and Giant Causeways,'¹ thus graphically naming the natural peculiarities for which this country is widely known amongst foreigners and students of Natural History. For, although the remains of the *Megaceros* are by no means exclusively restricted to Ireland, but occur at intervals over England and Western Europe, they have been found in such profusion in some parts of this country that the specific name *Hibernicus*² has been proposed by Professor Owen as pointing to the region of the 'Giant Stag's' favourite haunts, and where it was free to

¹ Dr. Ferd. Roemer commences a short sketch of his tour throughout Ireland in 1876, thus:—'Ich war in diesem Herbst im Lande des Riesendamms und der Riesenhirsche. Schon lange hatte ich gewünscht, die grüne Insel kennen zu lernen.' Neu. Jahrbuch f. Min. Geol. u. Palæon. (1877.)

² 'Palæontology,' 2nd edit., p. 405.

roam unmolested by many of the fierce carnivores which infested the lands on the opposite side of St. George's Channel.

Those, however, who have studied the physical history of this country are well aware that it is full of interest to the student of Nature, and that it offers many special problems for solution. The relative ages and mode of formation of its mountains, the origin of its Central Plain, of its river-valleys, and of its numerous lakes ; its volcanic phenomena, the evidences of extensive glaciation at a former period exhibited by its rock-surfaces, its eskers and extensive moorlands—all these will repay careful study, and will form the subject of the following pages.

In order to lay a solid foundation for the more recent phenomena to be treated of, it will be advisable first to present a brief sketch of the solid geology of the country. Fortunately, geological science is becoming so generally a subject of study that it is likely to be ere long the property of the many, rather than, as at present, of the few ; and along with

the extension of knowledge of its general principles there is being diffused sounder views regarding the mode in which the outward configuration of the earth's surface has been brought about. Thanks to the labours of the modern school of geologists, the worthy disciples of Playfair and Hutton (if not of still older philosophers), it is generally recognised that the features of the landscape are due to the action of water, under its varied forms and modes of working; whether as rain, rivers, torrents, ocean-waves, snow and ice, operating on rocks of varying composition, degrees of hardness, and kinds of structure. We now know that the form of the loftiest mountain equally with that of the slightest eminence, the extent of the widest plain equally with that of the narrowest gorge, the rugged coast-line with its bold headlands and deep indentations, or the featureless shore which descends almost imperceptibly into the sea—all owe their existence to the great sculptor, WATER;—slowly, almost imperceptibly, working on the rocks which have been placed within its reach, where they have been elevated into dry land by the