

The Carboniferous Limestone of County Clare (Ireland)

James Archibald Douglas.

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Abstract

I. Introduction.

The work of examining the Carboniferous Limestone of County Clare was undertaken with a view to ascertaining whether the zonal sequence of the fauna, established by Dr. Arthur Vaughan for contemporaneous rocks in the Bristol district, and since proved to hold good for other localities in Great Britain, was also applicable to these beds in the West of Ireland. This district, which forms the western limit of the great limestone-plain of Central Ireland, furnishes one of the most typical examples of a limestone country in the British Isles, and it is strange that it has not attracted more attention from Irish geologists. Although Dr. Wheelton Hind has studied the overlying shales and shown them to be the equivalent of the Pendleside Series, the fauna of the limestone has up to the present remained undescribed.

A brief allusion to the limestone in the extreme south of the county is given in the recent Survey Memoir on the Geology of the Limerick District; but, with the exception of accounts of cave-explorations, there are, so far as I am aware, no papers bearing on the geology of Eastern Clare of more recent date than the original Memoirs published by the Irish Geological Survey in 1860 and 1863.

Mapping, at that time, was executed by sole reference to the lithological characters of the rocks, and little attention seems to have been paid to their fossil contents.