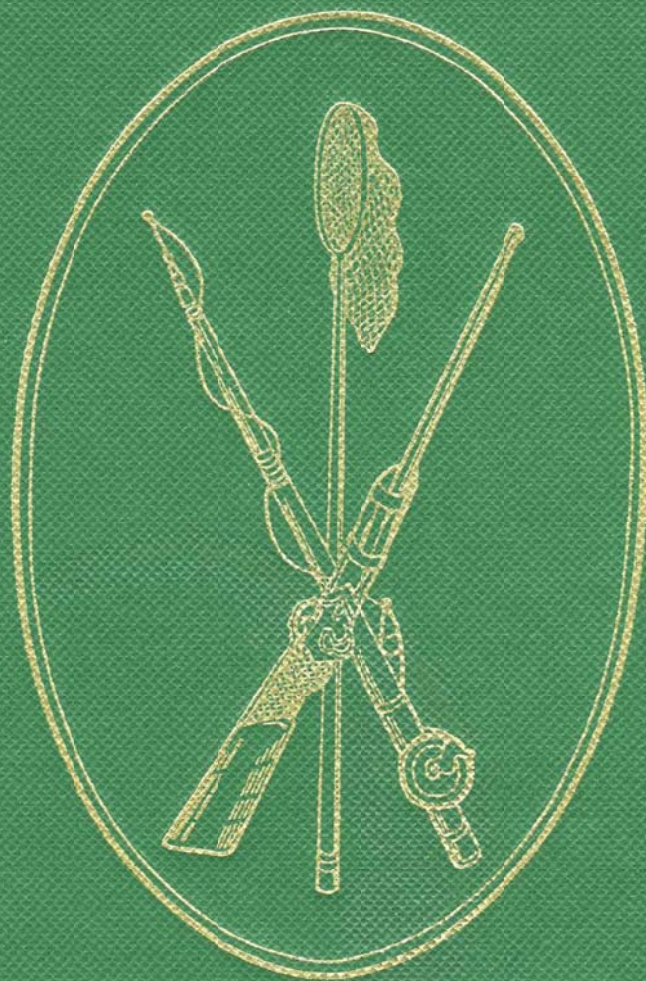


*Wild Sports of the
West of Ireland*



by
W.H. Maxwell

Published by **ASHFORD PRESS PUBLISHING** 1986
1 CHURCH ROAD
SHEDFIELD
HAMPSHIRE
SO3 2HW

First published in 1892
This new edition 1986

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Maxwell, W.H.

Wild sports on the west of Ireland: also
legendary tales, folk lore, local customs
and natural history.—(The Field library)

1. Hunting—Ireland

I. Title II. Series

799.292'4 SK191

ISBN 0-907069-68-1

PRINTED AND BOUND IN GREAT BRITAIN.

methods of taking fish will be here found successful, and the lakes of Westmeath will soon be rivalled by the Loughs of Mayo.

Of the greater western lakes, Conn and Carra belong to Mayo; Corrib to Galway; and Mask lies between both counties. The most northerly, Lough Conn, is about nine miles long by two or three in breadth. Part of its shores are beautifully wooded; and where the lower and upper lakes unite, the channel is crossed by a bridge of one arch, called the Pontoon; and there the scenery is indeed magnificent.

Lough Carra is smaller than Conn: but as a sheet of water nothing can be more beautiful; and everything that the painter delights to fancy may here be realised. Islands and peninsulas, with rich overhanging woods, a boundless range of mountain masses in the distance, and ruins in excellent keeping—all these form a splendid study for the artist's pencil.

Mask communicates with Carra, and their united waters discharge themselves into Lough Corrib by a very curious subterraneous channel at Cong. Lough Corrib is largest of all; it stretches twenty miles to its southern extremity at Galway, where, through a bold rocky river, it discharges its waters into the Atlantic. Its breadth is very variable, ranging from two to twelve miles. Besides its singular connection with the Mayo lakes by the underground channel at Cong, Lough Corrib produces a rare species of mussel [Appendix, No. XIII.], in which pearls are frequently discovered. Many of them are said to afford beautiful specimens of this valuable gem.

The smaller lakes, which are so profusely scattered over the surface of this country, vary in the species of fish which they respectively produce, as much as they do in their own natural size and character. Some of them afford trout, others pike only, and many are stocked with both. That this union cannot long subsist, I should be inclined to infer from one remarkable circumstance, and it is a convincing proof of the rapid destruction which the introduction of pike into a trout lake will occasion. Within a short distance of Castlebar there is a small bog-lake, called Derreens; and ten years ago it was celebrated for its numerous and well-sized trout. Accidentally pike effected a passage into the Lough from the Minola river, and now the trout are extinct, or at least none of them are caught or seen. Previous to the intrusion of the pike, half a dozen trout would be killed in an evening in