Like other districts around the city of Limerick, Corbally has, for the past sixty years, been undergoing a gradual transformation. Houses have spread everywhere. Up to the thirties, it was a sparsely populated rural district; today it is a considerable town in itself.

Before the building of Athlunkard and Park bridges, the whole area was, more or less, isolated. The land around the canal and the area now known as Healy's Field was an impassable morass, while the tides and flood waters of the Shannon swept up to the gardens of the residences along the Mill Road. The only land approach to Corbally was by a narrow road which was a continuation of the present St. Patrick's Road. This can be traced through Singland Cross, Rhebogue Cross and the canal bank (on both sides), and through Lower Park. A smaller road linked Pennywell Lane with the ferry that operated near the present O'Dwyer Bridge. This road was transformed by mother nature to a green velvet pathway, lined with beautiful hawthorns. It was known to many generations of local folk as Paddy's Hedge, and was probably the most frequented 'lovers' lane' around the city for two hundred years. In my own time, it was also the happy hunting ground for some of the clergy from St. John's Cathedral, who often put the courting couples to flight.

A public house - probably a shebeen - stood in this boreen about 250 yards from the canal bank, at a point where it turned a sharp angle. Perhaps the proprietor of this alehouse gave his name to the place. Ha'penny well was situated on the canal bank at the entrance to the boreen.

Sweeping down from the high ground of the 'Bun Ard' are the water meadows of Lanahrone, partly taken over by the splendid houses which were built at the end of the nineteen forties by Irish Estates Ltd. The Clare ferry operated near the site of Athlunkard Bridge.

A radical change in the social order of Corbally and Park took place in 1757 when the Shannon Navigation Canal cut through the two roads which served as the only avenues to the city. The whole area became an island, bounded by the Shannon, the Abbey River and the canal, and having only a small hump-backed bridge over the latter waterway at Madden's Lock to connect up the old road with Pennywell Lane.

**The Bridges**

The construction of Park Bridge during the terror of 1798 proved a great boon and opened up the delights of Corbally to many people for the first time. The building of the beautiful Athlunkard Bridge by the Pain brothers in 1830 provided the second avenue from the city to Co. Clare. Even before the building of the bridges, efforts were made to contain the tides and flood waters of the Shannon by raising strong embankments between the Lax Weir and the site of Park Bridge.

After the building of Athlunkard Bridge, the citizens started their picnic excursions to the Church Fields - the area downstream of the bridge on the right bank - a wholesome amenity that can never more be enjoyed as a result of an ill-planned scheme of houses which spoilt the tranquility of the place and ruined a heartening panorama of green and silver, stretching to the foot of the Clare hills, with the tapering spire of St. Patrick's, at Parteen-a-Lax, lending a pastoral touch to the splendid scene.

**The Mills**

The special features that gave so much character to Corbally were the mills and the Lax Weir. The former were demolished during the Second World War years and no trace remains. There were two mills close to each other. The old mill was built by the Bindon family, who also had a fine mansion close by. It had an undershot wheel that was worked by a stream which owed nothing of its forces to a milldam, the natural fall of the river having been sufficient to provide constant power. The tailrace, which curved to the river almost directly opposite the