BARRINGTON'S HOSPITAL AND THE MONT DE PIETE.

Until this water-colour was discovered it was not known who the architect of Barrington's Hospital was. Even now I have been unable to find out anything of the Architect, W. O'Hara, though his design for the Mont de Piete shows him to have been a more than competent one.

Barrington's Hospital, founded by Sir Joseph Barrington, Bart., assisted by his sons, Mathew, Daniel, Croker and Samuel, was opened for the reception of patients on 5th of November, 1831.

The Mont de Piete or charitable pawn office was built in 1837 and was founded on the plan of those of the same name on the Continent. In explaining the objects of the concern, Mathew Barrington informed the meeting that there were then 25 pawn offices in the city, taking in 735,056 pledges in the year, out of which the owners make a profit: (1) on tickets, which the Mont de Piete proposed to abolish altogether; (2) on affidavits for lost tickets, which charges the Mont de Piete proposed also to abolish, and (3) on the interest, amounting to about 50%.

The Establishment was not a success, though they made a profit in the first few years. Eventually, through gross neglect, it fell from its original purposes and was converted into a Polic Barracks. The building was dismantled some time towards the end of the last century.

R.H.

ANCIENT BURIAL CUSTOM.

I witnessed an interesting burial custom at Templeachally (O.S. spelling) Grave Yard, Ballina, Killarney, on the 81st October.

When the grave had been filled in after the burial a rough herb of fairly large stones was placed around the sides and on questioning a mourner he informed me that this was a very old custom not now in common use. He explained that the stones were originally placed in a loose pile all over the grave to prevent wolves from getting at the corpse. Prior to entering the grave yard the coffin was placed on the ground, just outside the gate, with a view to putting the wolves off the scent.

I have never heard of this custom before which looks like a survival from early times. It may be of some interest to readers of the Journal.—A. B. KILLEEN.

THE OLDEST BOOK IN CASHEL LIBRARY.

By R. Wyse Jackson.

The oldest book in the Cashel Diocesan Library is a remarkable little MSS volume, containing 348 pages of writing. It is bound in oak vellum—covered boards, and measures three-and-a-half inches by five. There is evidence from the Paschal Table on page three that the date of writing is probably 1188 A.D. Internal evidence suggests further that it may, perhaps, have belonged originally to Canterbury, for it contains the IMAGO MUNDI ET REGULE DE COMPUTO of HONORIUS AUGUSTODUNENSIS, which appeared as Number 175 in the earliest (1170 A.D.) Catalogus of Christ Church, Canterbury.

Its contents are very various, ranging, among many other matters, from a map of the world (showing the Terrestrial Paradise beyond India), through arithmetical, musical and philosophical treatises, to the Romulus version of Aesop's Fables and Pythagoras' method for deciding whether a sick man will recover. In short, it suggests a compendium of universal knowledge. The space of a short note does not allow of a full abstract of its contents, but one entry deserves to be quoted in full.

This is a note in later legal hand of regulations issued in 1281 A.D., by Archbishop Pechen, in the Council of Lambeth, and by Archbishop Walter Gray, of York, in 1250 A.D. This is worth printing as a picture of the details of mediaeval church furnishing:

"There were disputes between rectors of parishes and their parishioners, touching the ornaments of the church, and we find that it was required of the parish to provide the chalice, the principal mass vestments of the Church—a chasuble, a clean alb, an amyt, an mantle, a girdle, two towels, a cross for procession, a lesser cross for the dead, a bier, a cense pot, a lanthorn with bell, a Lent veil, manuals, banners, hells, vessel for holy water, an oscillatory for the pax, Easter taper with a candlestick,
bells in the steeple with ropes, fonts with lock and key, reparations for the body of the church, within and without, as well in altars as images, glass windows, with the enclosure of the church yard."

NOTE ON OLD TIMBER ROAD EXCAVATED LIMERICK-DUBLIN MAIN ROAD, ANNAHOLTY, NEAR LIMERICK.

The following is a brief note on an old timber road excavated in bog in connection with the reconstruction of the main Limerick-Dublin road at Annaholty, for a distance between 9.6 miles and 10.2 miles from the centre of Limerick City.

The existing road constructed of gravel and macadam, 4ft. to 5ft. thick, laid horizontally over the bog, is now being replaced with a concrete slab laid on a vertical (sag) curve, thereby necessitating some six feet of excavation. This excavation, which was carried out with a dragline excavator was complete when the writer inspected the site, and a detailed examination of the timber road in situ was not possible. The re-alignment of the road exposed approximately 20 yards of the old timber road, but it is believed that this construction underlies the macadam road throughout the full bog length. A typical cross-section is shown on fig. 1. It will be seen that the timbers were covered with 2 to 3ft. of what appeared to be undisturbed (natural) bog. The portion of the timber road removed was not straight, and meandered from one side of the macadam carriageway to the other.

The main timbers consisted of whole trees or branches, 6in. to 1ft. in diameter, laid side by side (fig 2). The length of each unit varied from about 5 to 7ft. The ends showed evidence of having been half cut with an axe-like instrument and then broken by bending. In some cases the ends were roughly pointed. In most instances the bark had been stripped or rotted away, but traces still adhered to a few of the smaller-diameter units. The timbers were soft and waterlogged when removed and bore no discernible marks of wheels.

A number of other small pieces of timber was recovered including wedges (fig. 3) and pegs (fig. 4). The purpose or arrangement of which were not clearly established mainly because of the disturbance due to the method of excavation. In contrast to the main timbers, these small pieces were extremely hard and unaffected by water. The pegs which occurred in large numbers appeared to have been pointed with a knife-like tool, while the wedges showed evidence of having been dressed with an axe or edge-like instrument.

In the event of excavations being undertaken at a later date, the writer will be able to locate at least one point where the timber road in position protrudes a few feet outside the edge of the new concrete slab.

The road works are being carried out by the South of Ireland Asphalt Coy., on behalf of the Limerick County Engineer. Commenced in October, 1950, the work should continue until the early part of December, 1950. The writer was on the site during the week-ending 21/10/’50.

E. T. HANRAHAN, 28/10/’50.