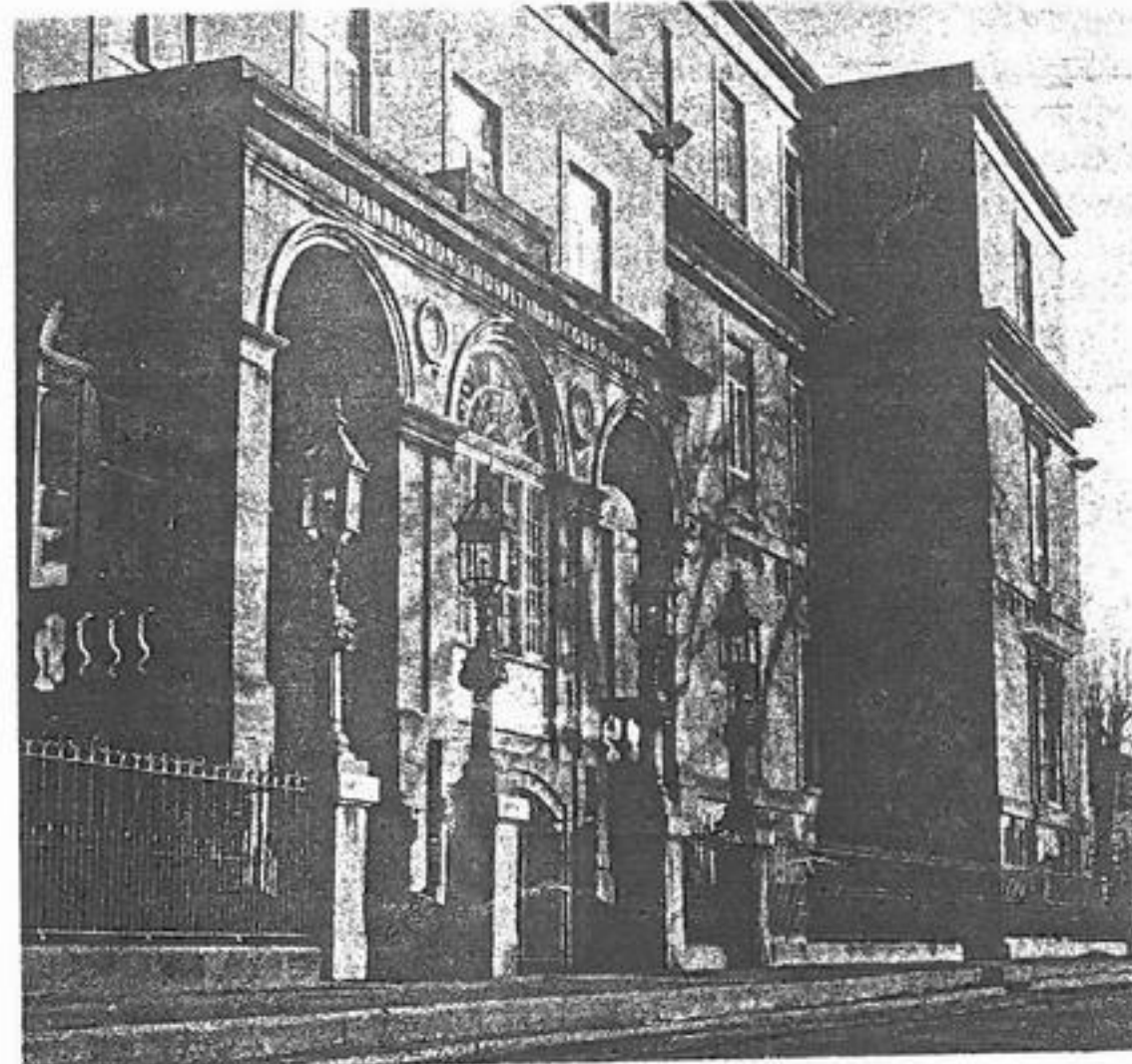year.

THE COUNTY INFIRMARY was opened by Sylvester O'Halloran and Giles Vandeleur, two noted surgeons of the day, as a four-bed hospital in 1759. It was located in three small houses on Little Island and was conducted as a charity. Other people soon became involved in the project and additional finance was required for expansion.

THE COUNTY HOSPITAL developed from the infirmary but used the former title to benefit from an act in favour of county hospitals. Edmond Sexton Pery conveyed some ground, with the ruins of a former work-house on it, in St. Francis Abbey, to the trustees, Charles Smyth and Dean Hoare, at the yearly rent of one peppercorn in 1765. Lady Hartstonge contributed heavily to the erection of a new hospital capable of holding upwards of forty beds. Sylvester O'Halloran was retained as the officially appointed surgeon: he had given his services free in the infirmary; but Giles Vandeleur did not live long enough to see the new hospital, as he had died within sixteen months of opening the infirmary.

BARRINGTON'S HOSPITAL was endowed by Joseph Barrington in 1830. For over a century and a half the hospital served the medical and surgical needs of the city, county, and neighbouring counties extremely well, only to become the victim of economic recession and medical cut backs in 1988.

THE BARRINGTON FAMILY have been

Barrington's Hospital Entrance.

associated with the city since Francis Barrington arrived from England in the 1640s. Samuel Barrington survived the Williamite siege of 1691. He was a clock-maker who died in 1693 and was buried in St. Mary's Cathedral. His epitaph reads; "Little Samuell Barinton that great undertaker of famous cittis clock and chime maker ...:

JOSEPH BARRINGTON was an enterprising man with a philanthropic flair. He was disliked by Caleb Powell who described him as a "Pewterer dwelling in a very small shop" who had "rais'd himself to eminence" and acquired extensive landed property in Limerick. Joseph owned, amongst other possessions, a pewter works under the sign of the Copper Globes on Charlotte Quay. Ironically, soon after Caleb Powell wrote that description of Joseph in 1858, Powell's ownership of

Bourke's House.

Clonshavoy passed into Barrington hands. Joseph became a baronet in 1831, the year after he had founded Barrington's Hospital. His first cousin, William Canter, of Ballyvarra was a skillful bone-setter. Joseph died in 1846.

SIR MATTHEW BARRINGTON was a solicitor with practices in Limerick and Dublin. He was Crown Prosecutor in Munster during a very disturbed period and his son, William H. Barrington was a Grand Juror selected by Caleb Powell in 1858. Matthew is best remembered as the instigator of the Barrington's *Mont De Pieta* or pawnshop.
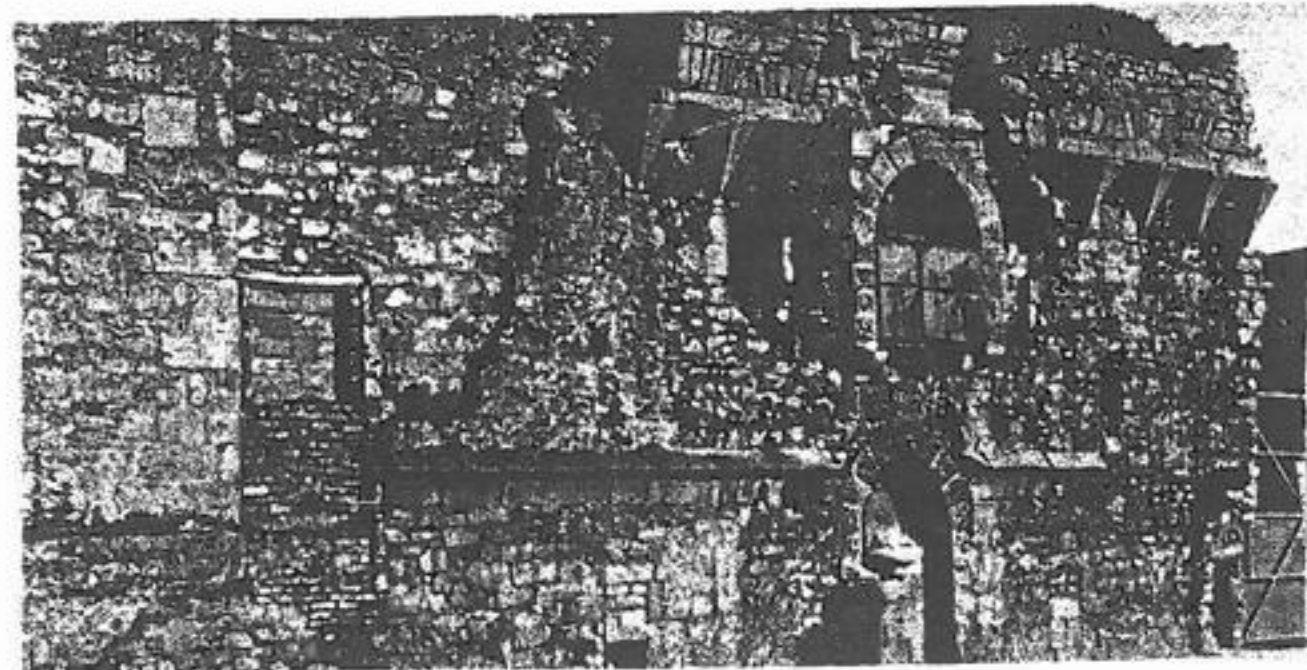
BARRINGTON'S MONT DE PIETA was the first of eight such establishments opened in Ireland in 1837. It operated as a type of pawnshop in which an interest rate of less than two new pence to the pound was charged, and there was no charge for the ticket of pledged articles. In 1840 it made a profit of £1,357 which was used to fund Barrington's Hospital. By 1841 the *Montes De Pietas*, or *Mons Pietas*, had started to lose money. By 1843 ony three remained, and the last one, in Portadown, closed at the end of that year.

THE FRANCISCANS of Perugia founded the first *Mont De Pieta* in 1461. The idea proved so successful that Pope Leo X had to issue a bill in their defence, in 1515, to silence the vested banking interests who had objected to religious orders getting involved in financial affairs.

SIR FITZWILLIAM BARRINGTON lived in Glenstal House as a child. He returned to Limerick for the closure of Barrington's Hospital, of which he had been honorary secretary, on Wednesday, 30 March, 1988.

BOURKE'S HOUSE, on Athlunkard Street, was also known as Castle Friary because Franciscan friars lived here from 1732 to 1766. This is not a typical Irish tower-house although the machicolation proves that it was built as a fortified structure. A Gothic-style drinking fountain was inserted in the stone facade of this late medieval dwelling in 1860. This was a presentation to the people of Limerick by the Malcolmson family, founders of the Limerick Shipping Company. The inscription reads, "Protect what is erected for your benefit". The fountain no longer serves its original purpose but is used instead as a lit-

ter-bin, despite the inscription.

ATHLUNKARD STREET developed after the demolition of the old city walls in 1760, part of the general clearance that presaged the building of Newtownpery. Salvaged material from the demolished walls and buildings was used to build the quays. Athlunkard street, itself, was built in 1824.

ATHLUNKARD BRIDGE was designed by the Pain brothers. Work on the five large elliptic arches was started in 1826 and completed at a cost of £16,000 in 1830.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH was erected on the Sluice or Little Island between 1746 and 1749. It was cruciform in design; had no external decorations; and contained a handsome altar donated by a merchant, John Kelly, in 1760. This church was demolished when the newer church, designed by Messrs. Ashlin and Coleman, Dublin, and erected by Messrs. Maguire and Shortt, Dublin, was opened on 31 July, 1932. The foundations of

the older structure remain, forming an attractive feature within the garden.

THE CELL OF ST. MARY HOUSE or Priory, was located on the bank of the Abbey River, on King's Island, east of Baal's Bridge.

THE SANDMEN of the *Parish* carried on their arduous, often hazardous trade, from the earliest days of the city's foundation until the completion of the Shannon Hydroelectric Scheme in 1929 changed the river so completely that most of them were forced out of their ancient profession.

THE SAND from which most of the older parts of the city was built had been washed into the river-bed from the catchment areas of the Shannon, Mulcair, Newport and Clare rivers. It was deposited in several places along the Shannon's bed but the three most important locations were where the Mulcair river entered the Shannon; the deep waters below Plassey Bridge; and between the Lax Weir and the Island Point. The sandmen used

an ugly but versatile craft, known as a sand barge, to recover and transport the sand. This was thirty feet long by five wide; sloped fore and aft; had a small jib; a hand-winch in the stern for raising dredges filled with sand from the river bottom; could be loaded from the gunwale by one man but needed a crew of two; carried ropes, anchors, grapnels and a *skeef*, a wooden bailer; and was powered and steered from the stern, over which a heavy sweep was set in a socket.

SOURCES USED
1-13-30-39-48-49-52
54-55-63-64-76-78-80
81-83-84-86-96-110-120
123-127-129-130-131-170-171
176-220-227-246-250-256-264
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Below: Aerial view from Corbally over the Abbey and Shannon rivers.