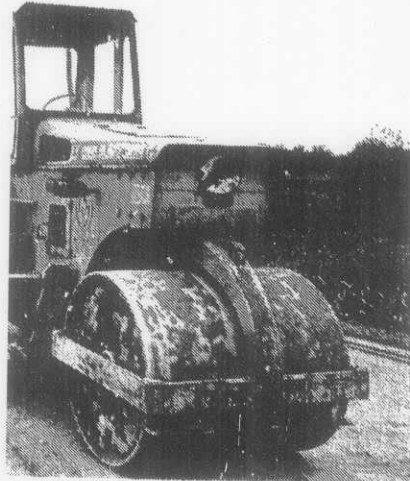


It to likely



with the Ennis Road near the Elm
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He said that he had been assured by ornithologists that the wildlife in the area would survive despite the fact that a road was being built so close to the preserve.

confident
he project

Alderman Leddin pointed out that the Corporation had provided sluices to ensure that there were proper water levels and a change of water.


from the
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lar Road,
Tim Led-
Terrace.

He predicts that the preserve area will be a great attraction and, if developed properly, be ahead of Stephens Green, Dublin. "It should be far ahead, it is more natural," he added.



is work proceeds on the new road
□ Pictures: JOHN F. WRIGHT

**GLIMPSES OF
LIMERICK**
by WILLIE
W. GLEESON



Founder of Catholic Young Men's Society

□ **THIS YEAR** marks the 176th anniversary of the birth of Richard Baptist O'Brien, Dean of Limerick, and the centenary of his death. He was born in Carrick-on-Suir in 1809 and two years later came to Limerick with his widowed mother.

Richard O'Brien was sent to school in the parish of St. Mary and was in due course apprenticed to Lynch's grocery establishment in Mary Street, "next door" to where he lived at No. 27. The young O'Brien must have had some exceptional qualities, for he attracted the attention of a zealous priest in the city, Father John Brahan. The priest became his friend and patron and, as a result of Fr. Brahan's intercession, he commenced his collegiate career in Knockbeg College, Carlow.

He was destined for the priesthood and, having graduated from Maynooth with distinction, he was ordained in 1839. Following his ordination, he was sent to a Catholic college in Halifax, and thus it was clear almost from the start that Richard would gain many honours. Despite his clerical duties, the young priest devoted much of his time and energy in his efforts to bringing about a much-needed improvement in the social and intellectual lives of the people around him.



RETURNING TO Limerick, in the Famine year of dark '47, Father O'Brien was appointed curate of his home parish of St. Mary. Two years later, on May 19, 1849, he founded the Catholic Young Men's Society.

The Society was established in humble circumstances in the back room of a two-storey house at 46 Athlunkard Street, which was recently demolished to make way for Limerick's controversial Ring Road. Not more than 30 men were present at the inaugural meeting and, according to the words of the founder, "they were mostly all of the labouring class, with few tradesmen, and only one or two had claims to anything more than an elementary education; but they were earnest men, every one of them, and they made a



Dean Richard Baptist
O'Brien (1809-1885)

regular mission of the work they had undertaken". Considered one of the most vigorous bodies in the country, the chairman was William FitzGerald, plasterer, great-grandfather of the writer, and the honorary secretary, Simon Collins, grandfather of John Healy, printer, St. Mary's Place.

The Society, we are told, was founded to promote the religious, intellectual, social and physical welfare of its members, and in due course its constitution and rules received the approval of Rome.

Father O'Brien was the first priest in the diocese to receive the title of Monsignor, a special honour conferred on him by Pope Leo XIII.



TODAY THERE are a great many branches of the C.Y.M.S., spread throughout the country and overseas, with a membership of thousands of men from many walks of life. Two

local branches of the Society — St. John's and St. Michael's — each with a membership of several hundreds, continue their activities. Strong and widespread as the Society is at present, it is surprising to learn that there are no branches in most Limerick parishes, not even in St. Mary's (The Parish), where it was first established, or in Newcastle West, where its founder breathed his last.

After pursuing his higher theological studies in Rome, and on his return to Ireland, he was appointed to a professorship at the All Hallows Seminary in Dublin. He was next appointed parish priest of Kilfinane and, in 1858, was made Dean of the Diocese. Dean O'Brien later became parish priest of Newcastle West, where he died in 1885. During his lifetime he had a special interest in literature and politics. He wrote three published novels: *Ally Moore*, *Jack Hazlitt*, and *The Daltons of Crag*. An ardent admirer of Daniel O'Connell, the Dean worked hard to win moral and material support for the Irish Repeal Movement.



IN ACCORDANCE with his last personal wish, he was laid to rest at the Gospel side of the parish church of the Immaculate Conception, Newcastle West. "It is here the poor people pray", he is recorded to have said, "and they will, I hope, remember me in their prayers".

Just behind the high altar, a beautiful stained glass window serves as a memorial to the great Churchman; but the greatest monument to his works and achievements is the C.Y.M.S.

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AND LAID WITH
POISON**

I, the undersigned, strictly forbid fox and fowl hunting on my lands at Garryduff and Drominbeesom and Dromin-McTurlough, Newcastle West. Signed: William John Collins.

(f9-6911)