

FATHER THEOBALD MATHEW

The Last days of the Great Apostle of Temperance

Father Theobald Mathew—To readers of Irish history there is no more interesting personage than Father Mathew, the Apostle of Temperance. From the first his mission was a success, and the fame of his doings at home induced bishops, priests and philanthropists to urge him to visit England, Scotland, and America. In the former country he administered the pledge to 600,000 persons. In Scotland his mission was as successful, and then came his visit to the United States.

Father Mathew's embarrassments were set at rest for a time by the results of a public subscription, but from this time the amazing success which had attended the cause from its inauguration began to lag. Father Mathew, unwilling to run the risk of renewed debt, felt constrained to curtail grants to bands, temperance halls, and before very long the terrible famine of '46 laid Ireland waste, and his energies were drawn away from his immediate mission and absorbed in helping the people in the awful struggle with starvation and fever, in which thousands, nay even millions, were worsted.

These dark and terrible days, when "the hunger" was rampant over the land, and famished human creatures perished for food all over Ireland, are heart rending even to read about, and shall not be touched upon here except in relation to how they affected Father Mathew's mission. With his unbounded love and sympathy for the people, it can readily be imagined how, with even more than his wonted energy, he gave himself up to the task of alleviating the awful misery around him. He was foremost in every organization for helping his stricken fellow-countrymen, and by his foresight, public-mindedness, and power of working harmoniously for the common good with men of different politics and creeds, was able, not, alas! to arrest the famine, but to save thousands from the terrible fate which menaced them.

And now began the high tide of emigration which has since flowed from Ireland to America. Queenstown was the usual point of departure, and to see these heart-broken emigrants off, administer to them the pledge, comfort them with such cheerful words as his heart prompted even in those cheerless days, became a recognized duty of Father Mathew, whom trouble and toil had now turned into a broken old man, gray-haired and feeble, though counting by years he was still in the prime of life.

Father Mathew's name being so well known at home and abroad caused him to be chosen as agent for dispensing the charity of many Americans and others who sent food to alleviate the horrors of the famine and it is said that he, more than any man in Ireland, overcame the prejudice of the starving people against the "yellow male" which appeared so unpalatable to them. Even in the midst of the desolation of the famine, Father Mathew's loving heart found consolation in contemplating the wonderful generosity of those starving poor, ever ready as long as anything lasted to share their scantiest allowance of food with each other.

In 1847 Father Mathew, in consideration of his great public services, was granted a pension of £300 a year out of the Queen's Civil List, which money went the same road as all other which found its way into his hands, for he was but the almoner of the Government, as he had been all his life of whatever funds he had in his keeping.

At last he had to pay the inevitable penalty of the overwork and anxiety of the long years he had given to the temperance cause, for he was struck down with paralysis. Although he made a rally from this serious attack and lived for eight years afterwards, he was never again the vigorous, sanguine man of the early days of the cause. The blight of the famine was on that great work, and on all that had been hopeful and happy in Ireland, and the Apostle of temperance had the heavy grief of seeing his ranks thinned by death and desertion.

In 1849, while still suffering from the stroke of paralysis of the year before, he determined (very much against the advice of his friends) to pay his long promised visit to America. His reception here was most cordial and enthusiastic, but though he strove manfully to repay the cordiality of his new friends with his wonted geniality, the effort of seeing and talking to countless numbers of people was no longer easy to him, and the contrast of the joy and prosperity of the New World, with the gloom and misery of the dear, old land,

where he had recently witnessed such heart-rending scenes of misery, saddened him. His greatest pleasure was in seeing among the well-to-do citizens of the cities he had visited, men and women, to whom he had administered the pledge, in Ireland, years before, and whose faithful observance of it had secured them good positions in the new world. To many of them he was able to bring tidings of their kindred, for he never forgot a face he had known.

In spite of his shattered health, he toiled in America, as he had toiled at home, and with the like happy results. The United States Senate gave him a place within the Bar, a privilege which had before only been conferred on Lafayette, and the President entertained him at a banquet to meet a number of the foremost men, all eager to know the Apostle. His stay in America lasted two years and a half for he visited twenty-five States of the Union, and administered the pledge to half a million of people. For a short time of repose he dwelt in the solitude of the forests of Arkansas where he said Mass in the open air under the canopy of heaven, with a congregation of only four persons.

On his return to Ireland, Father Mathew, now grown too invalided to be allowed to continue his mission, was induced to take up his residence with his brother Charles, at Lehenagh House, near Cork. There surrounded by the loving care and ministrations of his family, who did all that was possible to comfort his last sad years, he awaited the coming of Death, like a man whose life's work was done, and who pined for rest. But, though he could no longer seek out the drunkard, the sick and the suffering, they still knew where to find him, and to the very end those who sought him were not sent away unsatisfied. Nay, even after the final stroke of paralysis had stilled the voice which had pleaded so lovingly and so long, his dying hand guided to bless and sign with the cross the very last of the millions to whom he had given the pledge.

He died on December 8, 1856, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and the forty-second of his ministry, and it is surely not too much to say of him that he was mourned by the entire people. Clad in his Franciscan habit, and with the beauty and peace of earlier days come back to his dead face, the Apostle lay in state in his own church in Cork, where those among whom he had labored so long could take a last farewell of their beloved father and friend. The name and fame of the apostolic Theobald Mathew, so justly dear to his own generation, still sends a thrill to Irish hearts, and is revered and cherished by thousands of his countrymen and women who never heard his persuasive voice, nor felt the clasp of his helpful and beneficent hand.

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THE JOY OF WORKING

Think not, Sir Man-of-Leisure, as you peep lazily through your heavily-curtained window at the scurrying seven o'clock crowd on the way to its daily toil, that you have the best of it, because you can snuggle back beneath your luxurious covering and sleep until Jeems or Meadows brings your morning coffee and the paper, and asks you if you prefer the Yellow Dragon or the Green Devil for your forenoon spin.

Do not lay the flattering unction to your soul that yours is the happier lot.

Yonder youth with swinging step, with fists dug deep into the pockets of his threadbare coat and a cold luncheon wrapped in paper tucked beneath his arm tastes a finer, sweeter joy than all your luxury can bring. His is the pleasure of incentive—the glory of work.

For there is a zest to it all. The quick spring from bed at the alarm clock's summons, the hastily swallowed breakfast, then out into the wine-like air of early morning. To work—vigorous work of brain or brawn, whether it be pegging away at a desk or directing the eternal grind of clanking machinery. It is occupation—accomplishment.

Do not pity these work-a-day folk. Save your sympathy for the hapless and hopeless idle fellows—the unfortunates or unwilling; alike commiserable

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Then take two tablets every night for a week—and then one every night for a month.

Be careful about the diet—eat regularly—avoid veal, pork, dark meat fowls, and never drink milk with meals.

Bathe frequently—dress warmly—exercise sensibly—take "Fruit-a-tives" faithfully—and see how much better you are at the end of the month. ^{50c. a box.} At all druggists.

Joy goes with the working masses. There is joy in the noon-day luncheon, whether in a gilded cafe or a cold snack hastily devoured "before the whistle blows."

The evening meal is a feast to the weary man, and his well earned rest is the greatest joy of all.

Hard work is the best of all cures for insomnia.

Thank God you can work!

Though your office labor strains your nerves and racks your brain, though the "shops" take the best of your strength and vitality—be glad to be living, an active part of the working world.

You must earn your amusements before you can enjoy them. Ennui has no part in the strenuous life.

Be glad, for conscience sake, that you are not one of those most miserable of all men, a fellow without a job—a human machine standing idle, rusting and losing its value from disuse.

Thank God you can work!

When sorrow and grief come, when you strive to forget, to crush out cruel thoughts, thank God that you can absorb yourself in your occupation, plunge deep into the details of your duty.

Thank God you can work—that you can grasp your pay envelope and say, "This is mine, the rightful pay for the labor of my brain, the just earnings of my strong right arm."

Be thankful, employer as well as employee for the joy of working.

You know the pleasure of it. Do not deceive yourself by the promise (nine times in ten a pleasant little fiction) that by and by you will retire, ease up, end your life in idle luxury.

The business game is not alone for the pleasure of the spoils, but for the joy of playing it.

What the world may call greed and avarice you know to be the fascination of success—the intoxication of accomplishment; and it will keep you untiringly at it—on your mettle in the battle—till the end of life.

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