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## FATHER MATHEW AND HIS WORK.\*

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### THE CITY OF CORK.

The city of Cork is distinguished among the seaport towns of the United Kingdom, not more for its magnificent harbor and "grand sea-avenue," of which Tom Moore speaks, than for its literary and scientific reminiscences. The readers of Mrs. Shelley's "Perkin Warbeck" will not need to be reminded of the costly devotion of its Mayor and citizens in the reign of Henry VIIth to the real, or supposed, last of the Plantagenets; nor need the readers of "The Faery Queen" be referred to the passage in which, describing the rivers of that region, Edmund Spenser pours his own silvery phrase round the ideal city, as the river in those days "encircled" the real one "with half-divided flood." But the literary and artistic glories of Cork are not all in the far past; it was the parent or nursery in the two last generations of Barry, Ford, and Maclise among painters; of Hogan among sculptors; of Maginn, Mahoney ("Father Prout"), and Sergeant Stack Murphy, among wits and scholars: there Callanan began, and Gerald Griffin ended his days; and the vicinity is still fragrant with the fair memories of Catherine, Countess of Charleville; Brinklay, Bishop of Cloyne; Father Arthur O'Leary, and Bishop Berkely, the ideal philosopher. Where there was so much individual renown, we may fairly infer that there was a corresponding degree of associated activity. And such an inference would be quite right. No city

of less than 100,000 † inhabitants in modern times has, its means considered, done more, or better, in works of benevolence, or institutions for public improvement. We find in Cork, all of them of several years' standing, a highly successful Medical and Surgical school; a public Library; an Academy of fine arts, (founded in 1815); a Royal Institution for the advancement of science; a Cuvierian society; a local Antiquarian society; a Horticultural society, and a Botanical garden. The character of the inhabitants and the whole tone of society are deeply impressed with literary and artistic tastes, and it is as natural for a young person of either sex, in that city, to discourse of books and pictures, of social science, or of periodical literature, as it is for the same classes elsewhere to gossip about the latest discovered novelty, in the way of dress or scandal. As compared with the inhabitants of Dublin, the Corcagenians are more earnest-minded and better read, and wholly free from that *frivolezza* which is the prevailing curse of provincial towns.

### WILLIAM MARTIN.

Among the works of pure benevolence which did honor to this quick-witted, and public-spirited city, one of the principal was the "House of Industry," or workhouse, sustained chiefly by subscription, and under the direction—in later and more liberal days—of a Board of Directors, representing as fully and fairly as possible, the different religious denominations from whom its support was drawn. In the year of grace, for Ireland, and mankind, 1838, there were members of this board, Mr. William Martin, a Quaker shop-keeper, and the Rev. Theobald Mathew, a highly popular priest and preacher among Roman Catholics, and indeed, with the citi-

\* The writer is indebted to two sources for the facts personal to Father Mathew in this sketch, namely, to a memoir of him, published early in the Irish Temperance movement, by the Rev. Mr. Birmingham, P. P., of Borrisokane, Tipperary; but still more to the very full, instructive, and interesting *Life*, by Mr. Maguire, M. P. for Cork, published in 1863. Mr. Maguire, as a resident and leading journalist at Cork, and as a close personal friend of Father Mathew (whom the writer also had the honor to know), was particularly well qualified for the task of writing his life.

† The total population of Cork in 1861 was 93,304 souls; of whom 12,583 are returned as Church of England, and 2,475 as Dissenters, leaving the remaining 78,000 Roman Catholic.