

firkin of butter into the Cork market, he would not return home until he had gone to confession to Father Mathew," passed beyond the bounds of pleasantry into the domain of strict truth. Being a man of keen perception, he soon discovered the existence of two predominant evils: ignorance and idleness. As an offset to these he established schools, in which literary and industrial training were happily blended.

Although Father Mathew's favorite proverb was "take time by the forelock, for he is bald behind," he pondered long and deeply ere he cast in his lot with the upholders of Total Abstinence, who at this time were nearly all members of the Society of Friends. The good, old, honest William Martin, who in after days gloried in the proud title of "Grandfather of the Temperance Cause" perceived that the humble Capuchin was the right man to lead the van of Temperance against the deadly forces of alcoholic drink. In season and out of season did Martin importune the priest, "Oh! Theobald Mathew, if thou would but take the cause in hand."

At length the die was cast, Father Mathew had crossed the Rubicon and burnt his boats. At a public meeting held April 10th, 1858, he solemnly declared "that if only one poor soul could be rescued from destruction by what we are now attempting, it would be giving glory to God, and well worth all the trouble we could take. No person in health has any need of intoxicating drinks. My dear friends you do not require them, nor do I require them, neither do I take them. After much reflection on the subject, I have come to the conclusion that there is no necessity for the use of them by any one in good health, and I advise you to follow my example, I will be the first to sign my name in the book which is on the table, and I hope we shall soon have it full." Father Mathew then advanced to the table saying "here goes, in the name of God" and signed his name.

Great indeed was the astonishment, when it became known that Father Mathew had espoused the cause of those, who had hitherto been regarded as pious frauds and temperance fanatics. The doctrine of Total Abstinence was ridiculed

and considered absurd as long as it was advanced by those who were out of touch with the masses and had not the ear nor the heart of the people. In fact everyone sneered at them and their then fantastic doctrine. Even when the great Father Mathew himself became the leader of the Temperance movement, there were not a few among the clergy, who sagely shook their heads and murmured "poor Mathew." The sequel proved that the wisest are liable to err, for Father Mathew was building upon an adamant foundation that he had been laying and perfecting during the twenty-five years of his sacerdotal career. His unflinching, untiring zeal in the confessional; his earnestness in the pulpit; his devotedness in the fever-stricken suburbs of Cork; his well known charities; his priestly virtues; his great Catholic, all-embracing spirit; his talent, beauty, noble birth, all united to designate him as the leader in a mighty crusade against intemperance.

Some, as we have already hinted, thought that he had acted on the spur of the moment, and confidently predicted that his ardor would soon be cooled. These reckoned without their host; Theobald Mathew was not built of that sort of timber, in this respect he resembled the giant, sturdy oak of the primeval forest; he might be broken but could never be bent from the course that he had mapped out for himself. With him there was no lukewarmness, no compromising matters, when the fate of immortal souls lay trembling in the balance. Father Mathew was not one of those who draw fine, hair-splitting distinctions to prove that liquor is good *per se* but bad *per accidens* and look down from their lofty pinnacle of self-complacency upon the wanton destruction of millions of human crafts, by the overwhelming billows of intemperance; on the contrary he was a shrewd, practical observer, who perceived from stern facts, that the parent liquor, with its hideous offspring, drunkenness, was the maelstrom that infallibly drew thousands and thousands of souls into its vortex of moral ruin, ignoble poverty, and social degradation. No one knew better than he, that the great curse of the Irish people was intoxicating drink and that no other evil makes so bold an