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THE APOSTLE OF TEMPERANCE.



AMONG the many talented sons of Erin who have delighted and elevated their fellow-men by their heroic deeds of charity, shed additional lustre on their native land by their genius, and conferred honor on their race by their christian virtues, the venerable Father Mathew will ever hold a most prominent place. The 10th of October, 1790 was an auspicious day in the annals of Cashel, the ancient capital of Tipperary, for on that memorable morning was ushered into the world one of God's choicest spirits who was destined to be another Moses to lead the faithful Irish out of the treacherous bondage of intemperance, into the secure haven of total abstinence.

Too often the early days of the world's greatest men are obscured and overshadowed by the dazzling rays of their subsequent achievements, we forget the man and remember his works. It is not thus with Father Mathew; the facts of his life teach us that the characteristics of his youth were but purified and intensified by the chastening influence of the religious life. His sweet engaging manner made him his mother's favorite child, for his tender sympathetic heart beat responsive to the love that only a mother can feel.

The young "Toby" was called "the pet" by his brothers and sisters, yet he was "the little tyrant" of the family circle, and displayed all that personal magnetism which in after life subdued the most confirmed drunkard and softened the hardest

sinner. In his boyhood days, it was his one delight to afford pleasure to others, and often was he the angel of peace and reconciliation between his mother and his elder brothers and sisters. His gentle disposition, unselfishness, sweet gravity and kind consideration for the poor and infirm, pointed him out as the future "Priest of the family," and won for him, from the servants of his father's house, the honored title of "the little saint." Even as a boy, he was not one to follow aimlessly and heedlessly in the well-beaten track of the many; on the contrary, he was the beloved and undisputed leader of his young companions.

One day his mother said: "Is it not unfortunate? I have nine sons, and not one of them to be a priest." Then the manly, sturdy little fellow arose and exclaimed "mother don't be uneasy; I will be a priest." From that day, the family regarded him as consecrated to the service of God, and his patroness, Lady Elizabeth Mathew, insisted on educating him at her own expense. The young Theobald was sent to a school in Kilkenny, whence he was graduated into Maynooth.

Having completed his course of studies and feeling himself called to the religious life, he entered the Capuchin order and was ordained in Dublin on Easter Sunday morning by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Murray. Immediately after his ordination, Father Mathew was stationed at Kilkenny, but was soon removed to Cork. Here, in Cork, Father Mathew laid the foundation of his future fame; his reputation as a director in the confessional, extended from parish to parish, until the common saying that "if a carman from Kerry brought a