

Many people are afraid of germs. Few people are afraid of germs. Yet the germ is a fancy and the germ is a fact.



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WILLIAM ORR. The Gallant United Irishman Who Died for His Country's Freedom.

Dr. Drennan, in one of his best poems, fancies himself beside the bier of William Orr, the first of the United Irishmen to succumb to England's hate, and thus passionately addresses his fellow countrymen:

Here our murdered brother lies; Wake him not with woman's cries; Mourn the way that manhood ought; Sit in silent trance of thought. Why cut off in palmy youth? Truth he spoke, and acted truth, "Countrymen, unite," he cried, And died—for what his Saviour died.

THE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN STRUCK TERROR INTO THE GOVERNMENT.

We know now that the progress of this grand society filled the Government with alarm; that the decline of fighting, quarrelling and drinking throughout the country made tyrants and flunkies quake in their shoes. They understood well that when men cease to drink they begin to think. Therefore it was decreed that the Society of United Irishmen—so beneficial to Ireland and consequently so dangerous to England—should be put down. A royal proclamation declared it an unlawful association, membership of which was treason-felony, a crime punishable with death.

A disreputable fellow, a soldier named Wheatley, was employed to make the acquaintance of Orr, and if possible get sworn in by him as a United Irishman. Orr had sworn in hundreds of men in his time. He was a keen judge of character and distrusted Wheatley from the start; therefore he treated the man civilly, but absolutely declined to discuss politics with him. This was somewhat of a disappointment, but the difficulty was soon got over by instructing Wheatley to charge Orr with treason-felony and with endeavoring to seduce him—Wheatley—from his allegiance to his most gracious majesty King George.

The circumstances surrounding the judicial murder of this noble and gifted young Irishman were of such a nature as to excite a fever of indignation all over the country and to make the phrase "Remember Orr!" the rallying cry of the United Irishmen. He was born in 1766 at Farranrhanne, in the parish and county of Antrim, where his father was a farmer and bleachgreen proprietor in comfortable circumstances. Nature appears to have been lavishly generous toward him. When he reached the age of manhood he stood six feet two inches in height and was a perfect model of strength, symmetry and grace. The expression of his face was frank and manly. He possessed a sound understanding and considerable talent in the conduct of affairs. His affections were strong, and his disposition so kindly that he was loved and respected by all classes.

In short, William Orr was exactly that type of man whose presence is a blessing to the community. He was that type of man whose career under any well-regulated government would have been one of honor and reward. But William Orr had the misfortune to be an Irishman and to love his country; therefore he perished on the scaffold in the very flower of his manhood. When Wolfe Tone published his celebrated "Plea on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland" Orr was one of the first to read it. Its noble tone and generous sentiments touched a sym-

pathetic chord in his heart and he straightway joined the Society of United Irishmen. He was an enthusiastic believer in the grand policy of breaking down the barriers of sectarian bitterness and uniting Irishmen of every class and creed in one solid phalanx, animated only by his desire of advancing their country's interests.

Accordingly, Orr was arrested and put under trial at the Carrickfergus Assizes. Wheatley came forward and glibly told the lying story which he had been rehearsing for months; but when the great counsel, John Philpot Curran, proceeded to cross examine him, the whole fabric of falsehood collapsed like a house of cards. The jury retired at 6 in the evening and sat up all night considering their verdict. In the morning they asked if they could bring in a qualified verdict as to the prisoner's guilt. Judge Yelverton directed them to give a special verdict on the general issue. They retired again and after a short absence they found the prisoner guilty with a hypocritical—and as they knew, perfectly useless—recommendation to mercy. Then Judge Yelverton pronounced the death sentence in a voice—we are told—"scarcely articulate," and at its conclusion burst into a flood of crocodile tears!

What a contrast then must have existed between the stalwart and noble looking young felon in the dock and the wretched pack of rogues and time-servers by whom he was surrounded! When called upon to say why the death sentence should not be passed upon him his eyes swept scornfully over the court.

"That jury," he said in an unflinching voice and with his accustomed grace of speech, "has convicted me of being a felon. My own heart tells me that their conviction is a falsehood, and that I am not a felon. If they have found me guilty improperly, it is worse for them than for me. I can forgive them. I wish to say only one word more, and that is to declare on this awful occasion and in the presence of God that the evidence against me was grossly perjured—grossly and wickedly perjured."

The conviction of Orr aroused resentment among all classes against the Government. He was so young, so handsome, so brave, so generally beloved—above all, his conviction was so palpably a put up job—that a storm of indignation over swept the country. The informer, Wheatley, repenting of his crime, went before a magistrate and actually made a solemn affidavit that his evidence against Orr was one tissue of perjury. Two of the convicted jury made depositions that they had been inessentially plied with liquor while in the jury room, and that they were blind drunk when they gave a verdict which was contrary to their opinions. Two others swore that they had been menaced by their fellow jurors with denunciations and the wreck of their property if they did not comply with their wishes.

Under these circumstances no Government with any sense of decency would have let the verdict stand. However, when Dublin Castle gets a victim in its clutches it does not easily let go. A short respite was granted to the condemned felon, and the interval was employed in devising against him one of the meanest and most atrocious plots on record. It had been resolved to execute Orr at any cost and under any circumstances. His trial, however, had been such a farce and a scandal that some step was required to placate public resentment. If Orr, in hopes of a reprieve, could be induced to sign a confession of his guilt the Government would be to some extent vindicated, and any protests against his execution might be disregarded.

REFUSED TO MAKE A "CONFESSION" TO SAVE HIS LIFE. Accordingly, Mr. Skelington, the high Sheriff of Belfast, and a well known clergyman named the Rev. Mr. Bristowe visited a brother of the prisoner, named John Orr, a man who appeared to have possessed a keener sense of affection than of principle. They informed him that if his brother could be induced to confess his guilt he would infallibly be reprieved and in all probability liberated after a short period. James at once proceeded to the prison, and with tears, prayers, entreaties and every manner of exhortation, begged him to sign a confession, to save his life, and not to leave his family despairing and heart-broken. But when honor and principle were at stake no arguments, no prayers, no lamentations could shake the resolution of William Orr. He bade his brother go, telling him he would rather die ten thousand deaths than do what he asked of him.

The wretched man went back to the emissaries of Dublin Castle, and informed them of the result of his mission, in reply they craftily pointed out a way in which his brother might be saved in spite of himself. He had merely to forge William's signature to the confession which had been drawn up and forward it to the Lord Lieutenant, and a reprieve would immediately result. The affectionate, but weak and ill advised, man fell into the trap. He was ready even to commit a crime to save his brother. The forged confession was sent to Dublin. Next day the startling news over spread the country that William Orr had broken down, confessed his guilt and acknowledged the justice of his punishment. Every one who had known and loved him previous to his arrest now blushed for shame at such unexpected and incredible potroony.

In spite, however, of the alleged confession, the preparations for his execution rapidly proceeded. On Oct. 14, 1797, at the hour of 2 o'clock, he was handed over to the Sheriff by the Governor of Carrickfergus Jail. A vast assembly of soldiers attended the Sheriff. There were the Fife-shire Fencibles (the corps to which Wheatley, on whose evidence Orr was convicted, belonged,) the Monaghan Militia, the Royal Fencibles, the Twenty-second Dragoons and the Carrickfergus Yeoman Cavalry, besides a detachment of artillery with two cannon. Followed by a great concourse of people, the procession marched some distance from the town. The prisoner then spent some time in prayer with the Rev. Mr. Stavely and the Rev. Mr. Hill, two Presbyterian clergymen who had been in constant attendance upon him. Then he bade farewell to the weeping friends who surrounded him, and who were astonished by his unshaken fortitude. Next in a firm voice he delivered a declaration of innocence, printed copies of which he distributed to those near him. He then mounted the scaffold with a firm step, and the apparatus being adjusted, he was launched into eternity. So, in the flower of his manhood, and leaving a beloved wife and five little children to mourn his death, was the gallant, incorruptible William Orr judicially murdered.

LOVE OF HIS COUNTRY HIS ONLY CRIME.

In his dying declaration he prayed God to forgive the informers, the judge and the jurors who had conspired to take away his life. "My comfortable lot," he continued, "and industrious course of life best refute the charge of being an adventurer for plunder; but if to have loved my country, to have known its wrongs, to have felt the injuries of the persecuted Catholics, to have united with them and all other religious persuasions in the most orderly and least sanguinary means of procuring redress—if these be felonies I am a felon, but not otherwise."

He indignantly repudiated the charge of having acknowledged his guilt. "A false and ungenerous publication having appeared in the newspapers stating certain alleged confessions of guilt on my part, and thus striking at my reputation, which is dearer to me than life, I take this solemn method of contradicting the calumny. It was applied to by the High Sheriff and the Rev. William Bristowe to make a confession of guilt, who used entreaties to that effect, but I peremptorily refused."

The document thus touchingly concludes: "I trust that all my virtuous countrymen will bear me in their kind remembrance and continue true and faithful to each other as I have been to all of them. With this last wish of my heart, nothing doubting of the success of that cause for which I suffer, and hoping for God's merciful forgiveness of such offences as my frail nature may have at any time betrayed me into, I die in peace and charity toward all mankind."

When we consider the unassuming heroism of this young patriot and the foul conspiracy which extinguished his life we understand why the cry "Remember Orr!" was such a thrilling inspiration to the men of '98. He was not fortunate enough to share the joy of those comrades who beneath the folds of the green flag fought for country and liberty, but

Whether on the scaffold high or on the battlefield we die, 'Tis no matter, when for Ireland dear we fall. In conclusion, we will quote the words of Peter Finerty, the gallant editor of the Dublin Press, who was imprisoned for ten years in consequence of publishing them. Here is now Finerty addresses Lord Camden, the Lord Lieutenant, shortly after the execution of William Orr: "The death of Mr. Orr the nation has pronounced one of the most sanguinary and savage acts that have disgraced the laws. You did not exercise the prerogative of mercy—the mercy which the law entrusted to you for the safety of the subject. Innocent he was. Nevertheless his blood has been shed, and the precedent is awful. Feasting in your castle, in the midst of your myrmidons and Bishops, you have little concerned yourself about the expelled and miserable cottager whose dwelling at the moment of your mirth was in flames, his wife or his daughter suffering violence at the hands of some commissioned ravisier, his son agonizing on the bayonet and his helpless infants crying in vain for mercy. These are lamentations that disturb not the hour of carousal or the counsels of intoxication. The constitution has reeled to its centre—Justice herself is not only blind, but drunk, and deaf like Festus to the words of sobriety and truth."

Let the awful execution of Orr be a warning to all thinking men that, like Macbeth, the servants of the Crown have waded so far in blood that they find it easier to go forward than to go back.

"Let us not burden our time with trifles and our souls with grievances. We are every one of us good, bad and indifferent in our daily journey, walking with steady or unsteady step directly towards an open grave, and why worry and fret over anything? What is the laurel wreath of fame but a shadow? What is wealth but a bubble? Let us do our duty—the right as God gives us to see the right, with malice toward none, with charity for all."

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FATHER MATHEW. Justin McCarthy on the Apostle of Temperance.

I can hardly say when my acquaintance with Father Mathew began. His noble, dignified figure, his graceful face, his sweet smile, his gracious, genial manners made up a presence which belongs to my early boyhood and even to my childhood. I was born and brought up in the city of Cork, where Father Mathew's chapel, "The Little Friary," was situated, and I was in the habit of meeting the good and great priest and reformer almost as far back as my recollections can go. I took the temperance pledge from him while I was a mere boy—little more in deed, than a child—and I was in the habit of meeting him very frequently for many years until I left my native city and settled in Liverpool and then in London. Father Mathew had a finely-moulded, rather aquiline face, a face that somehow suggested high birth, and was certainly remarkable for its quiet dignity. His smile was most winning and even captivating. It seemed to bring man, woman, and child at once into a relationship of confidence and affection with the benevolent priest. He spoke with a strong Waterford accent, and he never was an orator or made the slightest pretensions to rhetorical eloquence. But he could carry a great meeting along with him by the force of a charm which not even the genius of eloquence can always confer—the charm of boundless charity, of exquisite sympathy, of Christian meekness, tenderness, and love.

Everybody in Cork knew Father Mathew, or perhaps I should rather say Father Mathew knew everybody in Cork. For him, in his friendly intercourse and his charitable dealings, there were no distinctions of rank or class, of sectarian denomination, or of political party. He was the friend of the rich as well as of the poor. The title to his friendship was to be honest of purpose, to aim at living a pure life, to be helpful to one's neighbors, and perhaps above all things else, to be in need of Father Mathew's help. The most devoted and assiduous of Catholic priests, he was on the most cordial terms of friendship with the clergymen of the Established Church—for there then was a State Church in Ireland—with the ministers of all the Dissenting denominations, and perhaps especially with those of the Unitarian and Quaker bodies. He visited everyone who was in any manner of difficulty or distress, and indeed, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that whenever there was trouble in any household the helpful presence of Father Mathew brought brightness to the scene. He needed no introduction to any home to which he believed his visit might bring comfort or assistance of any kind. He took but little concern in the workings of political life, and while I imagine that his own innermost inclinations were rather Conservative than what we call Liberal in their nature, one could never have guessed at his political opinions by any of his daily sayings or doings. I do not think I have ever known a man who was so absolutely above and beyond all the distinctions of rank and class which count for so much even in republics and democracies. Thackeray tells in his "Irish Sketch Book" that he met Father Mathew in Cork in 1842. "On the day we arrived in Cork," he says, "and as the passengers descended from the 'drag,' a stout, handsome honest looking man, of some two and forty years, was passing by, and received a number of bows from the crowd around. It was Theobald Mathew, with whose face a thousand little print-shops had already rendered me familiar. He shook hands with the master of the carriage very cordially, and just as cordially with the master's coachman, a disciple of temperance, as at least half Ireland is at present." Again, during the same visit, Thackeray met Father Mathew at one of the hotels where "one of his disciples in a livery coat came into the room with a tray. Fr. Mathew recognized him, and shook him by the hand directly; so he did with the strangers who were presented to him; and not with a courtly, popularity-hunting air, but as it seemed, from sheer hearty kindness, and a desire to do everyone good." I have seen him in many a house shake hands with the butler, and heard him ask about the butler's wife and children, and all this "not with a courtly, popularity-hunting air," not with the faintest suggestion of patronizing condescension, but simply a part of the natural bearing of the kindly priest, to whom all men were as brothers.

I came to know Father Mathew very soon, because he was always particularly fond of the young, and there was something in his every look and word which won the instantaneous confidence of boys and girls. He constantly spoke of the wonderful work which he hoped to do "through my young teetotalers." There was nothing whatever of austerity or of asceticism about Father Mathew. His eyes beamed with delight at any chance of finding amusement and pleasure for the young, and indeed, for the old as well as the young. He thoroughly entered into the Irish love for music, and his temperance movement, as directed by him, brought with it an organization for bands and musical societies in the city where he worked, and, indeed, all over Ireland. We used to have great processions of teetotalers, old and young, with bands and banners, on all manner of holidays and as important parts of every open-air temperance demonstration. We had Temperance Halls all over the city, and in each of these halls there used

to be from time to time temperance tea parties, which Father Mathew honored and brightened by his presence and where he spoke words of encouragement and comfort to those who were gathered round him. Music always formed a great part of these entertainments, and Father Mathew knew everybody, and if any of the guests had the gift of song Father Mathew was sure to call upon him by name and to insist on his giving the company a specimen of his skill. He understood human nature and especially Celtic human nature far too well not to know that innocent amusement is a splendid weapon against vice. He made his movement educational in the narrower as well as the broader sense. For instance, he started in Cork a society called the Temperance Institute, which became an immense influence for good among the boys and young men of the city. It was a large hall, almost in the very centre of Cork, with a library attached to it and with reading-rooms and writing-rooms; and this institute was open all day and until a reasonable hour every night for the benefit of its members. Father Mathew's idea was to form a sort of literary and educational club house for the benefit of his young teetotalers where they could be brought into frequent intercourse with himself and all the leading members of his temperance organization, representing every class and every religious denomination. The rooms were comfortably and even elegantly fitted up, and the library had many shelves filled with histories, books of reference, standard authors in all branches of literature, and the best magazines and newspapers of the day. Each member paid a small subscription and Father Mathew himself exercised a certain control over the admission of members. Many a boy who was too poor to pay even the small subscription found himself, nevertheless, admitted a member of the institute at Father Mathew's suggestion, and the members in general were not allowed to know that the new member had not paid his subscription for himself. The place became a regular home of evenings for numbers of boys who would not otherwise have had much of a home in which to spend their hours happily after school or after work. Many of the leading members of the temperance movement in Cork used to look in there a good deal during the evening, and used to direct in an unassuming way the studies and amusements of the boys. We used to have evenings set apart for the reading of essays on all manner of literary and historical subjects, and for discussion of the questions they opened up. One evening was generally given to the reading of the essay, and a later evening set apart for its discussion. Father Mathew himself often attended these meetings, and spoke a few pleasant, appropriate words on some casual question that happened to arise in the course of the debate.

I remember that on one occasion the dispute wandered off into a controversy as to whether ambition was or was not a noble feeling in the human mind. We debated the matter in true schoolboy fashion, every speaker adopting the assumption that his own definition of ambition was the true and only one, each speaker citing portentous authorities to justify his own views, this set of speakers pointing out that but for ambition no great work could ever be done, and that set of speakers insisting that because of ambition the noblest efforts of mortals had been fully undone.

Father Mathew quietly arose, and in a few bright sentences pointed to the fact that without some definition being agreed upon as to what we meant by ambition, and without some limitations as to its aims and its powers, it would be hard to get to any satisfactory conclusion from the moralist's point of view. But then he added, with a humorous smile, he was glad to be able to say that his young friends were not more wanting in definiteness than Shakespeare's Brutus, who had said of Caesar, "There is tears, for his love; joy, for his fortune; honor, for his valor; and death, for his ambition," and had left it entirely to his audience to define for themselves the nature of Caesar's ambition. This charming little touch of humor had its happy effect. With all our high wrought eloquence, we boys of the Temperance Institute could understand a joke, and we knew that we had been gently reminded that we were making fools of ourselves, and the debate was allowed to return to its natural course. Among the young fellows who read essays and took part in the debates was one whose name I have already mentioned in the pages of St. Peter's—my old friend Joseph Brennan—then a boy of remarkable intellect, culture and reading, who afterwards took part in the Irish Rebellion of 1848, then went to the United States and made a distinguished name there as a poet, a journalist and a politician, and whose career was cut short by a premature death. I reviewed not long ago in these pages "A Trinity of Friendships," a charming story written by my dear old friend's daughter, who is now a nun in an American convent. Another of our prominent debaters was a dear friend of mine, still living and flourishing, Mr. Thomas Crosbie, now and for a long time past editor and proprietor of the Cork Examiner, and who not long since held the high position of President of the Institute of Journalists of Great Britain and Ireland.

I made my first speech at one of these literary gatherings at the Temperance Institute, and I think that just before delivering it I was, if possible,

even more to make years ago. When Father Mathew was a pleasant fellow, we were ready to wonder at the con- putting into the Father M know all about us. The city was us. The indeed, his boy said be- of the amongst help us was don himself in the perance solemn appoint good be heads u Mathew way to thing sort of ade won among curvings, ings, our am was al- served. Shakesp help of moun parts a appear eous au a part in which and of John P well. be a m but I c and the know t word of pra were a the pu I ha Father tious atten ance In seem t thing. priest, of his no no dressin of tem of all tions: the co and S own s find th and th ing it and to how o other was b life, I to ha time usual Mathew which could occa even given fende the o come dissa his m defin the o of his his sgal unfa lead which cate, as the Fat yet t man able recie frier I ha see pan cou I ter per inv con Fat by frie the Exa men wor as a he pat the scr say mu Ma lu loc rov ev