

must try and do so. You remember that, a considerable time ago, you spoke to me on the subject at the House of Industry,' 'I remember it well, and that I often spoke to thee about it, and told thee that thou wast the only man that could help us.' 'At that time, continued Father Mathew, I could not see my way clearly to take up the question; but I have thought much of it since then, and I think I do see my way now. I have been asked by several good men to take up the cause, and I feel I can no longer refuse. How are we to begin, Mr. Martin?' 'Easily enough,' said honest William. 'Appoint a place to hold the meeting, fix a day and hour—and that's the way to begin.' 'Will Tuesday next, at seven o'clock, in my school-room, answer?' asked Father Mathew. 'It's the very thing,' said William, who added,—'This will be joyful news for our friends. Oh! Theobald Mathew, thou hast made me a happy man this night.' An affectionate pressure of the hand was the response.*

FATHER MATHEW'S FIRST MEETINGS IN CORK.

Ireland, thirty years ago, contained within a fraction of eight millions of people, living almost exclusively as agriculturists. There was much poverty in the land, but as the potato was still abundant, cheap, and wholesome, there was much cheerful contentment too. The state of society itself, was primitive, and behind the times elsewhere. The wooden plough, the block-wheeled cart, and the hide-bound wicker boat, were still to be found in the fields, on the highways, and on the waters of the country. The privileged beggar still sat by the kitchen fire, retailing the news of the country around; the Faery doctor was still consulted as to the cause of the cow's going dry, or the young maiden's "decline;" children were still passed under an ass's belly for the hooping-cough, and pilgrimages and patterns were universally, if not religiously observed. Hurlings and cosherings, forbidden by antiquated statutes, were the universal rule, and a fair without a faction fight was considered something out of the order of nature. At every cross-road, and usually on both sides of the way, hung the seductive sign of "Entertainment for Man and Beast." The march of the new era was still at a slow pace, and subject to many interruptions. The first mail coach between such leading points as Cork and Dublin was established only in 1789, the year before Father Mathew's birth.

*¹ Mathew Father: a Biography. By J. F. Maguire, M. P. Pp. 106-7.

The hedge-schools of Munster had not yet entirely disappeared from the byeways; and though the National system was rapidly extending its organization, its influence could hardly be expected to be much felt before another generation. The civil emancipation of the Roman Catholics, in 1829, had been followed by some years of legislation in many respects meritorious. The commutation of tithes, and Corporation reform, had given the Catholics increased satisfaction; and, though the members of the one denomination had not acquired the easy sense of political equality, nor the other forgotten the old feeling of sectarian superiority, the bitterness of the emancipation struggle had in a measure passed away.

It was the pleasant vernal month of April and the 10th day of the month, 1838, when Father Mathew, in accordance with his arrangement with William Martin, went forth to address his first temperance meeting in his own schoolroom. "The meeting," says Mr. Maguire, "was not a large one;" but the good Quaker, and others of a like mind, were there to encourage him. Father Mathew presided, and wound up a brief, cogent, earnest speech by saying "I have come to the conviction that there is no necessity for intoxicating drinks. I will be one of the first to sign the book now on the table, and I advise you all to follow my example. I hope the book will soon be full." So saying, he moved towards the table where the blank-book lay, and, first exclaiming "here goes, in the name of God!" he, in his exquisitely neat hand, inscribed the name "Theobald Mathew, C. C., No 1 Cove street." Sixty names were enrolled that night, and so at length the man so long needed had taken "this cause in hand."

The second meeting was called by placard, and the schoolroom was quite incapable of containing those who attended. A large loft over a neighboring store was then obtained, but fears being entertained for the strength of the floor, a more suitable place was sought. In Father Mathew's own neighborhood, there was a capacious, if not a commodious, building, known as the "Horse Bazaar," a kind of Tattersall's, capable of containing four thousand persons, and this was generously placed at his disposal by the lady, Mrs.