

of which were besieged by a crowd of penitents awaiting their turn for admission. He was closely engaged in his sacred duty, when an ecclesiastic entered the chapel, walked direct to his confessional, and handed him in a document of an urgent nature. Father Mathew opened it, read the first few lines, rose from his seat, and departed humbly from the church, saying to his anxious flock, who felt that something strange was about to happen—'Go to your other clergymen; I have no power to hear your confession any longer.' He had received a command from the bishop to cease hearing confessions, on the alleged ground of his having, contrary to the regulations of the diocese, administered Paschal Communion. A report spread abroad that Father Mathew had been suspended, and the circumstance under which he had received the order from the bishop gave some show of probability to the rumour. It was but a rumour; yet the deprivation so imposed cut him to the soul. He determined to leave Kilkenny without delay, and seek some other diocese; which intention he put into immediate execution. The bishop discovered, when too late, that the complaint on which he so rigorously acted was entirely groundless, and that the young friar had never infringed the regulations of the diocese. Explanations and apologies were offered; but his resolution was not to be changed, and he hastened his departure from the scene of his first mission. Ever after, the bishop deplored his own hastiness in this transaction, and did all in his power to lighten the effects of a blow which he could not recall.

CHAPTER II.

The Little Friary—Father Arthur O'Leary—His Character and Influence—New Coat for St. Patrick—Reply to the Quaker—Father Donovan—Saved from the Guillotine—Attending the Condemned—How the Shirts went—Father Donovan obtains a Colleague, and provides for his Reception—Father Donovan's Ambition—'Moll in the Wad'—Father Mathew little known at first—Confessional of a Popular Priest—Devotedness of Father Mathew's Friendship.

REMOTE from the din of traffic, and shut out from the public eye, there then, and for many years after, existed in the city of Cork a little chapel of humble pretensions both as to appearance and accommodation. This diminutive place of worship had been erected by a celebrated member of the Capuchin Order, a man whose strong and powerful intellect and scholarly attainments were devoted as well to the defence of his persecuted or endangered faith, as to the promotion of liberal and tolerant opinions, and the maintenance of social order. This was the famous Father Arthur O'Leary. As a priest, he was pious, zealous, charitable; as a public writer, he was bold, eloquent, of lively fancy, and replete with that humorous vein which is so useful to a cause, and so damaging to an opponent. Fearless and formidable champion to the oppressed, as he proved himself to be during many trying years, while the mass of his countrymen were slowly emerging from an oppression against which it seemed almost useless to contend, it was only natural that Father O'Leary should be loved and honoured by those of his own communion; while his earnest advocacy of toleration and Christian concord

among all men, whatever their faith, and his well-meant efforts to repress lawless and destructive combinations of the peasantry, earned for him the respect of his Protestant and Dissenting brethren. Such, indeed, was his deserved influence with the leading members of the Irish Parliament, that he on more than one occasion saved the Regular Orders from the revival of old penalties, or the imposition of new restrictions. He encountered, and confessedly overthrew, some of the most famous political and polemical writers of the day, and these successful efforts rendered his name celebrated in England as in Ireland; but the production which most added to his fame and enhanced his influence, was one styled 'An Essay on Toleration, or Mr. O'Leary's plea for Liberty of Conscience.' Very much owing to this remarkable work, he was elected a member of a society, partly political and partly social, known as the Monks of St. Patrick, which took its rise under the auspices of Mr. Yelverton, afterwards Lord Avonmore, and to which belonged many of the celebrated and leading men of the day. During a debate in the Irish House of Commons, on the Catholic Bill of 1782, testimonies of the most flattering kind were borne to the merits of Father O'Leary. These testimonies were the more remarkable as the assembly in which they were spoken consisted exclusively of Protestant gentlemen. Mr. Grattan described this Franciscan friar as 'poor in everything but genius and philosophy;' and he added—'If I did not know him to be a Christian clergyman, I should suppose him, by his writings, to be a philosopher of the Augustan age.' Mr. St. George would 'for the sake of one celebrated character of their body, be tolerant to the rest.' Sir Lucius O'Brien 'did not approve of the Regulars,' but he spoke with respect of 'the Reverend Doctor Arthur O'Leary.' In five years after, Mr. Curran, during a debate in the same House, thus bore his personal testimony to the character of this remarkable man:—'Mr.

O'Leary is, to my knowledge, a man of the most innocent and amiable simplicity of manners in private life.' A still more interesting evidence of his merit is afforded by his biographer, the late Rev. Thomas England, who states that the late Bishop Murphy of Cork, when a mere youth, was frequently the almoner of Father O'Leary's charities; and that a number of reduced room-keepers and tradesmen were, on every Monday morning, relieved by the good friar. The general average of his weekly charities amounted to 2*l.*, and sometimes to 3*l.* His biographer justly remarks—'When it is recollected that the poor Capuchin had no income, except what was derived from the contributions of those who frequented his chapel, the charitable disposition of his heart and mind will be duly appreciated.'

There was a time, however, when the resources of the good priest were not so flourishing, as the following incident will prove. Father O'Leary had many Protestant friends, who admired his ability, and sympathised with his opinions, so full of liberality and Christian charity. One in particular, Mr. Joseph Bennett, a well-known lawyer of the day, was most intimate with the distinguished friar, and frequently visited the little chapel, to enjoy the pleasure of hearing his friend preach. On a certain St. Patrick's Day, Mr. Bennett was in his accustomed place, listening with delight to a noble discourse on the life and labours of the national saint. The preacher and his Protestant admirer dined together the same day. During dinner the latter remarked—'Father O'Leary, that was a splendid sermon of yours on St. Patrick.' 'Didn't I give him a beautiful new coat to-day?' said the preacher in his usual jocular tone. 'Indeed you did,' replied his friend. 'And how much do you think I got for my work?' 'I can't tell—I have no notion; only I know it deserved more than it got.' 'Well, let us see,' said Father O'Leary—'there is the box, on the chair near you. Turn it up, and count its contents.'

The box was turned up, and its contents were counted. 'Eighteenpence-halfpenny!' exclaimed Mr. Bennett, in deep disgust. 'Well, my dear child,' said the priest, with a smile, 'that's what St. Patrick gave me for his grand new coat.'

Father O'Leary gained more by a reply which he made to a respectable member of the Society of Friends, than by his splendid panegyric of St. Patrick. Going about the city on his annual collection for the support of his chapel, he called into the thriving shop of this worthy Quaker. He made his application, and was answered by a decided refusal. 'Then,' said he, as if speaking to himself, 'I know for whom it will be worse;' and he turned to leave the shop. 'What, friend!' said the Quaker, 'dost thou mean to threaten?' 'Not I, indeed,' replied the friar. 'Then what didst thou mean when thee said thee knew for whom it would be worse?' 'Why, it would be worse *for myself*, to be sure, *if I didn't get the money*,' said O'Leary, with a look of drollery which betrayed the sedate Friend into a hearty laugh. 'Then, if that was all thee meant, here is a guinea for thee,' said the Quaker.

Father O'Leary waged rather a fierce controversy with Dr. Woodward, the Protestant Bishop of Cloyne. Indeed it would be more correct to say he defended himself from a fierce attack from his Right Reverend assailant. It was in reply to an envenomed attack, in which the friars, and O'Leary in particular, were treated with scant courtesy, that a passage, replete with sarcastic humour, thus concludes:— 'It is equal to us where a man pays his debts, whether here or in purgatory, provided he pays us ourselves what he owes us; and however clamorous a mitred divine may be about a popish purgatory, *he may perhaps go farther and speed worse.*'

Father O'Leary left Cork for London in the year 1789, when he became connected with St. Patrick's Chapel, Soho Square, in which he officiated till his death, in 1789, in the 73rd year of his age.

In one of his public letters, written in the 'Little Friary,' while yet striking hard blows in the cause of religious freedom, he describes himself as 'a poor friar, buried between salt-houses and stables.' And this was a literal description of his place of residence, the scene alike of his priestly duties and literary labours.

Such was the most famous of the predecessors of Father Mathew, and such the out-of-the-way place in which the young priest recommenced his missionary career. In Cork, as in Kilkenny, the Capuchin Order was represented by two members of the body; and at the time of Father Mathew's arrival, his associate and superior was the Rev. Francis Donovan, of whom some particulars may be given.

At an early period of his life, Father Donovan may have been courteous, refined, and elegant in manner; but at the period when he was joined by his youthful colleague he was not preeminently remarkable for these qualities—which, no doubt, are too often but mere external attractions, and not true indications of the real nature of their possessor. Father Donovan was, in truth, a worthy and pious man, but he was both rough and brusque, and not a little singular in some respects. His life had not been wholly destitute of peril and excitement; for not only had he been the witness of those scenes of horror which have been since then the theme of the philosopher and the property of the historian, but he was made to feel in them a terrible personal interest. Educated in France, at a time when society was heaving with the throes of revolution, he became chaplain to the family of a French nobleman, shortly before the storm burst forth which hurled throne into the dust, and prostrated altar in the mire. The rank of his patron being of itself sufficient to decide his fate before the so-called tribunals of the hour, which were in reality purveyors for the public shambles, he determined to fly from a danger which it would be madness to face, and was fortunate enough to escape to England. The nobleman

and his family fled in safety, while the Abbé Donovan was left in Paris, in charge of the hotel and its valuable contents. But as the guillotine was robbed of the Marquis, the Chaplain was made to take his place. It did not require many minutes, or a long deliberation, to find one of his order guilty of treason against the public safety; and the sentence was a matter of course.

It was a fine, bright sunshiny morning during the Reign of Terror, while yet Marat was a popular idol, and Charlotte Corday was brooding over her thoughts of vengeance away in the quiet province, when a long procession of victims wound its way through the streets of Paris, delighting a populace still unsatiated with blood. On it went, accompanied by a scoffing and yelling rabble, that surged and swayed against the horse-soldiers who guarded the prisoners, and who struggled to reach the scaffold with unbroken line. In one of the rude tumbrils was the Abbé Donovan, who had been actively employed during the preceding night in administering the consolations of religion to his fellow-captives. The goal was at length approached, and the first tumbril was close to the scaffold, on which stood the executioner and his assistants, ready for their dreadful work. Father Donovan, whose appearance was the signal for many a scoff and curse from the savage crowd that were now about to enjoy their daily feast of human slaughter, believed his last moment in this world had arrived; and having whispered a few words of hope and consolation to his companions in misery, he offered up a prayer to God, and prepared to meet his fate with the fortitude of a Christian. But just as he was about to cross the narrow space which appeared to separate him from eternity, an officer, whom Father Donovan ever after described in resplendent colours, rode up to the head of the procession, and raising his voice—'his melodious voice, sir'—above the hoarse murmur of the swaying multitude, cried out—'in the vernacular, sir'—'Are there any Irish

among you?' 'There are seven of us!' shrieked Father Donovan, in agonised response. 'Then have no fear,' said the officer, in a voice that sounded to Father Donovan's ears as the voice of an angel; and using his influence with the officials and guards, this man in authority had his seven countrymen put aside, on some pretence or other, and ultimately secured their safety. The guillotine and the friends of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity,' were so fully fed on that day, that both could spare the few prisoners who were rescued from the knife of the one, and the remorseless cruelty of the others. For some time after, as Father Donovan used to tell, he would shake his head rather doubtingly; 'for though,' said he, 'my pate was never any great things of a beauty, I would have felt mighty awkward without it.' In which opinion his friends generally concurred.

This event made a deep impression upon his mind; not so much in consequence of his own extraordinary escape from a fearful death, as from the idea of so many human beings summoned, almost without any preparation, before the Great Tribunal; and he determined that, if he could, he would devote himself thenceforward to the duty of attending on the condemned in their last moments. His wish was gratified; for, some time after his return to Ireland, he was appointed Chaplain to the County Gaol of Cork, but not before he had voluntarily prepared many a poor fellow to meet death with firmness, and in humble confidence in Divine mercy.

Those were times when executions were terribly frequent; as not only were many offences then punished by death which are in these merciful days sufficiently atoned for by a short period of imprisonment, but there were also classes of offences which sprang from the unsettled state of the country, and with which the law dealt relentlessly. Therefore, for a considerable time, Father Donovan had many opportunities of exercising his charity and zeal in bringing the condemned to a true consciousness of their awful position. Rough and ready

was the operation of the law in those times. In forty-eight hours after the prisoner stood in the dock, and heard his doom from the lips of his earthly judge, his soul was in the presence of a greater and more merciful tribunal. It is a short time for a man, strong in life, and with every faculty for enjoying existence, to be made to understand that at such a moment he is to die—to become as a clod of earth—cold, senseless—a thing to hide in the ground. A shorter time still in which to prepare for the solemn thought of the world beyond the grave. This fearful rapidity with which execution thus followed upon sentence, rendered necessary the constant attendance of the priest upon the condemned; and, as a rule, Father Donovan remained up with his penitents for the whole night previous to the fatal morning. It was then the custom to convey the prisoner from the gaol to a place outside the town, where the gallows was erected; and the bottom of the cart in which he was so conveyed was frequently the platform from which the victim of the law was launched into eternity. Often must the gaol chaplain have thought, as he sat in the cart beside the condemned, perhaps on the coffin which was so soon to receive his lifeless body, of that memorable procession through the streets of Paris, with the long line of tumbrils, in which old and young, the beautiful and the brave, the innocent girl and the strong man, were borne to death, amidst mocking cries, fierce gestures, and flaming eyes. Not that there was any, even the slightest, similarity in the conduct and bearing of the populace in both instances; for while the one mocked and cursed, the other sympathised and prayed; still there was enough of resemblance in the one procession to bring the other vividly before the mind.

Father Donovan had many an anecdote to tell of his experience as a gaol chaplain, and of how men bore themselves in the supreme moment of their fate. Though a good-natured man, his temper was not difficult to ruffle; and on one

occasion it was tried rather curiously. A prisoner was sentenced to death on Friday, and was to be executed on the following Monday. Father Donovan was, as usual, most zealous in his attention to the condemned, and employed the best means to bring him to a suitable state of mind. On Sunday, the priest assured his friends that 'that poor fellow up in the gaol was a most edifying penitent, whose thoughts were wholly fixed on heaven.' The hour too soon arrived at which the law was to take its course. The sad procession was slowly winding its way through one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, when the priest, who was absorbed in his pious efforts to complete his good work, was stunned by hearing the condemned man, who sat near him, cry out in a voice expressive of great amazement—'Oh, be the holy powers, that's quare! Yea, Father Donovan, alana, look there!—look at that fine man up there! But what is he doing there at all at all?' The priest indignantly glanced at the cause of this ill-timed excitement, and he saw, over the shop-front of a well-known ironmonger, the, to him, familiar figure of Vulcan, which, cleverly carved in wood and naturally coloured, stood, nude and brawny, leaning in an attitude of repose; the hammer resting on the anvil. The figure was sufficiently life-like to deceive the unhappy culprit, whose dread of death was not powerful enough to repress every emotion of curiosity or surprise.

When engaged in this duty of attending on the condemned in their last moments, it was Father Donovan's invariable custom to wear black silk breeches—this portion of his dress being of cloth on ordinary occasions. So that when the *silk* was seen adorning the well-turned limbs of the chaplain, it was known that the 'law was to take its course;' but when *cloth* was the material worn on a day, generally a Monday, on which an execution was to have taken place, it was equally certain that a reprieve had been received.

To make a 'decent' appearance on the scaffold was a matter of pride, and indeed of consolation, to many a poor fellow; and in the kindness and sympathy of the chaplain the condemned had an unfailing resource, for not only did Father Donovan freely 'lend' his own shirt, to render his penitent 'decent and clean' as he appeared before the public for the last hour of his life, but he as freely 'borrowed' the shirts of his friends for the same purpose. The lending and the borrowing in this case did not, as the reader may suppose, bear their ordinary signification; for neither the chaplain nor his friend ever again saw the article thus lent or borrowed.

From this cause, among others, it was rather hard to keep Father Donovan in shirts, his stock of linen being at times reduced to a very scanty complement, as the following incident will show. He had been on one occasion invited to join a yachting party by the wealthy owner of a fine boat, in which the good priest had more than once before enjoyed a pleasant sail and an agreeable day. 'Mind you are ready in time, Father Frank; for if we delay, we'll lose the finest part of the day, and have the tide against us besides.' 'Oh, make yourself easy about me; I'm sure to be punctual,' said Father Frank, with an air of confidence that nearly satisfied his friend. 'Very well; but if you are not with us at my house by such an hour, I will call for you at your place.' The morning of the intended excursion arrived, but the friar was not true to his tryst. Time was slipping away, and still no appearance of Father Frank. So the friend proceeded to the well-known cock-loft, in which the unpunctual priest dwelt. To his quick and vehement application to the outer door, a very elderly woman responded, after a cautious 'Who's there?' by opening it to Mr. ——. 'Is Father Donovan within? I have been waiting for him all the morning.' The old lady made some vague reply, and looked a little confused; but, on being pressed, she admitted that he was still in bed.

'In bed! why, what's the matter? is he ill?—he, such an early riser, to be in bed, and a whole party waiting for him! I must see what it means.' So saying, the speaker turned to the door of Father Frank's room, which he found to be locked. He then knocked sharply with his knuckles, crying out, 'Father Donovan! Father Frank! are you within? what's the matter? are you sick?' No answer. More knocking, and renewed appeals to Father Frank. 'Man, I'll kick in the door if I do n't get an answer,' said the impatient gentleman, as the vision of his yacht riding buoyantly at Cove, and straining at her anchor, and his friends waiting ready to start, crossed his mind. This last appeal was effectual, for there was a creaking of the bedstead audible, and then a scramble towards the door, and a turning of the key, and then a shuffle back, and more creaking of the bedstead. In rushed the exasperated owner of the yacht, who could only see a pair of beseeching eyes and a rather red nose above the bed-clothes. 'What does this mean?—are you sick?—do you know the hour?—what's the matter?' The reply was uttered in a plaintive voice—'I had a little disappointment, child.' 'Good heavens! I hope nothing serious? what is it, Father Frank? can I be of any use?' 'No, my dear, none in life; there is only one in the world who can help me now, and that's Molly,' said the occupant of the bed, in dolorous tones. 'Molly! Molly!—what of Molly?—what has she to do with your being in bed?' 'Well, my child, if you must have the truth, which is always the best, I must tell you that I determined to do honour to your party, and to appear as a gentleman ought; and in a fit of confiding simplicity I entrusted my only shirt to Molly, to do up; and here I am, all this blessed morning, fuming and fretting my life out, and she by the way starching and ironing it! My blessing on you, Molly!—'t is you that would make up linen for the Prince Regent, let alone for a poor Irish friar!' Father Frank's last shirt, save

the one in Molly's hands, had graced the person of a penitent of his, who had been hanged the week before, and whose last moments were not a little cheered by the consciousness of the effect produced on his friends and the public in general by the beauty and whiteness of that garment. Molly, the old attendant, at last succeeded in the performance of her task, and the toilet was completed to the satisfaction of Father Frank and his anxious friend; who, it may be added, soon after presented the priest with a good stock of shirts, which, however, went in time the same road as their predecessors.

It was not alone by such small sacrifices that Father Donovan soothed the unhappy men whom he attended to the scaffold. The thought of what would become of their wretched families, when they were no more, would frequently add to the bitterness of their last hours; but the assurance of the priest, that he would take care of them and watch over them, rarely failed in its tranquillising effect. And once that the promise was given, it was sure to be kept, as many of his friends knew to their cost, for Father Frank made them sharers in the good work.

One day, Father Donovan, meeting a respectable lady with whose family he was most intimate, abruptly said: 'Congratulate me!—I have a young priest at last—and a charming young fellow he is, I can assure you.' 'I hope, Father Donovan, you will be kind to him,' remarked the lady. 'Kind to him!—to be sure I will; why not?' The lady evidently suspected that Father Donovan was not always a lamb of gentleness to his young coadjutors; and perhaps she had some reason for so thinking. But whatever he might have been to Father Mathew's predecessors, to him he never gave the smallest cause of complaint. And Father Mathew was the 'charming young fellow' whose arrival he so exultingly announced. Scant, however, was the accommodation for the new comer, and great was the

difficulty to provide for his reception. Indeed, it would be hard to find a more miserable hole than what was, in fact and in reality, the Capuchin convent of the city of Cork. It consisted of two small rooms and a kind of closet, formed of what was afterwards the organ-loft of the little chapel; which organ-loft was above the gallery that faced the altar. One of the small rooms was the property of Father Donovan, the other was to become the possession of Father Mathew. To furnish this room for the stranger was a task of no light care to Father Donovan. It had a bedstead, and even a bed, but not a vestige of sheet or blanket. Perhaps, were the truth known, it might be found that sheets and blankets had been made over to some distressed neighbour, who had whispered a sad tale into the ear of that priest of rough exterior but tender heart. To purchase these essential articles was out of the question, in the normal state of Father Donovan's exchequer, and therefore they had to be got by some other means, and were accordingly 'borrowed' of an obliging friend, who would have been delighted to 'lend' a much more valuable equipment for the same purpose.

The difficulty of the bedclothes having been happily got over, there then was the dinner to provide; and how is that to be managed? thought Father Donovan. Easily enough to him. 'Come with me, child, and I'll show you some of the sights of the city,' said he to the young stranger. Having honestly fulfilled his promise in this respect, he brought him to the door of a respectable-looking house, occupied by a family as remarkable for their worth as for their hospitality. 'Come in here, child; I want to see a friend, to whom I must introduce you.' Briefly introducing his companion to the lady and gentleman of the house, he whispered to him, 'Stay here till I come back, and be sure you wait for me,' and then abruptly quitted the room, leaving the bashful and modest young friar to get on as well as he could with persons to whom he had been pre-

viously unknown. He should have waited a long time had he waited for the return of his superior. Poor young priest ! that was a day of trial for him. No one possessed more thoroughly the feelings and instincts of a gentleman than he did ; and yet, in obedience to the injunction which he had received, he was compelled to remain, though in a state of mental torture, until the usual hour for dinner had been struck by the house clock. The dinner was at length announced, when Father Mathew, whose embarrassment and annoyance were every moment on the increase, rose to depart. 'No, no, Father Mathew,' said the lady of the house, 'you must not go—you are to dine with us—you know we expected you.' 'Expected me, madam !—I assure you I ordered my dinner.' 'That may be, my dear sir ; but still you must dine with us. Father Donovan kindly promised us that pleasure, and he was good enough to bring you here himself.' This, then, was the meaning of the whispered injunction, 'Stay here till I come back ; be sure you wait for me.' The cordiality and kindness of the good lady and her husband broke down all reserve ; and that day was the commencement of a mutual friendship which neither failed nor flagged at this side of the grave.

The two friars became strongly attached to each other ; and yet rarely were two men more widely different from each other in many respects. The one, rough and brusque, and not unfrequently passionate and inconsiderate—the other, gentle and courteous, sweet-tempered and thoughtful ; the one, occasionally evincing a sublime disdain for the graces and amenities of life—the other, almost formal in the observance of the established rules and customs of society.

But there was this bond which linked the two men together : they each recognised the worth of the other, and they both yearned for some one in whom to centre their affections—one whom to love, and to be loved by. Soon the mutual feeling of regard ripened into the strongest and

warmest affection, rendered more sacred, on the one hand, by that paternal feeling which age and a desire to cherish and protect inspired, and, on the other hand, by filial respect, and instinctive reverence for authority, and that natural humility which induced a willing and cheerful obedience.

Father Donovan seemed, as it were, to have got a new lease of life since the arrival of his youthful coadjutor, of whose amiability and goodness he was never wearied of speaking. 'Indeed, Father Donovan,' said a friend to him one day, 'there is really no bearing with you of late, you are so proud since your little Apostle has come to you.' The zeal and holiness of the young priest even then suggested to the mind this most beautiful and sacred form of appellation. In five-and-twenty years after, he was known in every quarter of the globe as the 'Apostle of Temperance.'

If any mortal man could be said to be truly happy, Father Donovan might certainly lay claim to that rare distinction. But there was one cloud that occasionally shadowed his happiness—the want of an organ and a choir. Two difficulties, and rather material ones, stood in the way of the acquisition of the first object. The one was the poverty of the church, the other was the limited space of the building. The church itself exactly measured 43 feet in length, and about the same in breadth ; and from the rails of the altar to the interior of the porch, the space did not exceed 28 or 30 feet. So that, were there money to purchase the organ, there was no place in which to erect it. What might be, and what eventually was, the organ-loft, was then occupied as the dwelling-place of the two priests and an aged attendant. Still, notwithstanding the impossibility of accomplishing his wish, the idea of an organ and choir haunted the brain of Father Donovan, and he determined to accomplish his purpose by some means or other. At length, he believed he had overcome all obstacles, and had realised the darling object of his ambition.

Father Mathew was conscious of a striking change in the manner and bearing of his reverend friend, who suddenly manifested a degree of softness and gentleness not generally common to him, and who walked with a springy and rather boyish step, as if he were revelling in the possession of some joyful secret. 'I have it, my dear boy—I have it, at last—at last, sir!' exclaimed Father Donovan one day to his friend, in a tone of exultation. 'Have what, my dear Father Donovan?' gently enquired Father Mathew. 'Why, the organ, my dear boy! I have such a treat for you for next Sunday. Yes, sir; the organ. I knew I'd have it at last.' 'An organ! my dear Father Donovan; how are we to get it, and where are we to put it?' was the natural question. 'It's all right. I got it, sir—a most beautiful instrument; and as for room, it won't occupy any space. You will be sure to be delighted, and so will our poor people. I tell you what it is, the *Adeste* is heavenly. Wait till you hear it.' Father Donovan then explained how he had procured a barrel-organ, which played a number of sacred airs, such as the *Adeste fidelis* and the *Sicilian Mariners' Hymn*; and that these could be fittingly introduced during Mass, and also at Vespers. The musician would be under his control, and he (Father Donovan) would be responsible for the admirable effect of this delightful innovation. The Sunday, fraught with anticipated triumph to Father Donovan, arrived. The organ and its operator were in the little chapel, and Father Donovan was having a vigilant eye to both. Nothing could be a more decided success than the *Adeste*, as many besides Father Donovan thought it 'heavenly;' nor was its effect lessened by the plaintive sweetness of the *Hymn*. Tears of rapture stood in the eyes of Father Donovan. It was a moment of unalloyed triumph, such as mortals experience but rarely in this life. The Last Gospel was just being read by Father Mathew, who was the celebrant, when the operator commenced a third air; but—horror of

horrors!—instead of one of those gentle and spirit-breathing strains that lift the soul to heaven in a flood of holy melody, out rattled the two-well-known air of '*Moll in the wad!*' It would be impossible to describe the bewilderment of the congregation, or the rage and confusion of poor Father Donovan, at this 'awful scandal,' which nearly threw him into a fever, from shame and humiliation. His friends were, thenceforward, rather cautious in their allusions to mechanical music, and indeed organs of all kinds; and as for the remotest reference to '*Moll in the wad,*' that would have been a rashness as fatal to peace, as it would have been cruel and ungenerous to the sorely-afflicted friar.

For a time, little was known of the young priest, who was rarely to be met with beyond the precincts of his chapel, and who with difficulty could be drawn from the retirement of the miserable apartment which was appropriated to his use. Miserable indeed it was in every respect; for not only was it bare of furniture, and mean and poor in its accommodation, but the vitiated air from the congregation, whose clothes were frequently saturated with rain, ascended to this as well as to the adjoining chamber, producing its natural effect even upon his youthful frame and robust constitution. If one desired to see Father Mathew, the most likely place in which to find him was the confessional. As in Kilkenny, the number of his penitents rapidly increased, and with them, of course, increased the labour which he had to undergo in consequence of his growing popularity.

To those who know little or nothing of this branch of the duty of a Catholic clergyman, it would be almost impossible to describe with accuracy its wearying and engrossing nature. Constant attendance in a crowded court is fatiguing to the lawyer, whether he be actually engaged in business or otherwise; but can its irksomeness, which is relieved by mental excitement, or by the interest felt in the

conduct of a case, be compared to the dull, monotonous, terrible drudgery of the priest, who is popular with the poor, and whose confessional is therefore much frequented? Some idea of the labour undergone by Father Mathew in this department of his priestly duty may be understood, when it is mentioned that, on certain days in the week, he was in his confessional as early as five o'clock in the morning. In this box, his portion of which was about the width of an ordinary arm-chair, he generally sat till eight o'clock, if he had to say mass; or till nine, if he had not: but as soon as breakfast was over, he was to be found in the same place, with an anxious crowd at either side, each person awaiting his or her turn to kneel at one of the two compartments. Were it Saturday, or the vigil of a festival, the duty, which commenced at five in the morning, did not terminate till ten, and frequently eleven o'clock, at night. Towards evening the number always increased, as it was then only the working people could conveniently attend. In this confined box, surrounded by those whose poverty was painfully evidenced in the wretched condition of their clothing, the unpleasantness aggravated by the wetness of the weather or the heaviness of the atmosphere, Father Mathew was pent up, oftentimes for fifteen hours, as well during the stifling heat of summer as in the numbing cold of winter; but though this constant attendance was a fearful tax upon his strength, and no small strain upon his constitution, he never wearied of his work but persevered in it with the most extraordinary energy and the most marvellous punctuality.

Let the reader imagine the young priest, in this little chapel, seated in that circumscribed box, surrounded by a crowd, poor, badly clad, with garments reeking with moisture; and then think of the various trades and occupations in which the penitents had been engaged up to the moment they had entered the sacred building. There was the dealer

in salt fish, the workman in the chandlery, those engaged in killing meat for market or curing it for exportation, the makers of puddings and sausages, and, omitting many others, the lamplighters of the city!—the odour from whose clothes, however tolerable in the open air, must have been overpowering in a confined and ill-ventilated place. For eighteen or twenty years after Father Mathew had made Cork his future home, oil lamps were alone used in its streets; and this mode of illumination required a considerable staff of lamplighters. So soon as Father Mathew's fame spread abroad, the lamplighters turned to his confessional; and these poor fellows, whose clothes literally reeked with fish oil in every stage of decomposition, though most excellent and edifying Christians, were about the least savoury of human beings. At first, these highly flavoured penitents were almost too much for the jaded stomach of the young priest to endure; but he never, in any way, manifested the slightest repugnance to their close neighbourhood, and ere long it became to him a matter of indifference.

It was in the confessional that he laid the foundation of his future fame. His reputation as a spiritual director spread from parish to parish of the city, gradually it reached to its remotest confines, and so travelled far beyond; until, subsequently, it was said, with as much of truth as of pleasantry—that if a carman from Kerry brought a firkin of butter into the Cork market, he would not return home until he had gone to confession to Father Mathew. It may here be mentioned that, in order to hear the confessions of people from the country, many of whom then spoke no other language than Irish, Father Mathew set himself diligently to learn the native tongue; and that after a time he became sufficiently conversant with it for the purposes of his ministry.

An incident occurred to him on one occasion which left a deep impression on his mind. It was on a Sunday

morning, when he had been engaged in the church from six o'clock until after ten, in hearing confessions, celebrating Mass, and again hearing confessions. He had been in his confessional the night before till eleven o'clock; so that, when on this morning he was about to leave the church in order to get his breakfast, it might well be supposed that he was both hungry and weary. But as he was about to leave, four sailors rolled in, and requested him to hear their confessions. 'Why did you not come at a more reasonable hour?' asked Father Mathew, in a tone of momentary irritation; 'I can't hear you now, come in the morning.' The sailors turned to go, when a devout poor woman, who had witnessed the interview, gently approached him, and touching his arm, said, in a voice of respectful entreaty, 'They may not come again, sir.' This implied remonstrance made an instantaneous impression on his mind; and running after the sailors, who had left in the meantime, he brought them back to the confessional, and remained with them until he had administered the sacraments to each. He then entertained them at breakfast, and dismissed them in a happy state of mind. He afterwards thanked the poor woman, 'through whom,' he said, 'the Holy Ghost had spoken to him.'

In some years subsequent to the period of which we now treat, a Catholic lady said to an elderly servant in her house—'Well, Kitty, how do you like Father Mathew as a director?' 'Wisha, purty well, ma'm.' 'What do you mean by "purty well?"' enquired the mistress. 'Well, indeed, ma'm, he's a beautiful director, not a doubt about it; but—' here Kitty paused. 'What do you mean by your "but?"' persevered the mistress, whose interest was excited by the manner of her servant. 'Then, ma'm, the way of it is this—the worse you are in the beginning, the more he'd like you, and the better he'd use you; but if you didn't improve very soon, there is no usage too bad for you.' The mistress was strongly in favour of Kitty not changing her new director.

Day by day, did the young friar win his way to the hearts of the poor, and to the respect and confidence of the rich. The people could not think of him without love, or speak of him without enthusiasm. He was so gentle and compassionate to them, so respectful to poverty, in which, as he frequently said, he ever saw the image of the Redeemer; he was so earnest in his desire to rescue the erring from vice, and to raise the fallen to a new life; he was so full of fervour and zeal, and yet without harshness or austerity—that he took captive the affections of all who came within the reach of his influence. This is not the testimony of one; it is that of hundreds.

As the circle of his acquaintance became extended, so likewise was multiplied the number of his friends; and, with Father Mathew, once his friend, his friend for ever—for that must have been a quarrelsome and perverse person indeed, whose conduct severed the sacred tie with one who literally revelled in the delights of friendship. He thus began to be more generally known; and as he became more known, so did his influence extend among the class whose aid and assistance were frequently of use to him in the promotion of those good works to which he soon turned his attention.

An instance may here be given of the strength and devotedness of his friendship. It was in the summer of the year 1817, when he had been about three years in Cork, that that city was visited with an outbreak of fever of a peculiarly malignant character—in fact, the worst form of typhus; a disease which has long made its home in Ireland, and which, in the period of pressure arising from scarcity of food, is sure to manifest its dreaded presence. Father Mathew was then very intimate with a family of great worth, well known and universally respected on account of their religious and charitable disposition. The eldest son, who was then springing into manhood, was struck down by the sickness, which was making fearful ravages amidst the

poor, and rapidly picking out its victims from among the wealthier class, to which the family in question belonged. Their residence was some distance, perhaps a mile and a half, from Father Mathew's little crib in Blackamoor Lane, where, like his predecessor, Father O'Leary, he was 'buried amid salt-houses and stables.' But, as early as five o'clock in the morning, the watchman, were he in the way, might have seen a slight active figure climbing the wall which surrounded the pleasure ground attached to the residence, and rapidly making its way to the rear of the building. This was Father Mathew, whose anxiety for the safety of his young friend was so intense, that he sought the earliest intelligence of how he had passed the night, but whose consideration for the people of the lodge would not suffer him to disturb them at that hour to open the gate for him, and admit him in the usual way. The invalid, who was the object of so much solicitude, recovered from the attack, and lives to this day to tell, with grateful emotion, of a friendship so earnest and so sincere.

CHAPTER III.

Father Mathew establishes Literary and Industrial Schools—Attracts the Young to him—Founds valuable Societies—Economy of Time—Punctuality in keeping Appointments—Early Rising—Same Kindness to all—His lavish Charities—Instances of his Kindness—The imaginary Temptation—The Dean's Bees—He loses his youngest Brother—Instance of his Humility—His Preaching—His Passion Sermon—Charity Sermons—Establishes a Cemetery—The Cholera of 1832—His Services in the Hospital—Saved!

BECOMING, after a time, thoroughly acquainted with the teeming population around him, their wants, their necessities, their virtues as well as their vices, he witnessed with pain the operation of two parent evils—ignorance and idleness; and he determined, so far as he could, to provide the usual remedies to counteract their baneful influence—namely, education and employment. There were some few schools in the city for the humblest class of the community; but at the time when Father Mathew drew round him active co-operators in his benevolent work, education was much more restricted than it is at present, when it is placed fairly within the reach of all who desire to avail themselves of its advantages. As to industrial training, it was not much thought of in those days. The efforts which Father Mathew then made, in establishing a school in which industrial was combined with literary training, and in forming associations at once educational and charitable, were the fruitful germs of undertakings of far greater magnitude, which were afterwards developed into widely-extended and permanent useful-