

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-

ness. He opened a school for female children, and procured for it the attendance of a number of ladies who, at his earnest solicitation, devoted themselves with zeal to its superintendence. In this admirable school, which was established in a large store adjoining the Friary, hundreds of children were instructed in the ordinary rudiments of literary knowledge, and were also taught plain and other work, which was made for them a source of profit and support. They also received from those good ladies, whom they had so much reason to respect, lessons of piety and virtue, which strengthened while they formed their moral character, and prepared them to resist some of the worst temptations common to their condition of life. This school progressed and prospered, and was ere long felt to be a blessing to the neighbourhood. Father Mathew cherished it as the apple of his eye. In the year 1824 there were 500 pupils, grown girls as well as children, in this school. The upper loft, or apartment, was occupied by 200 girls, who were constantly employed in various kinds of work during the hours in which they were not engaged in learning the ordinary lessons taught in such schools. The lower loft of the store contained 300 children, a large proportion of them of tender years. There was also an evening or night school for boys, many of them orphan or deserted children, but all of the very humblest and poorest class.

To attract the young towards him by every honest art of persuasion and inducement, and to acquire and maintain over them a salutary yet gentle control, was with him an instinct as well as a policy. And few men were more calculated than he was to win the confidence of the young, and to inspire them with a deep interest in what they were taught, and a sentiment of personal devotion to their teacher. Father Mathew naturally preferred adopting the suggestion of the *blandi doctores* of Horace to the stern maxim of Solomon. The *crustula* were, in his esteem, a more effectual agent than the rod. Sweet

smiles, and gentle words, and tender caresses, and timely presents, and occasional feasts, and pleasant trips into the country—these were some of the means which he employed with a number of interesting boys and youths of the middle class, whom he attracted to his church, and formed into societies, whose objects were at once religious, educational, and charitable. They attended at the altar, and, by their decorum of conduct and gravity of demeanour, and the neatness and even picturesqueness of the costume which he had provided for them, added considerably to the pomp and impressiveness of the religious ceremonial for which the 'Little Friary,' as it was commonly called, became remarkable under Father Mathew's auspices. The young men taught catechism, and instructed poor children to read and write; and they improved their own minds through the aid of a well-stocked library, which their patron established for their use and enjoyment. They also visited the sick, and relieved their physical wants, as well as read for them and prayed with them. Here, in the Josephian Society of forty-four years since—for it was established by its founder in the year 1819—was the precursor of more than one association which in this day proves to be of so much advantage to its members, and which bridges over, as with a bridge of gold, the chasm that divides the different classes of society—especially those who possess almost everything, and those who want almost everything.

Father Mathew was most remarkable for his faculty of economising time. A favourite proverb of his was—'Take time by the forelock, for he is bald behind'; and few ever so uniformly and persistently practised the wise lesson which it teaches as he did. He made time by husbanding and economising it. Rising early, generally about five o'clock, and, if necessary even earlier, he got through much business while other men were still in bed. Though, like all who are constantly engaged in some engrossing pursuit, he

felt the day rapidly pass, he nevertheless found it* to suffice for the discharge of his varied duties. He seemed to have the right moment for everything, and this too when his duties became more onerous and pressing, and the claims upon his attention were multiplied in consequence alike of his great popularity, and the every day widening circle of his acquaintance. In his appointments he was punctual to the minute, always at the appointed place at the appointed moment. 'In fact,' to use the words of a brother clergyman who knew and loved him from the first year of his ministry in Cork, 'he was never once absent from where his duty called him, whether by a public necessity or a private claim, or where his presence could console the afflicted, or give hope to the despairing.' It might be added that he was as punctual as punctilious in his visits of friendship, and even of ceremony; though it must be admitted that he contrived to combine a little business with occasions of the kind. For instance, when visiting at the house of a friend, he was sure to ask after the 'young gentlemen' of the family; and when the young gentlemen appeared, perhaps in obedience to a special summons, and that he had fondled and caressed them, as usual, he contrived to whisper into their blushing ear, 'My dear, you are forgetting me altogether; I have not seen you of late,'—a hint which was unfailingly understood, and which was generally successful. So that these visits of friendship enabled the watchful shepherd to keep his young flock from straying into devious paths. But whatever the duty, public or private, he was certain to perform it with exemplary regularity; and thus, by early rising, and the assistance of a programme, carefully prepared in the morning, Father Mathew got through an amount of work which three or four really active and energetic men, not possessing his method, would have found it hard to have equalled. Being one day asked by a friend how he contrived to rise so early as he did, he answered, while pointing to an adjoining

cooperage, then in full operation, 'If I were a cooper, and bound to Mr. —, I should be up as early, so as to be at my work at the appointed time, and thus become pleasing to Mr. —, my master. But I have a higher calling, and I serve a better Master; and am I to be less desirous of pleasing that Master than I should be to satisfy Mr. —?'

It will be seen how this habit of early rising, and the method with which he provided for each hour of the day, served him in those wonderful exertions which he subsequently displayed in his mission as leader of the temperance movement.

Father Mathew was a gentleman by birth and association, and his tendencies might have naturally led him to seek the society of persons of the higher rather than of the humbler class; but there never was a man who was more thoroughly free from the vice of toadying to the great—whether the greatness were derived from power, position, wealth, or the accident of birth. He was respectful to those who held a high position, and deferential to authority, whether ecclesiastical or civil; but though full of humility and modesty, still there was a kind of unconscious dignity, and even nobleness, in the man, which kept him free from the slightest taint of meanness or cringing. When occasions drew together the representatives of various classes in the social scale, there was not a shade of difference in his manner to one more than to another—the same genial courtesy, the same consideration, the same kindly interest and cordial politeness. Father Mathew's manner was polished, but it was not artificial. There was this difference between it and the mere conventional politeness, which complies with the outward forms and observances of society, but which has no heart in it; Father Mathew was kind and courteous from thorough goodness of disposition, which is the true foundation of that quality which we understand as 'gentlemanly.' A true gentleman is always considerate to the feelings of others; and

this delicacy of sentiment is as often found under the homespun of the peasant as under the broadcloth of the courtier. In this sense Father Mathew was preeminently a gentleman. To the poor he was respectful and tender, indeed almost reverential. 'They,' he used to say, 'will be as high in heaven as the highest in the land.'

The circumstances of the Friary were now different from what they had been before Father Mathew's arrival. The church, though miserably small, displayed an air of neatness and elegance, and the condition of the clergymen attached to it was much improved. Father Mathew received a considerable number of offerings and 'intentions ;'* but as his pecuniary resources were increased, so were his charities multiplied. If he gave but little before, it was because he had only little to give, and he now gave abundantly because he had much to give. His daily duties brought him into contact with miseries and wretchedness in every imaginable form, and he never saw distress, in whatever shape, without attempting to relieve it. Here, in the midst of a poor and populous district, was a fitting theatre for the benevolent labours of such a man as Theobald Mathew. To give, and give with open hand, was with him, independently of its being a duty binding upon a minister of religion, a positive pleasure, an intense gratification—a kind of voluptuous enjoyment. Not only did he give charity himself, but he encouraged others to give it. 'Give, give, give!—have no fear of giving. What you have, you got from God; and be assured you will never be the worse of what you give in His name.' This was his answer to a person who talked of caution and prudence in the exercise of this great Christian virtue. He certainly had no fear of giving, giving with open hand and unstinted measure. Besides his regular pensioners, who were the very poor, he had a large number of room-

* Money given to a priest for masses to be offered up for some special purpose and intention.

keepers whom he constantly relieved. Then there were orphans, who clung round his very heart; and widows, whose claim on his compassion was irresistible. Where he possibly could, he provided for the one, and relieved the other. There was a class, however, to whom he was peculiarly tender and respectful—those who, to use an expressive phrase, had seen better days. Nothing could surpass his delicate consideration for their sensitive feelings. If he could not himself relieve persons of this class without hurting their susceptibility, he did so in secret, and without his name being known or his hand seen. Instances might be mentioned of families in distress, or under a cloud, and who had at one time been prosperous, and had carried a high head in their day, being visited by some one who, in the dusk of evening or the darkness of night, enquired of them at the door, handed in a letter, and then vanished. The letter contained money—money sadly needed—but the donor was unknown; and it was only in years after that those who had been thus made the bearers of his bounty, revealed the fact that Father Mathew was the unknown benefactor whose delicate charity assisted those families in their hour of need, perhaps rescued them from despair. The clerk of his chapel was frequently the medium through whom this timely bounty reached its intended object; and speaking on one occasion of his lavish charities, the clerk adopted this rather expressive mode of describing his superior's faculty or love of giving:—'Look, sir! here is my notion on the subject,—if the streets of Cork were paved with gold, and if Father Mathew had entire control over them, and could do what he liked with them, there would not be a paving-stone in all Cork by the end of the year.'

Surely the boy was, in this instance, the father of the man. The child who clung to his mother's side, and fondly importuned her for her little feasts for his brothers, and indulgences for the servants, and alms for the poor, was

here reflected in the priest, whose whole thought was how he could do good—how feed the hungry, and cover the naked, and raise the fallen—how minister to the sorrowful and the afflicted.

A case in point will exhibit the delicacy of his respect for those who had seen better days, and his quick sympathy with their feelings at what they considered the worst degradation of poverty. It was that of two young and attractive girls who, though delicately nurtured and carefully educated, unfortunately had no claim by birth upon their father's property. So long as they lived with their father, they knew nothing of sorrow or humiliation, and the world was to them without a cloud. But the father resolved to marry; and as there was no possibility of their being received by his future wife, he was compelled, through his selfishness, to make them over to the protection of relatives, who, having apprenticed the poor girls to the dressmaking business, gave themselves little further trouble about them. One of the girls bore the change bravely; but the other, who was delicate in constitution, and sensitive of disposition, gradually pined away, and, ere many months had passed, died. The father and his wife had left the country, and the surviving girl was as utterly desolate as she was destitute. What to do she knew not. To defray expenses of a funeral she had no means whatever; and her mistress, being either unwilling or unable to provide better, was about to have the remains of the dead girl carried to the grave in a rude shell, or parish coffin. Bold and brave as she was, the surviving sister could not endure this crowning indignity; for, in her mind, this was poverty in its most odious and revolting aspect. A thought struck her—she would appeal to one who had always been kind to her and her sister. Quitting the mean apartment, in which lay the body of the poor young creature, and the rude shell that had been brought for its reception, she rushed through the streets, and, wild and

almost breathless, reached the Friary, where she found Father Mathew. Flinging herself on her knees before him, she could only sob out, 'Oh, Father Mathew! oh, Father Mathew!' 'My dear child, what is the matter? tell me, what has happened?' 'Oh, Father Mathew, they are going to bury my poor sister in a parish coffin!' This was repeated hysterically by the unhappy girl, whose strength and courage were now completely broken down. 'No, my dear child; they shall not do so. Rise up, my poor child, and have no fear. I will have her buried properly,' was Father Mathew's instantaneous reply. And he fully redeemed his word; for he went that moment to a respectable undertaker, and gave the necessary directions; and as early as five o'clock the next morning, there was a hearse and pair of horses at the door, and a chaise for the officiating priest, who, it need scarcely be said, was Father Mathew. In an hour after, he was found in his confessional; as he would not allow even a luxury of the kind—the luxury of doing good—to interfere with his ordinary, but, with him, imperative duties. It is pleasing to know that this considerate generosity produced the most salutary effect upon the mind of the young girl, who soon regained her former strength and courage, and persevered at her employment till she learned to maintain herself independently.

Another case will afford the reader a further insight into the character of Father Mathew, and will also serve to show on what solid foundations rested the daily increasing fame of this good and holy man. A miserably poor woman, long and helplessly bedridden, had for her sole support on earth an only daughter, a girl of angelic sweetness, who lived but to minister to her afflicted mother. By incessant toil at her needle, this delicate girl just earned as much as enabled her to supply her mother with necessaries, and an occasional comfort; but for herself, her thin and scanty dress and transparent fingers told with terrible eloquence

of her bitter struggles and heroic self-denial. To feed her bedridden mother, she starved herself. If the holiest and most exalted love could have borne her up in her hard struggle, she might have fought the good fight successfully; but the poor child sank under the fearful pressure, and died—as such die—in peace. The wretched mother was stunned by a blow for which she had not been prepared. She was blind, and could not see the fatal hectic upon her darling's cheek, though she might have noticed the faltering footstep and the failing voice. Nor, such was the loving deception practised upon her by her daughter, could she have imagined that, while she had enough to satisfy her wants, her poor child was at that very time dying of hunger. In her despair, this bereaved blind creature lifted her voice, and in her momentary madness blasphemed God—Who took from her, as she foolishly thought, her only support. She raved and cursed in the frenzy of her grief. Father Mathew heard the sad story, which at once excited his compassion. The scene of this misery was a wretched garret in one of the worst lanes of the city. Thither he went without delay, but not before he had provided himself with necessaries and comforts suited to the condition of the invalid. He found her still inconsolable, and raving in her despair; but soon his gentle voice, fraught with tenderness and compassion, made this helpless creature feel that God had not abandoned her, even in this world. With his own hands he fed her; nor did he leave her bedside until he had brought her to a right state of mind, and placed her in care of a person whom he had provided to attend and take charge of her. Next day, he constructed an altar in that dismal garret, and afforded her the unwonted consolation of being present at the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. The poor creature, who was naturally religious and resigned to the will of Providence, perfectly recovered her right mind. She did not, however, long survive her daughter; but so

long as she lived, she was supported and watched over by Father Mathew. Her death was full of peace and gentleness, and, in her last audible prayer to the Throne of Mercy, the name of her child was coupled with blessings upon her benefactor. Father Mathew concluded his good work by following her body to the grave, where it was laid by the side of that young creature whose short life had been that of a martyr and a saint.

Father Donovan died about the year 1820, to the deep sorrow of his attached friend, who during their intimate connection had looked upon him as a father, and loved him with the tenderness of a son. The effect which this loss produced on the mind of Father Mathew was very painful: for a time his nervous system was completely prostrated. It was during this distressing period of physical and mental prostration that he imagined himself to be tried by the following temptation. Resisting the kindly importunities of his friends, who sought to distract his grief by the influences of agreeable society, he shut himself up in his unwholesome chamber, and there brooded in secret over his gloomy thoughts. As he sat one evening by himself before the fire, whose flickering light filled the room with fantastic shadows, a voice seemed to whisper in his ear—'Father Mathew, that Cognac in the cupboard is delicious. You have not tasted it. Why do n't you try it?' Yielding to the delusion, Father Mathew replied, audibly—'Tea is much better.' 'But you did n't taste the Cognac—it is delicious—only try it,' whispered the imaginary voice. 'No; tea is much better,' replied Father Mathew, now starting up in alarm. He seized his hat, and almost ran the short distance which separated the Friary from the residence of Dean Collins, the Parish Priest of St. Finn Barr's. He told the cause of his abrupt visit to his venerable friend, who was then in his seventieth year. 'It was a suggestion of the Evil One, my child, and you did well to resist it,' was the answer of the Dean. The next day, the Cognac,

which had been given as a present to Father Mathew, was sent by him to a friend. The voice was never audible again, simply because the nerves had recovered their wonted strength.

In those days there was not that cordial feeling which now happily exists between the different orders of the clergy ; and the earnest support of a powerful friend, like the Dean and Vicar-General of the diocese, and pastor of the parish in which his chapel stood, was of no small service to Father Mathew, the Capuchin. But that friendship was fairly won by sterling merit and by good works. It would be difficult to conceive a grander or more imposing High Priest than Dean Collins, as he stood upon the altar, engaged in some solemn office of his ministry. Tall and commanding in stature, the snowy whiteness of his hair imparted a venerable majesty to his aspect. His face was beautiful in feature, but more beautiful in expression. His eye was large, dark, and soul-searching, but its light was usually softened by the tenderness of his disposition ; and it was only when he had to deal with the base or the mean, or when he thundered at some scandalous abuse, that it flashed like lightning. Dean Collins had all the graceful dignity and bearing of a gentleman of the old school, and, in society, his fascination of manner was most remarkable. An able and learned man, he was still as simple as a child. Of powerful intellect and great wisdom, he was modest and unpretending. Originally well educated, and a scholar of considerable attainments, he was not satisfied with knowing only what he had learned in his youth ; but during his long career as a missionary priest, he steadily kept pace with the progress of the age ; and to his latest moments he was thoroughly conversant with the literature, the philosophy, the discoveries of the time, as well as a keen observer of the political changes by which nations were influenced either for good or ill. He did not love learning in a selfish spirit ; he equally loved to disseminate it. The

memory of the days when it was surrounded with danger to those who sought to drink from its spring, was ever present to his mind ; and he spared no effort to procure its waters pure and unpolluted for the children of his flock. His almost dying words will best represent his zeal in the cause of education, and his vivid recollection of the evil days that had gone.

It was a few days before he died ; and he lay stretched on a sofa, the sunlight and the soft breeze of summer entering through the open casement. One of his curates, the Rev. Wm. O'Connor, was with him in the room. Suddenly, the Dean said, in a low but impressive voice—'Do n't you hear the bees, Father William ?' 'No, sir ; I do not,' answered his curate, who went over to the window, to look into the garden into which it opened. 'Do n't you hear the boys in the school, laying up honey for the winter of life ?' 'Do n't you hear the bees now, Father William ?' 'Yes sir, indeed I do ; I hear *your* bees.' They were his bees, for it was he who had built the hive for them, and called them together to possess it. 'Well I remember,' continued the dying priest, 'when I was learning my classics, I had to watch on the ditch side to protect the life of my teacher. The older boys used to take that necessary duty in turn ; and many a time has my eye wandered over the surrounding country from the pages of my *Virgil*, to see if there was a spy or an informer in sight. But now see how it is ! The finger of God is there. Here are 600 boys below, gathering in the honey ; and there are 600 girls above, with the good nuns—and we are not afraid of anyone. We need not watch now. No wonder I should say—*Magnificat anima mea Dominum!*—My soul doth magnify the Lord.'

This good man gave his unreserved friendship to Father Mathew, simply because he believed in him, and honoured his worth. 'Oh, Dr. Collins,' said a lady to the Dean, 'I have been just listening to a sermon from Father Mathew, and I

have been greatly edified.' 'My dear,' answered the venerable priest, '*his life is a sermon.*'

The death of Father Donovan threw additional labour upon Father Mathew, who, with the assistance of occasional help, undertook and discharged all the duties himself. In this laborious work he soon found distraction for his sorrow. But he was ere long to suffer the keenest affliction of his whole life. This was the death of his youngest brother.

Though the fourth son of his parents, Father Mathew became, on their death, and as it were of right, the recognised head of the family. His eldest brothers regarded him as their natural guide and superior, and his younger brothers looked up to him as to a father; and, certainly, no father could be more solicitous for the welfare and happiness of his children, than was Theobald Mathew for the welfare and happiness of his brothers. Robert was the youngest of all the children, and Father Mathew took upon himself the care of his education. He brought him to Cork, where he lived with him, not in the cockloft of the Friary, for he had been literally driven from that miserable hole by a succession of fevers—but in a small house in the neighbourhood, of which he became the tenant. Robert was the great joy of his life. A gay, lively, cheerful boy, innocent as an angel, and more beautiful than angels are generally represented—he filled the house with pleasant laughter, and revived, by his sports and gambols, the recollections of his brother's youth. Every day was a holiday to the priest so long as he had Robert to welcome him as he returned home, wearied after many hours of duty in the church, or in attendance by the bedside of the sick. The little fellow used to lie in wait behind the door when he heard the familiar footstep, and then, springing out from his place of well-known concealment, jump on the neck of his brother, with whom the pleasant prank never tired, or lost its charm, because it delighted the merry and affectionate boy. Father Mathew kept Robert

at a day-school of high character in the city; but he never otherwise left him from his care. The truth is, he would have spoiled the boy, had he not been of the most amiable disposition; but such was his fondness for his young charge, that he gratified his every wish. Robert grew to be a high-spirited lad, strongly imbued with a love of adventure, which was not a little stimulated by the stories and descriptions indulged in by his brother Charles, who was then, and had been for some time previously, engaged in the African trade. Nothing would content Robert but to go with Charles, and share with him the dangers and the excitements of trade in a strange country and with a strange people. Father Mathew was much pained at the idea of losing the boy, who was at once his pet and companion, his plaything and solace; but Robert's vocation was for the sea, and he was not to be driven from his fixed idea. It was at length decided that he should make the next voyage with Charles; and too soon came the hour when he was torn from the arms of his brother Theobald, and consigned, with cautions and blessings, with tears and prayers, to his future guardian. Those who remember Robert at this time, as he was emerging from boyhood, speak of him with the utmost admiration—for the grace and elegance of his appearance, the extreme beauty of his countenance, and his frank and engaging manners. The vessel sailed for her distant destination; and many a fervent prayer, murmured at the altar, or uttered by the bedside at night, followed her path across the ocean. The time came when the good ship was expected on her voyage home; and as the days grew into weeks, so did the anxiety of the priest increase. Often, as he returned from some duty, he fancied that he should be met with the old surprise, and that the same loving arms would again cling round his neck. But it was the will of God that it should be otherwise. Theobald Mathew was never more to hear his brother's voice, or feel his circling arms, save in some happy

dream, from which he was to awake in sorrow. The thoughtless boy, profiting by the temporary absence of his brother Charles, and bidding defiance to his strict injunctions, proceeded on an excursion to shoot pelicans, and, exposing himself to the fierce heat of the sun, in his eagerness to come on his game, received a sun-stroke, from which he died in a few hours. Charles returned only in time to see that there was no hope for the unhappy youth, whose rashness was not only fatal to his own bright young life, but fatal to the happiness of one at home, who loved him with more than the love of a father. The blow was a fearful one to that fond heart. It literally crushed it for a time. The mother that bore him could not have felt a keener pang of anguish than did poor Father Mathew for the loss of that engaging youth. Indeed, the feeling of the elder for the younger brother had in it much of womanly tenderness. Besides, Father Mathew had been bequeathed the boy by his mother; and he ever felt, in addition to that natural affection which such intimate relationship inspires, that he was paying back, through his love for Robert, an instalment of the large debt of affection which he owed to the memory of that revered parent. For some time he was quite inconsolable, plunged in an agony of grief; but religion came at length to his aid, and in the contemplation of the sorrows and sufferings of his Divine Master, he learned the duty of resignation, and obtained sufficient strength to assume at least an outward composure of manner. It was a hard struggle, however, with one of his affectionate disposition; and his eyes would fill with tears and his features quiver with emotion, not only at the slightest allusion to the happy past, but at any circumstance which recalled it too vividly to his mind. It was pitiable, said an intimate friend, to witness the vehemence of his emotion, and the struggles which he made to subdue his feelings. It was a poor consolation to him, but one of which he eagerly availed himself, to order the erection of a monument over the

distant grave which held the remains of his lost brother; and in a few years after, in the cemetery which he founded in Cork, he raised another monument to his memory, bearing this inscription:—

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
ROBERT MATHEW,
WHO DIED IN THE BIGHT OF BENIN, MAY 27TH, 1824,
AGED 16 YEARS.

Yet think not, dear youth, tho' far, far away
From thy own native Isle thou art sleeping,
That no heart for thy slumber is aching to-day,
That no eye for thy mem'ry is weeping.*

For more than thirty years, as the 27th of May came round, this tomb was decked with the fairest flowers, emblematic of the bright young life which had been extinguished on that fatal day.

The healing influence of time, and the teaching of that religion which he not only preached, but made the guide of his daily life, restored Father Mathew to apparent cheerfulness; but those by whom he was known most intimately, state that he did not for many years entirely recover, if he ever did, from the effects of that shock; which effects were

* These lines were taken from a little poem, written by one who combined much sweetness and grace of expression, with a bard's full share of misfortune and disappointed hope. The song of *Gougane Barra* affords, however, a far more favourable specimen of his powers. Calanan loved and honoured Father Mathew, and he offered him the tribute of his sympathy in the rather feeble verses from which the above lines were taken.

The first part of the poem referred to, which is descriptive of romantic scenery familiar to many a modern tourist, is as follows:—

'There is a green island in lone Gougane Barra,
Where Allua of songs rushes forth as an arrow;
In deep-valleyed Desmond—a thousand wild fountains
Came down to that lake from their home in the mountains.'

manifested in frequent fits of despondency—the more gloomy and profound when they followed some scene of gay conviviality of which he had been the life and centre.

Theobald Mathew was a man of strong feelings and quick emotions. He was as keenly alive to sorrow as to joy, to wrong and insult as to benefit and kindness. But while he felt the sting, he did not resent the injury. He suffered all the more acutely that he did not retaliate. The impulse was there, for he was only human, with a man's strength and a man's weakness; but he resolutely beat down his rebellious nature, and rather sought to disarm his antagonist of the moment by a kind word, which 'turneth away wrath,' than to triumph in an angry conflict. He had a grand proverb which taught him the value of time, but he had a still better maxim which taught him the value of temper: '*A pint of oil is better than a hogshead of vinegar.*' Keenly sensitive and naturally excitable, he still was able to control the impulse which would prompt him to resent or retaliate. To use his own words, he 'struggled hard with the bitterness of the moment;' and the struggle invariably ended in victory over self. That 'pint of oil' was a grand peace-maker.

Father Mathew had great humility of disposition, natural, as well as the growth of reflection. An incident will happily exemplify this humility, as well as the Christian charity of the man. A lady, in mistaken friendship, and believing that she was doing well in 'putting people on their guard,' resolved to perform this kind office for her favourite friend. Being at a dinner party, where many guests were assembled, and where the conversation happened to turn on Father Mathew and his good works, she heard him spoken rather hardly of by a clergyman, who, perhaps, might have spoken without much consideration, or in a spirit of momentary opposition to the general feeling, which was strongly in favour of the subject of conversation. The lady was deeply mortified at the remarks made, and could not rest, poor

soul, until she had poured her complaint into the ear of her unconsciously outraged friend. Father Mathew heard her patiently, without betraying the slightest emotion of resentment, and then meekly replied—'My dear madam, I am very sorry indeed that my acts have not the approbation of this clergyman, for he is a truly good man, and one whose good opinion I value highly; and I only hope that I may merit it in future better than I have hitherto done.' The lady was stunned by the reply, and could not at the moment say whether she was more annoyed with the assailed or with the assailant. Some time after, the same clergyman contracted a bad fever, while attending the sick; and the first priest found at his bedside, and the one most constant in his attentions to the dying man, up to the last hour of his life, was the Rev. Theobald Mathew.

He was now about twelve years in Cork, and was most popular with persons of every class and creed. In those times religious differences were more strongly marked than in these happier days; and the state of the Catholic question, which was to be settled in a few years after by the Act of Emancipation, was such as to keep alive much anger and bitterness in the public mind. But even then, and while such elements of strife were in constant action, Father Mathew was respected by his Protestant and Dissenting brethren, who, notwithstanding his being a devoted Catholic Priest, could not fail to recognise in him the true type of the Christian minister. His manner and appearance were greatly in his favour. Kind, cordial, and courteous, he was deferential without the slightest tinge of sycophancy; and his appearance was pleasing and prepossessing in the highest degree. Handsome in person, with a countenance full of sweetness and expression, his natural gifts were heightened by the extreme neatness and simple elegance of his dress. While he looked the gentleman every inch, he was still unmistakably the priest. A brother clergyman, speaking of Father

Mathew in those days, says, 'He was the most irreproachable man I ever knew, and the pink of a gentleman. No one ever lived more within his ministry than he did. He was then what he was to the last—a mild, kind, gentle, unassuming man—always the same.' 'There was,' says another clergyman, 'a quiet gravity in his manner, with an air of genuine sanctity—something of the altar and the sanctuary always about him.' No one was more thoroughly devoid of affectation, and no one was more truly what he appeared to be—religious without austerity, good without parade, charitable without ostentation; devoted to his church, and in every thought a priest, but free from the slightest taint of sectarian rancour or intolerance. And this with him was not the result of calculation, or even of reasoning; it was instinctive, and sprang from his very nature.

CHAPTER IV.

Father Mathew as a Preacher — Earnestness his chief Attraction — Cotemporary Sketch of his Pulpit Oratory — His Sermons free from sectarian Bitterness — His Charity Sermons — His Pictures of the sublime Charity of the Poor — Intensity of his Emotion — The Man and the Preacher one — Establishes a Cemetery — The Cholera of 1832 — His untiring Exertions — The Hospital — Saved! — Give! give! give!

FROM the year 1820, his reputation as a preacher had been steadily advancing; and at the time of which we now speak—six years after that date—he was admitted to be one of the most popular preachers of the day. This was at a period when the Cork pulpit was adorned by men whose powers were of the very highest order. Father Mathew was not a man of shining abilities, nor was he a profound or severely-trained scholar. Neither had he fashioned his style upon the best models, or improved his taste by a thorough acquaintance with those authors whose works are the classics of English literature. He was not then certainly an accomplished pulpit orator, if at any period of his life he could lay claim to that distinction; and in the earlier years of his ministry he was frequently guilty of errors of taste, and violations of those rules laid down by rhetoricians of ancient and modern schools. And his voice, which at first was shrill, weak, and puny to the last degree, still lacked that strength and volume which practice and confidence imparted to it in later years. But those who for the most part thronged to hear him, and crowded his little church with that object, were not either inclined to be critical, or very capable of criti