

the burning shame of being obliged to avow, that in the midst of the blaze of affluence which our city presents, hundreds of our fellow-creatures have perished for want at the very rich man's gates. I could recount instances of heroic charity, amongst the poorest of the poor, at this very period, that would do honour—that are worthy—of the apostolic era. A desolate widow in my immediate neighbourhood, whose sole support is a bed for lodgers, has under her roof, for the last six weeks, an aged stranger, whom nobody knows. She tends him, and feeds him, as tenderly as if he were her brother. There is a lonely plain-work woman advanced in years, who resides in Chamberlain's Alley, in the parish of St. Nicholas, who has for many months supported, out of her scanty earnings, a helpless female; and if she were her mother, she could not love her more. And on last Monday, an interesting child was abandoned in the streets by its unnatural parent; and when it was about to be sent to the work-house, a poor man, a scavenger, with his broom in his hand, who, with tearful eye, was looking on, came and solicited the child; and when it was given to him, his countenance beamed with joy, he clasped the helpless innocent in his arms, and brought it rejoicing to his humble dwelling. There are, to my own certain knowledge, at this moment, cherished by the very poor in the poorest portion of this city, the parishes of SS. Nicholas and Fin Barr, more than thirty children, whose unhappy parents perished during the famine. On beholding such charity as this, well may I apply to these blessed poor the words of the Saviour to the widow and her mite—'Amen, I say unto you, she has given more than all.' O ye rich! how your merit fades before charity like this. Oh, that I could anticipate the glorious welcome that awaits these merciful beings on the great accounting day. Oh, may my death be the death of the righteous, and may my end be like to theirs! . . .

CHAPTER XXXII.

He receives a Royal Pension—Important Explanation—Invading John's Pantry—John's Refuge—Father Mathew's Pets—Letters to Mrs. Rathbone—His deserved Popularity.

IT had been for some time the intention of the more influential friends of Father Mathew to raise such a sum of money as would provide him with an annuity sufficient to maintain him independently, and thus enable him to prosecute his mission free from the embarrassment of pecuniary cares. His devoted friend Mr. S. C. Hall was one of the most active and untiring on this occasion. The principal result, however, of this organisation was, that the claims of the Moral Reformer of the age were brought directly under the attention of the Government, many members of which were friendly to him, and favourable to the object sought to be attained; and that the services rendered by Father Mathew to the interests of the public peace and the cause of humanity were formally recognised. The fact that Her Majesty had granted him a pension of 300*l.* a year, was thus conveyed to Father Mathew by Lord John Russell, who had acted towards him in a kindly and generous manner on former occasions:—

Chesham Place: June 22, 1847.

REVEREND SIR,—It is with much pleasure I inform you that the Queen has been pleased to direct me that an annual pension of 300*l.* should be settled upon you out of Her Majesty's Civil List, as a mark of her approbation of your meritorious exertions in combating the intemperance which in so many instances obscured and rendered fruitless the virtues of your countrymen.

It gives me great satisfaction to be charged with the duty of making this announcement.

I am, reverend sir, your obedient servant,
J. RUSSELL.

Rev. Theobald Mathew.

The bestowal of this pension was creditable to the Government on whose responsibility it was proposed to Her Majesty, and met with the universal approval of the country. Moderate as it was in amount, it established a sound principle—that the State should thenceforth recognise other victories than those won in the field of battle or on the quarter-deck, and should honour other conquerors than those whose hands were crimsoned with human blood. The approbation of his services by the Sovereign set the royal seal upon that moral reformation which had already earned the applause, not alone of the British Empire, but of the world. Father Mathew was really grateful for this act of kindness, though an occurrence, which took place two years after in America, and in which his feelings were not fairly represented, led many people to hold a different opinion at the time. As there will be no further necessity to refer again to the pension, it may be as well to set at rest this misrepresentation, intentional or unintentional, of his feelings with respect to it, though in doing so we must anticipate the course of events by at least two years. In a letter to his good friend Mrs. Rathbone, he thus explains the occurrence:—

Boston: August 28, 1849.

MY DEAR MRS. RATHBONE,—My object in now writing, after first expressing an earnest hope that every member of your beloved family continues well, is to satisfy your mind on the subject of the reply made by me to the Temperance Society in New York. The fact is, I never give written answers to addresses. My time is so much occupied, now more than ever, I must content myself with a verbal expression of my feelings. Party feeling runs high amongst the Irish in America; and the person who took on himself the publication of the address and my reply, *used expressions which I never uttered*. It would be ungrateful of me, were I to attack the British Govern-

ment; for though moderate the amount of the pension is, yet it answers the purpose for which it has been appropriated, and I am not unmindful of the exertions made by the Ministry during the recent scenes of destitution and famine. . . .

With most respectful remembrance to Mr. Rathbone, and to all the family, I am,

Dearest Madam,

Your ever grateful and devoted friend,
THEOBALD MATHEW.

To his friend Miss Jennings, of Cork, he wrote at the same time on the same subject. He says:—

Allow me again to address you on the subject of my reply to the Temperance Society in New York. I find that it has been the subject of remarks from some of the newspapers in England and Ireland.

Not having time to give written answers to addresses, I content myself with verbal ones; and the individual who, on behalf of the Society, took on himself to publish both, made me use expressions which I did not utter.

After the publication of the reply, I was unwilling to correct it, for various reasons, especially as party feeling runs high amongst the Irish in America.

Aware of your desire to serve me, of which I have had so many proofs, I leave it to your prudence to defend me, if necessary.

Father Mathew, as he says, had 'various reasons' for not publicly repudiating the words attributed to him; but the principal reason was, that the person who so compromised him was one whom he had known in Ireland, and for whom he entertained a personal friendship; and he, besides, made allowance for the strong anti-English feelings under which his young friend wrote the reply, in which the writer's own prepossessions against England were, perhaps unconsciously, attributed to one who entertained quite different feelings with respect both to that country and its Government. This is the explanation of a matter which caused considerable discussion at the time, and which, with many, was the occasion of a prejudice against Father Mathew, whom they accused—we now see how unjustly—of ingratitude,—a vice odious

in anyone, but the one most opposed to the character and disposition of Theobald Mathew.

Of the pension it is only necessary to say that it was appropriated to the payment of the interest of the insurance on his life, by which he guaranteed his creditors against loss, and secured them the amount of their debts.

For a few days in the summer, he paid his accustomed visit to the old house at Rathcloheen; but the great table was not now so full as in other days, for death had cut down the stoutest members of the family. Tom Mathew had followed Frank Mathew to the grave; and it was by the widowed mothers of their orphan children that the 'Reverend Uncle,' as he was styled, was now welcomed to his beloved Tipperary. He soon surrounded himself with the poor of the neighbourhood, to whom he distributed food with profuse liberality; and he took special pains to associate the young people with himself in the good work, in which he taught them to feel an interest and a pleasure. Here he adopted an ingenious mode of assisting the cottiers and small farmers, without at the same time hurting their pride or lowering their self-respect. He had it circulated abroad that he was in want of all kinds of poultry, which would be very useful at the house. The poor people, who would have made any sacrifice in order to afford him pleasure, or to pay him a compliment, brought to Rathcloheen chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, and eggs, which they freely offered as presents, but which he insisted on purchasing at his own price, and on his own terms, and much to their advantage.

The reverence of the children for their uncle was proof against the familiarity which he encouraged, the innocent games which he promoted, and the romps in which he did not hesitate to take part. *Butler's Lives of the Saints* is a standard book in the libraries of Catholic families; and when, a few years before the time now referred to, chapters were read for the young people, in which the life of some

illustrious servant of God was depicted, it was a common remark for the children to make—'Oh, how like our reverend uncle!' The criticism was just and discriminating.

Short was the rest which Father Mathew allowed himself, and brief was his sojourn at Rathcloheen. In a few days after his arrival in Tipperary, he was addressing a temperance meeting in Dublin; after which he returned to Cork, to superintend the distribution of bread to the poor.

His man John felt personally wronged by the famine, which drove so many people to the house in Cove Street. The poor were at all times obnoxious to John; and when they came, in their rags and their misery, pestering and importuning that aristocratic worthy, whose temper and humanity were about equal, he positively detested them. It was a pleasant sight to see Father Mathew invading John's pantry, and rummaging in his hiding-places, in search of a piece of cold beef or mutton, or a bone of ham, with which to thicken and flavour the soup that simmered on the range, and which soup was one of John's special aversions. There was Father Mathew, eager in his search after John's concealed treasures, and John following him, in despair, but at a respectful distance; and as his master made a grand discovery—perhaps of a leg of mutton, of which but a single cut had been taken—and with his own hands popped his prize into the huge cauldron, John would groan as if he were the victim of some atrocious burglar, who had broken into the house and robbed the larder before his eyes. Occasionally, John would stretch forth his hands, to save the morrow's dinner from confiscation; but the priest would turn on him, and crush him with the tremendous threat, before which he ever recoiled in mortal terror—'John! if you go on in this way, I must certainly leave the house.' John would thereupon abandon the morrow's dinner to its fate, and either conceal himself in his pantry, or seek refuge in bed.

It was no uncommon thing for John to betake himself to his couch at unnatural hours, and even at times when his presence in any other part of the house save his sleeping apartment was much required. John generally contrived to keep a little whisky in the house—for the 'tins' stood frequently in want of brightening, and he had always found that whisky was a grand specific for producing a lustre that made those useful articles shine like silver. It did happen, in some moment of abstraction, that John mistook the right application of the polishing fluid, and used a little of it internally, and that his bed became the most convenient and indeed necessary asylum after such unconscious mistakes. Over John's weakness, the Apostle of Temperance flung his large cloak of charity and affection. 'Poor John is not well to-day, my dear,' would Father Mathew say to his nephew, after a visit to John's attic; but although not a word ever dropped from the master which could indicate the failing of the servant, the sharp eyes and keen observation of inquisitive youth were not to be baffled—and John, on his reappearance in public, sourer and more morose than ever, would have to endure sly hints at the real cause of his retirement. John would also occasionally rebel against an order to prepare dinner for a company more than usually numerous, and rushing to his attic, would plunge into his bed, and there entrench himself. Many a pilgrimage to that attic would the master make, in the hope of softening the obduracy of his domestic tyrant, and bringing him to terms. Even when defeated and driven back by the inexorable despot of the pantry, the priest would still say—'Poor John! really he is not at all well.' He loved the little cross-grained fellow, and petted and spoiled him, and would not hear a word said to his disparagement; and so the little imp played upon his master's affection for his worthless self, and bullied and worried him to his heart's content.

The priest had his pets as well as his torment; and in

the caresses of his dog 'Sober,' or the milder demonstrations of Madam Pinky, his cat, he sought consolation when John was unusually obdurate. He would often tell of the untimely fate of a dearly cherished pet, a sparrow, that answered to the name of Peter. The sparrow, generally an early bird, was caught napping on one fatal occasion; for while in that unguarded state, he was sat upon by a huge friar, a man of exemplary piety but colossal dimensions. 'My dear, when the friar rose from the chair, there was my poor Peter, quite flat!' said his master, who, after the lapse of more than twenty years, remembered with regret the sad story of his pet sparrow. Sober's fate was more ignominious. Sober, though a model teetotaller, was a dog of morose disposition, and appeared to take a fiendish pleasure in grabbing unwary sinners by the legs. Father Mathew made ineffectual attempts to represent Sober as an animal of a naturally amiable character, whose occasional misconduct arose from innate playfulness of disposition and exhilaration of spirits. But this explanation not having proved satisfactory to a poor woman, in the calf of whose leg Sober had made a severe incision, that much misunderstood animal was consigned to a premature death. Father Mathew did all he could to save the brute; but the injured woman was not to be appeased, and justice was done on Sober, to the sorrow and indignation of his afflicted master.

The following letters to Mrs. Rathbone exhibit his ceaseless exertions in behalf of his clients, the destitute. They also depict the terrible condition to which the unhappy beings that flocked in from the country were reduced. The utmost alarm was felt by the hard-pressed citizens at the daily increasing influx of country paupers, who not only interfered with the stronger claims of their own poor, and drained the resources of the local community, but brought infection and death to many a home. This explanation is neces-

sary to qualify the statement in this letter of the 23rd of July:—

Cork: July 23, 1847.

MY DEAR MRS. RATHBONE,—Your esteemed letter reached me this morning, and it is now late in the evening, and I have not yet recovered from the agitation of mind caused by Mr. Rathbone's letter. The Government Relief Committees, at best, are giving only partial relief, and many of them have not yet commenced, though the period for their operations will expire the 15th of next month. Thousands and thousands would have perished, were it not for the supply of food furnished by the various benevolent associations. Should the charity of our great benefactors in the United States fail, it is horrible to anticipate the consequences of the stoppage of Government relief. The remonstrances of the Board of Health have had no effect on the Relief Commissioners. Even milk, though to be had in abundance at less than one penny per quart, is considered too expensive a luxury for the destitute on the relief lists, and in the Union Workhouses. We are still in fear and trembling for the harvest; but let it be most prosperous, money cannot be procured by the poor to purchase the necessaries of life, unless remunerative employment can be given by the landed proprietors. The New Poor Law Bill, with the cooperation of the party I have named, will effect much good. Self-interest has a powerful influence on the human heart, and, blinded by it, too many of the wealthy allow their wretched dependents to starve, lest the rates should become too heavy. If there was a fund to defray the expense of sending destitute strangers from Cork to their native parishes, it would prevent unutterable calamities. Many hundreds of these wretched creatures are to be seen in the dismal lanes and poor suburbs of our city, craving a morsel of food from beings almost as miserable as they are; and during the night, they lay themselves down to sleep upon the earth, exposed to wet and cold. These doomed beings are called vagrants, and sturdy beggars, and under that appellation are seized upon, should they appear in the public streets, confined like malefactors, without food until next morning, and then placed in carts, and, with two pennyworth of bread each, are driven four or five miles from the city, and left there to perish. Many of them die in the fields, and many find their way back again to Cork. No compassion, no helping hand for these miscalled vagrants—every heart steeled against them. The Relief Commissioners are too ready to listen to reports of frauds upon the committees; but they have no ears for the complaints of

the poor against their cruel oppressors. I feel so strongly on this painful subject, I am unwilling to write more, lest I should harrow your feelings.

With kindest compliments to every member of your family, I am,
With profound respect,

Dear Mrs. Rathbone,

Yours affectionately,

THEOBALD MATHEW.

Cork: July 30, 1847.

MY DEAR MRS. RATHBONE,—I regret having caused you and Mr. Rathbone so much pain and trouble. If the 'Macedonian' had put into any other harbour in Ireland, I should not have suffered so much from disappointment. As the 'Reliance' is now in our port, I hope some arrangement, satisfactory to all, will be made. I feel as intensely for the destitute in Galway, Kerry, Mayo, Sligo, Clare, and Donegal, as I do for the perishing poor of Cork. It was the expectations raised, and about to be blighted, that made me so unhappy.

Believe me,

With highest esteem,

Dear Madam,

Your devoted and affectionate

THEOBALD MATHEW.

Cork: August 26, 1847.

MY DEAR MRS. RATHBONE,—Ten thousand thanks for your welcome intelligence, and the charitable interference by which you accomplished so desirable an object. To Mr. Rathbone I am also deeply grateful.

The 300 barrels I shall carefully husband, dispensing their valuable contents like a precious treasure. The lamented death of the benevolent Mr. Beale has prevented me from applying for the flour. I cannot express the delight I felt at meeting my dear friend Samuel at Buncrana. It was so unexpected, and yet so timely, to see him amidst the wilds of Innishowen. I am about to start for Dublin, and have only time to assure you and Mr. Rathbone of the enduring gratitude of,

With profound respect,

Dearest Mrs. Rathbone,

Your devoted and affectionate

THEOBALD MATHEW.

On meeting a friend in the street about this time, Father Mathew, with whom the removal or expulsion of the country

paupers, referred to in his letter to Mrs. Rathbone, was uppermost in his mind, at once enquired if his friend had anything to do with those proceedings.

'No, indeed, Father Mathew, I have not; I do n't approve of them.'

'I am delighted, my dear sir, to hear that you have not joined in such a movement. You know, as a Christian man, you are bound to relieve, as far as your means will admit, the distress of every human creature, no matter if he comes from the centre of Africa.'

He did good himself, and encouraged others to do good. A young gentleman of the city, over whose youth he had watched like a father, came to him one day during the very height of the famine, to ask his advice as to what he was to do with a miserable half-starved female infant, that he had discovered, while passing through a field, lying asleep in the arms of its dead mother. 'I came to you, sir, to know what I am to do with the child.' 'God sent you that child, my dear; you can't do better than rear it,' was Father Mathew's reply. No proposal could have been more startling to the young man, who was not yet of age; but the influence of Father Mathew was so great over his friends, that the advice—embarrassing as it must have been—was adopted, and the poor child of the famine was carefully reared by her young preserver.

The ranks of the clergy were decimated in many districts of the country, and the death of an active member of a relief committee was a matter of the most ordinary occurrence. Neither wealth nor luxury could keep the Famine Fever at bay. Born in the hovel, of want and squalor, it was carried about in rags from house to house; and often when the members of a family had to leave or return to their home, they had to struggle through a clamorous group clustered round their door, and to pass through an atmosphere heavy with evil odours. But Father Mathew seemed insensible to every-

thing save the misery he sought to relieve. The famine odour was in his parlour in Cove Street, and at his door, and in the dwellings of the poor whom he daily visited. Nothing, however, could intimidate him. Neither was he disgusted by the most abject or even loathsome squalor. Beneath fetid rags, and accumulated filth, and swarming vermin, he recognised his fellow-creature, made in the image and likeness of his Divine Master. With the courage of the hero, he united the spirit of the Samaritan.

Indeed at no period of his career had Father Mathew a stronger claim upon the admiration of mankind, or the love and veneration of his country. In his own city the feeling in his favour was intense. He was the guardian angel of the poor, their surest and best resource. This feeling found public expression in the month of July 1847, at an entertainment to Captain De Kay (Commander of the 'Macedonian'), and other American gentlemen. The writer had the honour to preside on that occasion; and a short passage from the address of the Chairman, and another from that of the accomplished and brilliant advocate, the late Francis Walsh, familiarly known as Frank Walsh, will afford a just idea, not only of the estimation in which Father Mathew was then held by his fellow-citizens, but of the solid services to humanity on which the public sentiment based. The Chairman said:—

The awful visitation of the last nine months has exhibited Father Mathew in a higher and holier light, in a position and character more sacred than we had hitherto beheld him—as the champion of the poor. Before, he was a leader, at the head of a great popular movement, and sustained by the enthusiasm of the whole country; but he has magnanimously given up that great mission for a time, to remain in Cork, as a protector and friend to the poor; to shield them from the indifference of those who are too often wrongly entrusted with authority, and who, in their devotion to an inhuman policy and a hateful doctrine, are too often indifferent to the misery and sufferings of the wretched recipients of a relief grudgingly given, and pinchingly doled out. I say, then, that the last nine months have endeared

Father Mathew more to us, and have united him closer to our affections, than have all his previous labours and splendid triumphs.

The pleasing theme was thus enlarged upon by Frank Walsh, or, as he was popularly designated, 'the Counselor':—

What your Chairman has told our American friends of the last nine months' labours of Father Mathew, would be imperfect if we did not also add this to it,—that, while attending with an extraordinary vigilance, with indefatigable watchfulness, with intense care and eager anxiety to the distribution of the food in every petty detail, watching that no official should counteract, no mean minister should frustrate, no petty motives should restrict the value of the bounty, or diminish it to those on whom it was intended to confer relief, he has been in the midst of pestilence, in the most frightful dens, where fever exhibited its most awful and pestilential effects, hanging over the bed where not one but three were stretched, in a room where not one but sixteen were in disease together, perishing of fever. He has risked his life hourly and daily. Bift in the midst of all his cares, and labours, and toils, it is right to let the world know, as we in Cork do, that besides being one of the most distinguished men of our time, he is one of the most hard working, patient, zealous Catholic priests with whom God has blessed mankind. He had been in Cork, his selected and adopted city, before his name became so justly celebrated, so beloved and honoured for his devotion and anxiety to the poor, that he was one of those most revered as a Christian clergyman; and now, independently of the glorious movement which he represents, by his personal virtues, his charity, his amiability and goodness, he is at present a link of union between Christians of all denominations.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

His Influence with the People of Ulster—A strange Question and a laconic Reply—The incurable Cancer—A poor Breakfast—The disgusted Devotee—Christmas-boxes—The Great Duke.

SO long as there was a necessity for his presence, Father Mathew remained in Cork, whose people had, as he thought, the first claim upon his exertions; but the moment he could safely quit his post, without desertion of duty, he was again off to some distant part of the country, on his temperance mission. In the month of August he was entertained at a soirée in Londonderry, in which city he was hailed with enthusiasm by men who hated his church and not occasionally misrepresented its principles and its teaching; and in the following October we find him in Coleraine, in which thoroughly Ulster town the priest from Munster was received with a respect which was as sincere as it was, in many instances, involuntary. 'Why did you kneel to him?' asked one of the 'True Blues' to another. The answer was a testimony to the influence of the man—'Who the d—l could resist him?—who could help it?—no one could refuse him anything he asked.' Some came to their doors in a spirit half bitter half jeering; but, strong Protestants and Presbyterians as they were, they yielded to an unaccountable impulse, and, falling on their knees, humbly received the blessing of a man of God.

It was in Dublin, some years before, that he said rather an amusing thing in reply to a person to whom he was in the act of administering the pledge. He was hard at work,