

of wild animals, against whose attack he had to be ever on the watch. Frequently he lost his way, and had to sleep under some shelter which he ingeniously improvised. One day he was very near being strangled by a wild vine, and on another his hat was sacrificed to the same kind of obstruction, and he had to ride bare-headed for several miles, until he reached the first log cabin to be met with in the depths of the verdant wilderness. When he was lucky enough to enjoy the shelter of a roof, he either slept on the floor, his head pillowed on his saddle bags, or, if he stretched his weary limbs on the bed, he found himself the companion of a slain bear, which the hunter had flung in that receptacle for game. But, whether on the floor, or by the side of a shaggy monster, the slumber of the brave missionary priest was profound and unbroken. However, this constant strain upon every faculty of mind and body was soon to bring him to an early grave.

To show how missions prosper where they are energetically worked, it may be mentioned that when Father Mathew was in Little Rock, there still existed the log hut in which Bishop Byrne had taken up his episcopal residence seven years before; and that although he was then too poor to employ a regular servant, he had within that time built a cathedral—not very large, and with only three regular pew-renters—a dwelling house and a seminary, and had also established a college at Fort Smith, opened a mission at Pine Bluff, and accomplished a number of things which, considering the smallness of his means and the poverty of his congregation, were literally marvellous.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

He sets out for the Springs of Arkansas—Delightful Journey—Spends his Time pleasantly—Letter to Mrs. Rathbone—Bigotry rebuked—Scene in the Navy Yard of Pensacola—He objects to 'Lecture'—His wonderful Memory—Causes of his pecuniary Embarrassment.

ON Tuesday the 25th of June, Father Mathew set out for the Sulphur Springs, having previously distributed 100 dollars for various charitable purposes, besides having given a number of cards and medals gratis. The barouche and wagon cost him twenty-one dollars more. The journey was delightful, through a beautiful country, full of variety—hill, plain, rock, mountain, gushing streams and winding rivers, majestic trees as well as fragrant shrubs—and the most perfect stillness reigning over all. No song birds filled the air with their music, and not a sound was heard in this beautiful solitude, save the murmur of the babbling brook, a rustle amid the branches, or the clatter of the horses' feet over the track which was called a road, and which was occasionally but a passage, cleft, as it were, through a dense mass of living verdure. It seemed as if these lovely wilds of Arkansas had never been trodden by the foot of man, who had not yet come to claim as his own an earthly Paradise which had been rendered so well suited for his enjoyment. The settlers were few, and the attempts at clearing were rare.

Father Mathew for a time flung aside his cares, his load of anxiety and trouble, and resolutely left behind him the haunting shadow of debt—more terrible to him than the spectre of Death on the Pale Horse—and became himself

once more. He revelled in story and anecdote and humorous incident, recounted events of his early life, and gave his impressions of public men in the New world and the Old; and when he had contributed far more than his share to the enjoyment of the day, he called forth the recollections of his young companions, who were delighted to see the cloud of care banished from his brow, and the anxious look no longer in his eyes. The travellers reached their resting place late in the evening, and were regaled with a supper of milk and honey, and pure bread, and butter fragrant from sweet pasture. The next morning at five o'clock, the carriage was in motion, and the journey was resumed. The same variety of scenery, the same beauty, the same loneliness—the same cheerful gaiety in the carriage, as Father Mathew referred lovingly to incidents of his boyhood and to the memory of his mother, and to scenes and circumstances in the early years of his mission. And when he sought to impress any great truth on his young friends, he illustrated its wisdom by a parable, or its value by some striking fact, borrowed from history or the biography of a great or good man. Having rested for the night at the Hot Springs, where they found friends from New Orleans and Natchez, they arrived next day at the Sulphur Springs, eight miles from the Hot Springs. Here, then, in a lonely log cottage, in the very heart of the solitudes of Arkansas, tenanted by a widow and her son, and not another human being nearer than two miles, or more than two or three nearer than the Hot Springs, the wearied Apostle of Temperance sought a short repose from labour such as scarcely any other man had ever gone through. If thought and care could have been cut off by a barrier of mountains, or by a giant hedge of forest trees, or by rushing streams and flowing rivers, all would have been well; but from this Paradise the serpent could not be banished—it would intrude unwished for and unbidden.

In the lovely Washitau, which wound its graceful course,

now through woods, now between noble hills, Father Mathew was reminded somewhat of the Suir, which flowed through his native county. In the woods, by the banks of the Washitau, or by the side of a smaller stream, he rambled, when the heat was less intense; and he talked wisely and pleasantly to his companions, whose minds he directed, without apparent aim, but with instinctive purpose, to the contemplation and the love of the good. He picked blackberries, too, as of old in the woods of Thomastown; and the ripe berry of Arkansas tasted the sweeter from the association. Thus they spent the two first days in this retreat, reading, talking, rambling from one charming spot to the other, and making small explorations into the forest. And on the Sunday Father Mathew offered up the holy sacrifice on the piazza of the cottage, under the canopy of heaven. The congregation consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Kelly, who had come over from the Hot Springs, and the two secretaries, Mr. O'Meara and Mr. Mahony. It was the first time, in all probability, that the voice of the Priest had been raised in adoration in that part of the forests of America; and the solemnity and stillness of all around contrasted with the scenes of that day twelvemonth, when he first landed on the shores of the New World.

With intense interest, he watched the arrival of the papers from Ireland, which was then slowly emerging from the effects of the Famine. A passage from the diary will exhibit his opinion on a question of much importance to his country:—

Speaking of the changes about to take place in Ireland by the transition of land, Father Mathew remarked how at first it became encumbered. 'The first proprietors were gentlemen and would-be gentlemen, who let the land to what are termed "middle men." They, to make the most of it, usually let the ground to *conacre tenants*, calculating that—suppose the middle-man's take to be 200 acres, at 4*l.* per acre—by letting half in *conacre*, at say 10*l.* the acre, the rent was over paid. The next year the other half was let in the same way, while he had the produce of the other portion, which was

unlet. Thus the poor labourer, strictly speaking, had to bear the burden of all. The present contemplated changes will not be effectual, unless a clause be inserted in every lease *against subletting*!

The post brought him some letters that gladdened his heart, but more that filled him with sorrow and anxiety. To one of the former, he thus replied:—

Sulphur Springs of Arkansas :
9th July 1850.

My dear Mrs. Rathbone,—I thank you, I thank you, for your more than sisterly solicitude, and for the unexpected and unexampled generosity of Mr. Rathbone. His generous present arrived most seasonably, at a moment when I was quite bewildered, not knowing what to do. The cause of this distress of mind was an unexpected notice I received from the agent of the Insurance Company, to pay 150*l.*, the amount of the second year's extra premium for the permission to travel into the Southern States. The 700 dollars I received from my countrymen in New Orleans, I sent to pay the interest of the bills in the Banks at Cork. I ignorantly flattered myself that the extra premium I paid before I left home would free me during my sojourn in this country. . . . I shall continue at the cold Sulphur Springs for another fortnight, and then remove seven miles distant, to the celebrated Hot Springs, and after a sojourn of a few days, proceed to visit the Indian nation—the wretched degraded remnant of the once mighty proprietors of this vast continent. I go in the name of the Lord, to seek and to save the poor victims of oppression and drunkenness.

These unhappy people, round whom Cooper and other writers had flung the charm of romantic interest, excited the liveliest compassion of Father Mathew; but he was never able to realise the hope that he had so long cherished, of visiting them in their villages, and rescuing them from the deadly tyranny of the 'firewater'—a worse enemy than the white man, and more fatal to the Indian than the steel or the bullet of the foe.

The fashionable world of America was at this time absorbed in a case of peculiar interest, upon which much was said on both sides, the question of who was in the wrong being discussed with keen partisanship. A gentleman had won for

his bride, from a host of competitors, a reigning belle, the loveliest girl of the circle in which she moved. Fortunate prize-winner, he prepared a gilded cage for his lady-bird; and so sumptuous and costly were the bridal chamber and boudoir, that they were thrown open, first to the scrutiny of the *élite*, and then to the devouring curiosity of the vulgar. In twelve months after, while Father Mathew was plunged in the verdant solitudes of Arkansas, the fashionable world was startled by hearing of the separation of the 'happy pair,' and reading in the public prints advertisements from the husband crying down the credit of his wife! One of the heavy charges urged by the disenchanted husband was that his lovely bride was addicted to the free use—not of cognac—but of rouge and cosmetics. 'There are people in this world,' remarked Father Mathew, 'who, if they have no real troubles to vex them, will create troubles for themselves by their own folly.' And thereupon he told many strange things which he had seen in his experience.

After a month's rest at the Sulphur Springs, where he spent some of the happiest moments of his life, Father Mathew left for the Hot Springs. He had become greatly interested in poor Molly, the negro woman, and her little son Peter, whose woolly pate he was constantly caressing; and he much regretted the poverty which alone compelled him to relinquish the desire of purchasing both mother and son, and setting them at liberty. Molly and Peter might have been bought for 350 dollars; but there was no such sum in Father Mathew's exchequer.

While at the Hot Springs, an old lady sent for him to come to her at once. The distance was eight miles. Fortunately, there was no vehicle to be had, and therefore he could not comply with her request. But as Father Mathew could not come to the old lady, she came to him. Though very old and sickly, she mounted a horse and rode over to see him, and to request that he would cure her! At first it was

thought she was a Catholic, but she was a Baptist. Father Mathew denied that he possessed the power which the old lady persisted in attributing to him; but he did what he could to soothe and console her.

Generally, and indeed as a rule, the manner in which Father Mathew was treated by members of the different sects in America was in the highest degree creditable to their good feeling. They paid him every honour and respect; they thronged the Catholic churches in which he preached; and, in the addresses which emanated from their communities and associations, they bore the most generous testimony to the value of his services, and the disinterested purity of his motives. In a little village of Arkansas was displayed one of the very rare exceptions to this almost universal expression of courtesy and good feeling. During his stay at the Hot Springs, he visited a Sunday School, where his presence was expected, for an address had been prepared for his reception. Besides the children and their teachers, there were several grown persons in attendance. He was welcomed for various reasons, but he was expressly assured *not* because of his being a Priest of the Roman Catholic Church—an assurance equally gratuitous and offensive. This was a challenge which Father Mathew could not fail to accept; and, in his reply, he said 'he felt justly proud of being an humble minister in that holy church which had done so much for the glory of God and the civilisation of mankind, which had stood bravely in the van from age to age, unchanged while all else was changed, and which had outlived, and would outlive, both calumny and oppression.' Feeling that he had sufficiently vindicated the dignity of his Church, and his allegiance to her faith and authority, he resumed his accustomed gentleness, and expressed his regret that his young friends should have thought it necessary to make the allusion which they did; for, in advocating temperance, he recognised no religious denomination whatever. A sweet smile and a cordial shake of the

hand set matters at rest; and the proceedings were happily concluded by the enrollment of a number of 'postulants,' and the presentation of a card and medal to each.

But the scene which was witnessed on Sunday the 29th of December 1850, in the Naval dockyard of Pensacola, afforded the most remarkable testimony to the reverence in which Father Mathew was held by all classes in America. His reception by the Commodore, by whom he was splendidly entertained on the Saturday, was most flattering. When he arrived, he was met by his host, who wore his full dress uniform, and introduced to the numerous company who had been invited to meet him. As the greater number of the guests were officers of the navy, or officials in the establishment, uniforms were generally worn. Had the guest of the evening been the President of the United States or some potentate from the other side of the Atlantic, instead of a simple Irish Priest, he could not have been entertained more sumptuously, nor could he have been treated with more marked respect. Grace was said by Father Mathew, and thanks were returned by the Rev. Mr. Lewis, the Protestant clergyman.

On the morrow there was assembled in the spacious Hall of the Naval Hospital—which had been placed at the disposal of Father Mathew by the Commodore—a congregation of more than 600 persons. It included the very first people in connection with the great establishment, and represented the leading churches of the United States. The hall had been fitted up with an altar and every requisite for Catholic worship; and good ladies willingly assisted Father Mathew, like as of old in Ireland, to render the appearance of the altar and sanctuary as beautiful and as becoming as possible. Among the first that arrived in this extemporised Catholic church were the Commodore and his family, accompanied by military and naval officers, all in full dress uniform. Among the other members of that remarkable congregation was the Rev. Mr

Lewis, who, in order to afford his flock an opportunity of hearing Father Mathew, had word sent round to them that he would not have service on that morning. The decorum and gravity observed by all present could not have been surpassed by any congregation, or in any church in the world. Nor was the congregation disappointed in the Christian minister who preached the word of God to their willing hearts.

He seemed for the moment to have recovered the fire and animation of his best days; and he preached with so holy a sincerity of manner, with such convincing confidence of belief in the truth of what he uttered, and with such fervour and earnestness, that he carried his hearers with him from the beginning to the end of his discourse. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, he again addressed his audience, but on the subject of his mission; and the effect of that appeal was the addition of one hundred followers, most of them of respectable position, to the ranks of temperance.

It was disheartening to Father Mathew that he received but little benefit from his visit to the Springs of Arkansas. His limbs were tremulous and shaky, and his mind was at times grievously depressed. Neither were the accounts from home of the most enlivening character, whether of a public or a private nature. Great misery still amongst the poor—workhouses crowded—employment scarce—trade bad—and emigration on the increase. Then, temperance reading-rooms were abandoned, and their members scattered; and, lastly, there were pressing pecuniary claims. Thorns were scattered in the path of this tottering and toil-worn man; still he bore up bravely, and rather courted than avoided new scenes of labour and excitement. Rest, if it extended beyond a few days, became irksome to him. He longed to be again in the harness, doing his work, adding to his hundreds of thousands of disciples in America. His anxiety of mind, which fretted at inaction, prevented his obtaining the advantages of repose,

and of the regular and easy life which he led while at the Springs.

There was one thing, however, to which he had a decided objection—that was, to 'lecture;' and this was the very thing which he was most frequently requested to do. If he travelled by steamer on one of the great rivers, it was intimated to him that the saloon could be converted into a convenient lecture-hall, and that he was sure of a large and appreciative audience; or if the boat stopped at the smallest place—some city on paper, whose future glory was represented by a few log houses—there came a request from the 'citizens' that he should land and lecture. He almost invariably rejected these polite overtures, preferring to read, or to be read to, or to visit the passengers of the humbler class, amongst whom he was sure to find some of his own country people, whose resources were not the most abundant. Frequently are such passages as these to be met with in the diary of his Secretary:—'Went among our countrymen of the lower deck. Some took the pledge. Father Mathew assisted them in a pecuniary way also.' 'To a respectable young man in distress, Father Mathew handed ten dollars privately.' 'In St. Louis, the day before leaving, Father Mathew handed sums of money to old acquaintances in struggling circumstances.' 'The condition of the poor emigrants from Ireland excites his compassion, and he freely shares with them his scanty resources; so much so, that I am anxious for his departure, before they are entirely exhausted.'

There was not a face he met that did not recall some circumstance to his memory, which was prodigious. The man or woman whom he had spoken to years before, in any part of Ireland, he at once recognised, whether in the streets of New York or New Orleans, or on the lower deck of a steamboat on the Mississippi. Many a poor exile's heart was cheered by the salutation—'How are you, my dear?—when did you leave —?—when did you hear from your father

and mother?' Names as well as faces he retained in that wonderful memory; and often was his Secretary surprised at hearing him address people, whom he could not have seen later than six or eight years before in a northern county in Ireland, familiarly by their name, as if he had only left them the day before. He possessed this faculty of memory in the highest degree. And perhaps no faculty is more useful in a leader; for the followers of a great man are not always willing to make allowance for his oblivion of their identity, and expect that their Christian names, if they had half a dozen of them, should be remembered as well as their surnames.

This volume might be swelled with instances of his goodness to these poor wanderers. Here he bestowed money—there gave protection to helpless girls; here procured situations—there induced some compassionate matron to befriend a young creature who stood trembling in the very jaws of danger.

While on his first visit to New Orleans, a number of the brethren of a religious order in Ireland landed in that city. They were on their way to one of the Western States, there to establish a convent and a colony. The money necessary for their purpose was to have been remitted to them in New Orleans; but days passed, and no remittance arrived. The poor men were in great distress of mind, being naturally alarmed at their helpless condition, when they fortunately thought of applying to Father Mathew for advice and assistance. The assistance was readily granted by one who could feel for their position of embarrassment; and in a day or two after, the brothers were on their journey up the Mississippi, with a sum of more than 200*l.* in their possession, advanced to them by Father Mathew. The money was faithfully returned, but not sooner than a year after.

'What shall we do, sir?—we are at our last dollar!' was more than once the anxious demand of his Secretary.

'Trust in God, my dear; He will give us enough,' was the invariable reply. It was the same reply which he had often given in the Famine time; and when more money came then into his possession, it was bestowed on new objects. And so it also was in America.

While at Pensacola, a strange circumstance occurred. A young foreigner, named Demetrius Reoboe, died, and Father Mathew officiated at his funeral. The body, which was borne by the friends of the deceased, was first carried to the church, where the service for the dead was chanted, and then to the burial ground, where Father Mathew read the usual prayers. This funeral took place on Monday, December 16, 1850; and on Wednesday, the 18th, there was another funeral, at which he also attended. This was the funeral of a cousin of Demetrius. A compact had been made between them, that the first who died should prepare a place in heaven for the other, who was to follow immediately. Demetrius was buried on the Monday, and in twenty hours afterwards the cousin was a corpse; and in twenty-four hours more, both cousins were tenants of the same tomb. What was the cause? Possibly, it was the effect of imagination upon a system depressed by sorrow at the loss of a beloved friend. Whatever the explanation, the facts were as they have been stated.

Writing to Mrs. Rathbone from St. Louis, on the 20th of October, 1850, Father Mathew says:—

The success that has attended my exertions in the city of St. Louis has exceeded my most sanguine expectations. Nine thousand persons have taken the total abstinence pledge; and when you are informed that I have not been able to lecture in the temperance halls, from infirmity, you must deem it a very considerable number.

You do not appear to approve of my protracted stay in America. Neither do I myself; as I could advance the cause as much, and even more, in England, Ireland, and Scotland. To be candid—for I disguise nothing from one whom I love as a sister—I yearn after the old country, and I envy this letter which is so soon to reach its shores; but I fear to return home, so much is expected by my creditors. If I

had foreseen my illness, I would not have incurred debt, which makes me miserable, and detains me in exile. But apprehending no impediment to my career, and having well-grounded pecuniary expectations, I imprudently yielded to my feelings, and, to uphold the teetotallers, and to feed the hungry during the famine, I unhappily incurred liabilities which can only be liquidated by my death—an event which in any case cannot be far distant.

CHAPTER XL.

Politeness to a Female Slave—Her Reply—An impressive Lesson—Jenny Lind—Barnum—New World Notions—Another Attack—Embarks for Europe—His Farewell Address—Advice to his Countrymen—His Mission in America.

FOR nearly three months of the year 1831, Father Mathew made New Orleans his head quarters. He frequently stopped with attached friends, whose acquaintance he had made or renewed on his first visit—for he had known not a few of them in Ireland. Among the most devoted of these was Colonel Mansel White, who had emigrated years before from Tipperary, and who then held a high position in his adopted country. While enjoying the hospitality of this devoted friend, Father Mathew, who, as a true gentleman should be, was always kind and considerate to servants, apologised to a coloured woman for the trouble which his visit had caused her. Her answer much amused him;—‘I do n’t consider it any trouble at all; besides, we can’t get along any how in this world without it.’

Though Father Mathew was received with the greatest kindness by slave owners, and though slavery did not present itself to his view in abhorrent colours, he still maintained the same aversion to it as an institution which he had ever expressed. Yet he fully appreciated the difficulty of dealing with a question so vast, and with interests so complicated; and he could not but think that wisdom, not passion, was essential to its solution. Nor, it must be said, was he much impressed with the feeling evinced to the Negro in the Free States. A single circumstance will often produce a stronger