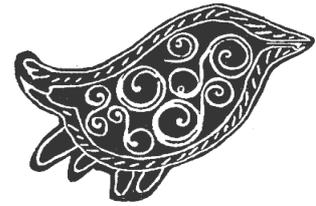


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The Cork Total Abstainer

By C. P. HYLAND

During the summer of 1993, in the course of my business I acquired a large number of nineteenth-century Irish newspapers. Among them was a volume which contained 18 issues of a newspaper bearing the title of the above heading. Some reading of the paper and some additional research showed this to be a paper of more than common interest.

The Cork Total Abstainer commenced publication on 20 February 1841, printed by S.M. Thompson, 18 Great George's Street, Cork, edited by J.F. Maguire, Esq., under the especial patronage of the Very Rev. Theobald Mathew, available at 2d. per issue and published weekly, on Saturday. It consisted of two leaves, 20"×15", folded to produce 8 pages, 15"×10", and contained three columns on each page. The front page of each issue contained a leading article, usually on the *raison d'être* of the journal. Each issue carried advertisements, to a greater or lesser extent, and some had notices of Deaths, Births and Marriages. Virtually all issues contained reports, some quite extensive, of the activities of the Cork Literary and Scientific Society. A note of some of the contents of the issues might be of interest. (Advertising was then, as today, the life blood of a newspaper, so I will note the number of advertisements in each issue):

1. February 20th. Opens with an address 'To the Public', stating briefly 'the principles on which the journal would be conducted', i.e. to advance the cause of National Temperance through a true and perfect union of all creeds and classes; through total



and entire abstinence. This item on the front page shares pride of place with an article on Fr Mathew, 'The Cause and the Apostle'. There is also an appreciation of and a letter from Anna Maria Hall, together with a notice of her new work on Ireland. This would be her work in conjunction with her husband, Samuel Carter Hall, *Ireland, its scenery and character* in three volumes, which first appeared in 1841. There is a poem of 20×6 line and 1×8 line stanzas, 'Another Christmas Ballad about Fr Mathew and the Temperance

6th Year

Ed. M. Thompson

Printer & Proprietor

Cork Total Abstinence;

OR THE

IRISH TEMPERANCE JOURNAL.

EDITED BY J. F. MAGUIRE, ESQ., AND UNDER THE SPECIAL PATRONAGE OF THE VERY REVEREND THOMAS MATHEW.

Vol. I. No 1. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1841. PRICE TWOPENCE.

TO THE PUBLIC.

In this our first number, it may be well to briefly state the principles on which this journal will be conducted for the future.

A true and perfect sense of all evils and classes being necessary, to enable the more fully to advance the cause of National Temperance, therefore, for the accomplishment of that aim most our best energies be exerted, not only by presenting a spirit of harmony and love, but by handling every possible ground leading to dissent or contention. This will best be effected by avoiding all discussions, such as party politics or religious controversies.

Having thus endeavored to unite the powers, the intelligences, and the virtues of all parties, we shall then strive to concentrate their moral force against the most formidable enemy to individual as well as national happiness and prosperity, namely, the odious vice of intemperance.

The easiest and most effectual way to remove the vice, will be to remove its cause, the drinking customs of society; and, therefore, for the purpose of obtaining that desirable end, we will we show abstinence, in the columns of the Cork Total Abstinence, the only true, the successful doctrine of total and entire abstinence from all drinks of an intoxicating nature.

The folly of accommodating principles, such as the ridiculous fallacy of what is styled moderation, has long been more solemnly by the voice of reason and common sense, and, moreover, forcibly illustrated by the destruction of moderate societies established, from time to time, in this and the sister kingdom. Men are now wise enough to understand a few plain and simple propositions. One is, that there was there no instance of an individual having at once become a confirmed drunkard, and that he would have made a beginning in his vicious education in order to render himself a voracious man in vice! That this beginning was nothing under heaven but moderate use, is too truthfully illustrated by the destruction of moderate societies established, from time to time, in this and the sister kingdom. Men are now wise enough to understand a few plain and simple propositions. One is, that there was there no instance of an individual having at once become a confirmed drunkard, and that he would have made a beginning in his vicious education in order to render himself a voracious man in vice! That this beginning was nothing under heaven but moderate use, is too truthfully illustrated by the destruction of moderate societies established, from time to time, in this and the sister kingdom.

It is necessary to banish the odious and terribly disgusting propensity for vice—that is, to remove it entirely and effectually—you must remove every imaginable cause leading to such a disgusting course; that is, in a word, if you ever touch intoxicating drinks, you are, by no reasonable possibility, any longer safe in this country!

Not only will we put forth our principles fully, unambiguously, and honestly, but defend and explain them against all opposition, of whatever nature that opposition may choose to be. If it be unfair or unjust, it will be immediately met, and, if possible, refuted; and if it be merely and honorably, it will be in the same spirit conducted with, and put to the test of plain common sense and reason.

In the uncompromising advocacy of total abstinence, we shall most ardently strive to avoid what we deservously from a moderately and selfish mode of advocacy, namely, attempts to possess still superior in the traffic, whether they be distilleries or publicans; yet, at the same time, we intend striving every power in our end to break the trade from its own base, being entirely convinced that it

has never proved a position and a cure to Ireland.

By a fair, open, and manly advocacy of the true and only doctrine, Total Abstinence; by inducing those who have not yet joined, to join, and by deterring those who have relied on the good Angel's staidness, to remain firm to the cause, we have no doubt but that before many months shall have past, it will be given in the traffic, from which it may never recover, to again bright the happiness, the honor, and the liberty of our country.

THE CAUSE AND THE APOSTLE!

The day has long since past away, when men regarded the great question of Total Abstinence as nothing better than a gross leveling, invented in industry, and advocated under the garb of hypocrisy.

The most enlightened as well as religious in Society accepted the notion of total abstinence from drinks of an intoxicating nature, as a thing beyond the verge of all possibility, indeed, as some wild and absurd proposition worthy of a half-crazy enthusiast, but totally unfit for the least consideration of rational or well informed men. Still, nothing daunted by the bitter sneer of contempt, by the loud laugh of mocking incredulity, by the open hostility of the assailed, or by the all-powerful voice of public opinion, the first apostles of the cause steadily, modestly, yet effectually, worked their way, have undermining some long-established prejudice, have opening customs, rendered venerable by antiquity; at one time startling the masses, at another appealing to the human heart; now exhorting by precept, and again convincing by the strong force of example. Laughter and derision were the apparent fruits of their vigorous and disinterested labors; contempt and scorn followed their preaching, and immediately their sleeping powers were roused with a noble resolution, they did not swerve from what a spirit of prophetic anticipation told them was their duty!

Some, reason, experience, reflection, observation, all convinced that their doctrine was the best, the most comfortable, simple and unobtrusive; and that the greater happiness of mankind ever result from its universal adoption. They looked ahead upon society, and beheld drunkenness doing the work of the grave, numbering its victims from the high as well as the low, from the rich as well as the poor, from the educated as well as the ignorant; they discerned that no state or condition in life raised up a safeguard against the deadly approach of this insidious vice; that it levelled all distinctions of rank, power, wealth, or of wisdom—in fact, that man, weak mortal man, was its victim!

They saw the streams of social corruption flowing on, and were able, not only to legislate the tyrannies, the losses, the character of individuals; not only to supply the foundation of every moral, political or religious obligation, but, when having occurred in its hellish course all trace of national character and form!

They dared not stem the torrent, but sought for former opposition; they hoped not to arrest it in its headlong career. To stem on the head waters would be to increase the evil, and cause the greater consequent destruction.

Arguing simply, with the logic of common sense—supported by a thousand allusions to the self-evident of metaphysical abstractions—they said—“If this hideous train of evils do actually flow from the vice of intemperance, as an effort from a cause, let us remove the cause of intemperance, and then we certainly remove the train of evils we deplore. Removing the cause, we remove the effect.”

Next, this proposition seems clear to the common-sense man; but also, so all-powerful was held, so unassailable was custom, so distinguished was prejudice, that we might well have imagined that man's reflexive channel of perceptions were closed up, that he had no intelligence to motivate itself from that, reason, the glorious gift of God, was almost within him! Well, modest wisdom then did the only thing, it guided their steps to the fountain source, and there they told man with wit, with energy—with patient success.

Next we trace their efforts through a long and painful period of probation, and meet we will have every ground they held, their fond hopes crushed by the bitterness of disappointment, or see their schemes for human happiness crushed by the rampant domination of custom, habit and of prejudice!

Though the first leaders did still struggle against opposition, scorn and laughing, yet they must not sit still, or perish in the unequal contest!

Attention soon became directed to one individual, lively in his humanity, but crushed in the greatness of his Christian virtues, whose heart ever beat at the sight of human misery, whose generous heart was ever open to answer the distress, whose gentle voice of his mouth the favored pillar of the dying wreck, replying to the very heart of man's condition, whose tongue of consolation dried up the burning tear on the widow and the orphan's cheek, whose noble heart felt for all mankind, without a base and vulgar spirit of sectarianism, that would condemn the exercise of charity in the limits of a particular creed. This humble and Christian manhood of religion, was the one fitted by nature, by character, by unworldliness of profession, so best this sacrifice of life, to stand forth in the hour of need as Ireland's champion, Ireland's righteousness—Ireland's Apostle!

Yes, deep, unshakable joy, filled the hearts of those who valued humanity well, when the Very Rev. Thomas Mathew first proclaimed the cause of abstinence, gathered together to hear the words of wisdom and of truth. That words of gladness were far exceeded when the people, stamped this new movement with the seal of his own approval, those qualified himself to go abroad and

Little more than two short years have elapsed, and a mighty and a wonderful revolution has been effected! He went through the land, and wherever he followed! He preached, and the pale voice of food and contention was



Cause', by Richard Webb, a Dublin Quaker.

A report of a charity sermon delivered by Rev. Michael Bernard O'Shea on 'National Education and Temperance', in aid of the schools attached to Carey's Lane Chapel, appears, also reports on Temperance meetings in Dublin, Waterford, at the Globe Lane Reading Room and Millerd Street, Cork, and on a Tea Party at the Clarence Street Temperance Reading Room. This issue contains 6 advertisements.

2. February 27th. Again, the front page is shared. First, an article criticizing the drinking of cordials and publicizing Fr Mathew's opposition to their consumption. Second, JFM's second great interest, Irish manufacture. It is one of his many appeals — and not by any means his last — to Irish people to use items of Irish manufacture. He makes the point, still very apposite, that there are few items of everyday use which the Irish workman cannot produce. There are also reports on Temperance meetings at Millerd Street and St Patricks Hall, Mallow Lane, as well as on the progress of the Knockmahon (Co. Waterford) Temperance Society. 7 adverts.

3. March 6th. The lead article is 'Do Drunkards Alone Need Total Abstinence?' (The answer being NO!) This issue contains a short story by Mrs Hall, 'The Contrast', and poems 'Lays of Temperance' by W.M. and 'The Drunkard' by S.R. Quinn. There is a report on Fr Mathew in Skibbereen as well as one on Temperance in Killarney. Also, reports on meetings in Globe Lane and Mallow Lane in Cork. 4 adverts.

4. March 13th. The front page is taken up with an answer to a letter in the 'Cork Constitution' attacking Fr Mathew's visit to Skibbereen. The writer of the letter implied that Fr Mathew's conversions to Temperance are of a very temporary nature and included some very unpleasant reflections on the Roman Catholic church and the motives of

those promoting Fr Mathew. The issue also contains the first part of a short story from Maguire himself, 'The Attempted Suicide!' A report on the Millerd Street meeting and much correspondence, some direct to the Editor and some culled from other journals. 8 adverts.

5. March 20th. This issue opens with comments on and the text of Judge Crampton's address to the Grand Jury of the County in praise of abstinence and Fr Mathew's work, followed by reports on Fr Mathew in Macroom and the Mallow Lane meeting. There is also a long letter from a Stephen Moriarty of Monaghan, an abstract from *Mister Humphrey's Clock* and the conclusion of JFM's 'Attempted Suicide!'. An Exhibition of Irish Manufacture was held in Mr Ronayne's large room in Patrick Street — on St Patrick's Day; textiles and hats, dyed leathers and gloves, soaps and paperhangings, to name but a few. 8 adverts.

6. March 27th. The front page is given over to a fuller report of the Exhibition of Irish Manufacture, 'the First in our city'. In a similar vein is a letter from William Kenely, Secretary to the Worsted Weavers of Cork in support of home industry, and James Haughton's first letter on the use of articles produced by slave labour, this on tobacco. There are also reports on St Patrick's Day in Thurles and Teetotalism in Dublin. However, this is a very difficult issue to read as the pages have been misplaced and appear in the following order: 41, 46, 47, 44, 45, 42, 43, 48. There are 6 adverts.

Whether the misprinting of the pages in the last issue was due to intemperance on the part of the printer, we may never know, but there is now a three-week gap to the next issue which is produced by a new printer, John Nolan of 38 Paul Street. The paper has its own office at 8 Cook Street and the price has been increased to 2½^d.

7. April 17th. The front page is again devoted to Irish manufacture, and there are reports on the new Total Abstinence Society at Blackrock, Stillorgan and Booterstown, Dublin. There is a lengthy report of an address to and reply by Fr Lyons, P.P. of Kilmore (in Erris, Co. Mayo) from the local Temperance group there. Also, a report of the Grand Temperance Procession in Cork on Easter Monday. 15 adverts.

8. April 24th. Leading off with 'The Triumph of Temperance in Cork', the issue contains the usual reports, particularly on Fr Mathew's progress around Kerry. There is also a report of a great meeting of the Operatives of Cork to prepare for the Procession next Monday — see next issue. 18 adverts.

9. May 1st. The front page again takes up the subject of Irish manufactures. 'Oh! When will the Irish learn the lesson of self respect?' There is also a report on the 'Grand Procession and Public Demonstration in favour of Irish Manufacture'. On the temperance front, there is the text of an address to Fr Mathew from New York, a report on temperance in Kildare and a clever 32-line acrostic address to THE VERY REVEREND THEOBALD MATHEW OSC, composed by H.M'N, a member of the Dunmanway Temperance Society. 21 adverts.

10. May 8th. This issue's front page contains a criticism of Dr Edgar of Belfast who believes 'Teetotalism is insulting to God and disgraceful to Man'. There is a report of a temperance meeting in Blarney and an address presented to Fr Mathew in Londonderry. There is also a report of an Irish manufacture meeting in Ronayne's room in Patrick Street — and 23 adverts.

11. May 15th. 'Irish Manufacture — The Coming Exhibition!' takes most of the front page, the remainder extolling the work carried out by the Cork shipyard in refitting and repairing the *S.S. Lee*. There was a great

meeting at the new Temperance Hall in Brown Street, a temperance festival in Mitchelstown, a temperance Tea Party in Clonmel and a report on temperance in Manchester.

Dr Woodroffe said farewell to the Cork Literary and Scientific Society. Mr and Mrs Crofts were continuing to provide musical evenings in the Theatre Royal, Cook Street. There is an extensive report on the saving of the transport ship, *The Sovereign*, which was nearly wrecked in a storm in Rosscarbery Bay. 27 adverts.

12. May 22nd. The front page poses a question — and tries to answer it — 'Will there be a reaction (to teetotalism)?' There are reports of Fr Mathew in Maynooth and Kinnegad. A meeting was held at Browne Street Temperance Hall. There is a 68-line poem 'Intemperance versus the Diseases' by a member of the Skibbereen Temperance Society.

John Nolan, the Printer, had moved to 16, Browne Street. 37 adverts.

13. May 29th. 'Irish Manufacture — Results of Agitation!' fills the front page, a report on the Total Abstinence meeting at Princes Street, with Richard Dowden (Richard) in the chair, filling most of the reverse. The St George's Company *S.S. Victory* set a new quay-to-quay record of 22 hours from Bristol to Cork and there is notice of great interest in river steamers.

There is information on a series of 12 lectures on Chemistry to be delivered by Professor Davy and a description of The Battle of Clontarf taken from Moore's recently published *History of Ireland*. There was a temperance meeting at Globe Lane and Dr Philip Cross was among those who greeted guests to the Coachford and Dripsey Total Abstinence Society. 28 adverts.

14. June 5th. The front page is largely devoted to the Exhibition of Irish Manufactures

being held on Whit Monday and Tuesday. Fr Mathew was in Birr and then went on to the North; he also received an address from the Ardee Total Abstinence Society. A 'Great Tea-Party and Soirée' was held in Browne Street and meetings were held in Douglas and Austen's Lane. 29 adverts.

15. June 12th. The question, 'Is the Temperance Society a Mere Political Society?' is posed and answered — in the negative — on the front page and part of the second page. Fr Mathew received an address from Kilbeggan Total Abstinence Society and he went on to Cootehill. T.A. meetings were held in Carrigaline and Browne Street, and a branch was founded in Church Street, Dublin. Maguire wrote a letter (on abstinence) to the Irish working classes.

This issue also carries a report of the skinning of a dog belonging to Father Colgan, a curate in Athy; the remains were then hung on his door. The report blames Orangemen. 25 adverts.

16. June 19th. JFM again addresses a letter to the Irish working classes on temperance — and the damage done to family life by intemperance. Fr Mathew was in Cavan and Banbridge and received an address from the T.A. Society in Beragh. Meetings were held in Globe Lane and Cove.

There is an editorial hint of changes to come — and 21 adverts.

17. June 26th. This issue opens with a story — unattributed — 'St Patrick's Day, According to the Old Regime', which fills the front page and the first column of the second. Temperance came to Manchester! Meetings were held at St Patrick's Hall, Mallow Lane and in Duncan Street. A Temperance Tea Party was held in Evergreen. Parliament was prorogued and there was

notice of criticism of the new Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Sir John Campbell, due to the fact that he was not a member of the Irish Bar.

Editorial Note: Due to its size and title, *The Cork Total Abstainer* is restricted in its scope. It will shortly be replaced by a new paper, larger and wider in scope, by the name of *The Cork Examiner* which takes its name from the London Whig paper, *The Examiner*. The Cork one will also support the Whig — or as it prefers to call it, the Liberal — interest. (How could John Francis Maguire, interested in the promotion of Irish Manufactures, support the party of *laissez faire* economics, which proved so disastrous during the Great Famine 5 years later?).

This issue contained 13 adverts.

18. July 3rd. The front page contains another letter on Temperance to the Irish working classes. There was a 'Tea Party and Soirée' in Passage West and a Tea Party in Brown Street Room. Father Mathew received an address from the Belfast and Lisburn Total Abstinence Society. The Editorial Note of the previous issue was repeated almost *in toto*, the last two paragraphs being dropped and three new ones supplied, and there were 15 adverts.

As far as this writer can see, this forerunner to the *Cork Examiner* was ignored in the 150th celebratory issue in 1991, and appears to be missing from most — if not all — lists of Irish newspapers and periodicals. One wonders what sort of paper the *Examiner* might be today — and what sort of city Cork might be — if John Francis Maguire's twin aims of Total Abstinence and support for Irish Manufactory had been successful.