

# Father Mathew in Limerick

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*The effect of Fr. Theobald Mathew, Ireland's Apostle of Temperance, on drunkenness in Limerick in the late 1830s is outlined, including his three-day visit to the City in 1839 when between 120,000 and 250,000 people took the pledge resulting in a dramatic reduction in drunkenness.*

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That the upper classes in Limerick were particularly susceptible to the attractions of strong drink was noted by a French visitor in the late eighteenth century, and the Poor Commissioners in the eighteen thirties found a similar partiality among the tradesmen and labourers in the city.<sup>1</sup> Tradesmen were more given to indulgence than labourers, so much so that one employer told the Commissioners that there was greater comfort among labourers and their families on one shilling a day than among tradesmen earning twice that amount. The ease with which licences could be obtained led to a great number of disreputable characters becoming publicans. There were more than three hundred licensed premises in the city in 1838 and Ritchie, on his way through Limerick, found them busy, with whiskey 'the grand luxury'.<sup>2</sup>

Lewis noted in his *Dictionary* that the city contained one distillery and seven breweries, the produce of which was "chiefly confined to the neighbourhood" by which he presumably meant the city and parts of the counties of Clare and Limerick.<sup>3</sup> The distillery was that of Stein, Brown and Co. at Thomond Gate, which in 1832 paid an amount of duty that was exceeded only by the distilleries of James Jameson and George Roe and Co. in Dublin.<sup>4</sup> In 1835 George Brown wrote to the Excise Commissioners to say that with the reduction of duty from 3/4d. to 2/4d. in 1834, his distillery's sales increased from an average of 161,793 gallons during the last four months of each year from 1828 to 1833 to 212,697 gallons for the last four months of 1834.<sup>5</sup> This increased level of sales does not seem to have been maintained, however, as Lewis, writing in 1837, gave 455,000 gallons as the amount produced *annually*.<sup>6</sup> Morewood wrote the following year that the distillery, which had steam engines powered by coal and turf, employed more than five hundred people.<sup>7</sup> The amount of illicit distillation in the Limerick area in the 'thirties, and the relationship of its price to legal spirits cannot be estimated, although Brown himself, in evidence before the Revenue Commissioners in the previous decade, confirmed that there was widespread use of illegal spirits 'among the lower classes' and that it was priced between 6/- and 6/6d. a gallon, compared to 9/- for that produced by his distillery.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Síle Ní Chinnéide, "A Journey from Cork to Limerick in December 1790", *Nth. Munster Antiq. J.*, 14 (1971), 72; *Third Report of Commissioners for inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland*, British Parliamentary Papers, 1836 XXX, Appendix C, Part 1, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>*Dublin Weekly Herald*, 16 Feb. 1839; Leith Ritchie, *Ireland Picturesque and Romantic*, London 1838, p. 196.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, London 1837, vol. II, p. 269.

<sup>4</sup>*Seventh Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Excise Establishment*, British Parliamentary Papers 1834, XXV (Pt. I), p. 233.

<sup>5</sup>*Seventh Report*. . . . British Parliamentary Papers 1835, XXX (Pt. II), pp. 126-127.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis, *Dictionary*, II, p. 269.

<sup>7</sup>Samuel Morewood, *A Philosophical and Statistical History. . . . of Inebriating Liquors*, Dublin 1838, p. 678.

<sup>8</sup>*Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Collection and Management of the Revenue arising in Ireland*, British Parliamentary Papers, 1823 (405) VII, p. 309.



There had been a temperance society in Limerick since 1833 at the latest, which had the support of both the Protestant and Catholic bishops.<sup>9</sup> It had 600 members at one stage, but declined because of suspicions of sectarianism. The society which succeeded it had 100 members at the end of 1836, the majority of them Catholics.<sup>10</sup> A Limerick Temperance Society soirée in November 1837 was attended by the Mayor and Sheriff, two M.P.s and preachers from the Wesleyan and Primitive Wesleyan chapels. It is clear from the wording of the pledge, quoted at the soirée by the Society's secretary, that the 'moderation' principle was adopted by members, with a promise to abstain from ardent spirits and "not become intoxicated by the use of any other liquor whatsoever".<sup>11</sup> A member of the Society had tried to justify the moderation principle to John Finch, a Liverpool teetotaler who had held a meeting advocating total abstinence in the Old Court House, attended by a number of the poor and destitute.<sup>12</sup> From an advertisement for their New Coffee and Reading Rooms in April 1838 it is clear that the Limerick Temperance Society was making a particular effort to gain adherents from among the working class. The Rooms offered tradesmen and mechanics an opportunity to meet in comfort as an alternative to the public houses where, according to the advertisement, the tradesmen would have to endure "the annoyance and everlasting din, uproar and riot, of frenzied madmen, inflamed by strong drink, and rendered more horrible by blasphemies and curses, impious songs and profane jests."<sup>13</sup>

In the same month, April 1838, Father Mathew had agreed to put his energy and influence behind the teetotal movement in Cork city and by the end of the year his followers in that city numbered almost ten thousand.<sup>14</sup> By the summer of 1839 large numbers were travelling to Cork from different parts of the country to take the pledge from Father Mathew. The first issue of the Catholic and Liberal *Limerick Reporter* appeared on 12 July 1839 and carried the story of two hundred habitual drunkards who had gone to Cork to enrol "under the banner of Temperance." They were almost certainly not the first to have made the journey, as the Temperance and Mortality Society, under the presidency of Rev. John Nolan of St. Mary's (R.C.) parish, Limerick, dates from the same month, with membership open only "to those who can produce Testimonials of their pledge from the Very Rev. Theobald Mathew of Cork".<sup>15</sup>

By September the beneficial effects of temperance in Limerick were being publicly acknowledged by the Mayor, who in a public letter to Father Mathew, claimed that there was less crime and public disorder as a result of people taking the pledge.<sup>16</sup> In the course of two reports during October the *Dublin Evening Post* told the stories of shebeen owners in Limerick converting their premises to coffee houses, of a distiller having his weekly sale of whiskey there more than halved and of the number of temperance pilgrims from Limerick to Cork having reached the extraordinary number of 10,000.<sup>17</sup> By mid-November the same

<sup>9</sup>See letter from Bishop Jebb to Massey Harvey in *Dublin Weekly Herald*, 20 April, 1839.

<sup>10</sup>*Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette*, 12 Nov., 1836.

<sup>11</sup>*Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette*, 11 Nov., 1837. The 'moderation' or 'anti-spirits' societies opposed all spirits but accepted wine and beer taken in moderation, whereas the teetotalers, or total abstainers, were pledged to abstain from all alcoholic drinks.

<sup>12</sup>*Preston Temperance Advocate*, July, 1837.

<sup>13</sup>*Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette*, 21 April, 1838.

<sup>14</sup>*Southern Reporter*, 26 Jan., 1839.

<sup>15</sup>'Rules of St. Mary's Temperance and Mortality Society', attached to reply from Limerick city Police District to Inspector of Constabulary's Temperance Enquiry of March 1840. State Paper Office, Dublin, H.O.M.A. 131/10 (hereafter 'Temperance Reports: Limerick City').

<sup>16</sup>G. H. Fitzgerald, Mayor of Limerick, to Rev. Theobald Mathew, in *Tipperary Free Press*, 24 Sept., 1839.

<sup>17</sup>*Dublin Evening Post*, 19, 29 Oct., 1839.



newspaper was claiming that through the influence of temperance "Limerick had become morally a new city."<sup>18</sup>

As a city where his reputation was obviously high and the teetotal movement was well established, it is not surprising that Limerick was to be the scene of his first labours for temperance outside Cork.<sup>19</sup> His ostensible reason for going there, though, was to preach a charity sermon at St. Michael's Church in aid of a school for poor girls run by the Presentation nuns who had settled in the city a couple of years earlier. Those arranging the sermon were fully aware of the popularity of their preacher and permitted entrance to the sermon by ticket only (seats from 1/- to 7/6d.), an unusual practice justified on the grounds that the church might be damaged by the large number of the poor who would try to get in if admittance was free! While Father Mathew had written to one of the priests at St. Michael's asking to be spared invitations to temperance functions, it is clear that there was an understanding with Bishop Ryan that he would spend at least one day in administering the pledge in Limerick.<sup>20</sup> His secretary was reported to have preceded him with 2,000 temperance medals and cards, but there is no further record of these items in the many reports of his meetings in the city. It is, in fact, unlikely that his secretary, James McKenna, accompanied him on this occasion, as in his subsequent account of the visit to Limerick, McKenna incorrectly gave 3 December, 1839 (rather than 30 November) as the date of Father Mathew's arrival there.<sup>21</sup>

The press announcement of his intended visit may have been preceded by news of it passed on by word of mouth, for by the Friday (29th November) the city was thronged with visitors and on Saturday when he arrived the streets were lined with large crowds to cheer the mail coach from Cork and the car arranged to take him from the terminus at Cruise's Hotel to his brother-in-law's house in Upper Mallow Street where he was to stay was standing by. Most came from the surrounding counties of Limerick, Clare and Tipperary, but some were identified as having travelled from as far away as Waterford, Galway and Mayo.<sup>22</sup> Lodging houses had been filled up by Friday and at the week-end, with an estimated 40,000 strangers in the city, accommodation problems became acute. Temperance societies and commercial concerns combined to offer some a roof over their heads, while many did not hesitate to make a few shillings on the sudden demands on food and shelter: the penny loaf was selling at three times that price "and two shillings were in numerous instances paid for the privilege of standing in cellars through the Irishtown."<sup>23</sup> John O'Donovan the antiquarian, trying to write up his Ordnance Survey notes on Clare, found himself "driven out of Limerick last Sunday by Father Mathew and his sober followers."<sup>24</sup> Those unable to find shelter will have been grateful that the weather, which the previous week "had assumed the cold garb of winter," had turned "mild and benign."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup>*Dublin Evening Post*, 14 Nov., 1839.

<sup>19</sup>Although it is likely that he did spend some time administering the pledge while on a short visit to his brother at Rathcloheen, Co. Tipperary, in September, 1839; *Tipperary Free Press*, 28 Sept., 2 Oct., 1839.

<sup>20</sup>Advertisement for sermon, letter to Father Raleigh of St. Michael's and justification of the entry charges are all in *Limerick Reporter*, 26 Nov., 1839.

<sup>21</sup>H. B. F. Shaw, "The Life and Times of Father Theobald Mathew", unpublished M.A. thesis, U.C.C., 1939, p. 156.

<sup>22</sup>*Clare Journal*, 2 Dec., 1839; *Limerick Reporter*, 3 Dec., 1839; *Limerick Chronicle*, 4 Dec., 1839.

<sup>23</sup>*Limerick Reporter*, 3 Dec., 1839.

<sup>24</sup>John O'Donovan to Thomas Larcom, printed in Seán P. Ó Cillín (ed.), *Travellers in Co. Clare 1459-1843*, Galway 1977, p. 47.

<sup>25</sup>*Limerick Chronicle*, 27 Nov., 4 Dec., 1839.



The charity sermon on Sunday succeeded in raising £160 for the school. Probably influenced by the knowledge that so many had come to Limerick to see him he began to receive prospective teetotallers outside the Court House, having been brought there by coach straight from the sermon. This was followed by a further session of administering the pledge at his brother-in-law's house.<sup>26</sup> He began again in the same place as early as 5 a.m. the following morning when, according to one paper, a pregnant woman died from injuries received in the crush around the house, and, according to another, missiles were thrown at the police sent there to keep order.<sup>27</sup> He returned to the Court House where, by the afternoon, the crowds were so great that Father Raleigh from St. Michael's Church and Mr. Dunbar, Father Mathew's brother-in-law, concerned for his safety, went to the Mayor. The Mayor arranged for an escort of Scots Guards who proceeded to 'liberate' Father Mathew from his followers, who had occupied the space between the New Bridge (later renamed Mathew Bridge) and the Court House. The crowds here "were so anxious to catch a glimpse of the great apostle that they braved the hoofs of horses and the swords of dragoons to touch the hem of his garment."<sup>28</sup>

The dragoons were able to extricate him, however, and guided him, via the Corn Market, to a green space near Dunbar's house, where he continued to administer the pledge. A reported 10,000 people crowded into the space between Mallow Street and George Street and all took the pledge, presumably in batches. He next went to the quayside and administered the pledge to 700 new arrivals from Kilrush, "not allowing them to disembark and increase the confusion so prevalent at that hour over the city."<sup>29</sup> This confusion was due in part to the great number of intoxicated people who had been engaged in drinking their 'farewell to whiskey'. The ultra-Protestant *Limerick Standard* described with relish how some of these "in a beastly state of intoxication" were "blindly rushing to the taking of the Temperance Pledge."<sup>30</sup>

On Tuesday Father Mathew postponed his return to Cork and began the day giving the pledge in batches of several hundred at a time, people entering one door of Mr. Dunbar's house and leaving by another. By the time the *Limerick Reporter* went to press that evening they had noticed he was hoarse from having repeated the pledge so often. Clergymen helped him out, saying the words after him, repeated in turn by the teetotallers on bended knees. He left for Cork on the 5 o'clock coach, but not before thanking the Mayor and civic authorities, as well as the military, for their assistance.<sup>31</sup>

Attempts to keep an account of the numbers taking the pledge were abandoned at an early stage and instead of entering the converts on a list they were asked to give their names to their parish priests, who would later be sent medals and cards for them from Cork. Estimates of the numbers who took the pledge over the three days vary from 120,000 to

<sup>26</sup>*Limerick Chronicle*, 3 Dec., 1839.

<sup>27</sup>*Limerick Reporter*, 3 Dec., 1839; *Limerick Standard*, 3 Dec., 1839.

<sup>28</sup>*Limerick Reporter*, 3 Dec., 1839. The *Limerick Standard*, 3 Dec., 1839, differs from other accounts in saying that Father Mathew was already accompanied by dragoons on his way to the Court House. It also reported a large number of injuries received when part of a balustrade along the river collapsed and several people fell in. The *Limerick Chronicle*, 4 Dec., 1839, confirmed this, and an English Quaker visiting the city some time afterwards noted that 100 feet of iron railing was still on the ground. Cyrus Clark in *British Temperance Herald*, quoted by John B. Sheil, *History of the Temperance Movement in Ireland*, Dublin 1843, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup>*Limerick Reporter*, 3 Dec., 1839; *Limerick Chronicle*, 4 Dec., 1839.

<sup>30</sup>*Limerick Standard*, 3 Dec., 1839.

<sup>31</sup>*Limerick Reporter*, 3 Dec., 1839; *Limerick Chronicle*, 4 Dec., 1839.



250,000.<sup>32</sup> There were similar discrepancies surrounding the numbers killed or injured: the *Limerick Chronicle* rejoiced that no one was seriously injured when the railings by the court House collapsed but the *London Times* reported that a man was killed in that incident.<sup>33</sup> Some were certainly injured, and one press correspondent who went to see them at Barrington's Hospital found that the casualties "presented such a spectacle as might be found near the field of battle."<sup>34</sup> A reporter from the *Limerick Standard* examined the hospital's casualty list and, while three deaths were recorded of people who had come to Limerick to see Father Mathew, none of the deaths arose from incidents at or near his meetings.<sup>35</sup>

The extent of the casualties was one reason why the *Dublin Evening Packet* disapproved so strongly of events in Limerick: other grounds for its disapproval were given as the large numbers of people on the streets, the public disorder and assaults on police, as well as the drunkenness of those having their 'farewell to whiskey'. It claimed that "a greater amount of evil, moral as well as physical, had been produced by his visit to Limerick in a single day than could have been caused—humanly calculating—by ordinary intemperance in six months."<sup>36</sup> The *Waterford Mail* expressed concern at the same aspects of the visit as the *Packet*, adding a feeling of particular horror at the spectacle of Father Mathew having been "hailed as a deity, before whom thousands fell prostrate in adoration." It favoured a "rational reformation founded on conviction and not arising from intemperate enthusiasm" and doubted if many of those who flocked to take the pledge in Limerick would keep it.<sup>37</sup> The *Dublin Evening Mail* went even further, arguing that not only would no permanent moral good come from the rash and fanatical avowal of temperance, but, lacking moral training and a conviction of the reasonableness of temperance, there was a danger that deprivation from drink would merely sharpen the appetite and, in the long, run, create more rather than less drunkenness.<sup>38</sup> The *Kilkenny Moderator* reserved its particular scorn for the temperance medals and their popular association with miracles, despite the fact that there seems to have been no medals distributed during the three days. Under the heading "Father Mathew's Miracles in Limerick" it is argued that those who were now abandoning drunkenness only to embrace superstition, will go back to their "lawless and vicious pursuits" when the spell is broken and they find the medals do not work any miracles.<sup>39</sup>

The *Limerick Standard* had never favoured Father Mathew's visit to the city but had largely restricted itself to reprinting articles from other newspapers that showed hostility towards the events in Limerick. Then, on Christmas Eve, it came forward with specific grounds for its hostility. This was the supposed association of the temperance movement with radical politics, quoting as evidence extracts from a Limerick journal "lately set up

<sup>32</sup>The lowest figure appears in the *Times*, 17 Dec. 1839; most of Father Mathew's biographers gave 150,000: see, for example, John Francis Maguire, *Father Mathew: a biography* (London 1863), p. 133; John Begley, *The Diocese of Limerick* (Dublin 1838), p. 386, gave 180,000; the *Dublin Evening Post*, 5 Dec. 1839, was informed the number was 200,000 and McKenna said it was 250,000: see Shaw (fn. 21) 'Life and Times', p. 158.

<sup>33</sup>*Limerick Chronicle*, 4 Dec., 1839; *Times*, 17 Dec., 1839.

<sup>34</sup>*The Freeman's Journal*, 5 Dec., 1839.

<sup>35</sup>*Limerick Standard*, 3 Dec., 1839.

<sup>36</sup>Reprinted in *Limerick Standard*, 10 Dec., 1839.

<sup>37</sup>*Waterford Mail*, 7 Dec., 1839.

<sup>38</sup>Reprinted in *Limerick Standard*, 6 Dec., 1839.

<sup>39</sup>*Kilkenny Moderator*, 7 Dec., 1839. There were no claims of miracles on this visit, but on another visit to Limerick in 1842 there was a suggestion that Father Mathew, by re-administering the pledge to a lapsed teetotaller, had cured him of paralysis. See Father Augustine, *Footprints of Father Theobald Mathew, OFM Cap: apostle of temperance*, Dublin 1947, pp. 542-543.



by the Radical party and Priesthood in this city.” The substance of the extract was that half a million Irishmen, sworn to temperance, would present a threat to English power. This alleged association with politics was an issue that dogged Father Mathew’s work throughout the pre-Famine period. Like other temperance societies founded after Father Mathew’s model, that of St. Mary’s, Limerick, had a rule which specifically forbade the discussion of ‘either politics or trade affairs’ and the reply from Major Volkes to the Chief Constable’s Enquiry on the state of the temperance movement in Limerick makes no mention of political associations.<sup>40</sup>

The *Dublin Evening Post*, whose editor F. W. Conway had himself taken the pledge, was in favour of “a moral rather than a political revolution”, although the consequences of such a moral revolution were spelled out by less cautious Catholic newspapers.<sup>41</sup> “Reform the people from the national crime”, said the *Limerick Reporter* referring to drunkenness, “and you deduct so much from their oppressor’s power and opportunity.” It went on to quote from a recent speech by Daniel O’Connell at Bandon, when he said he would be watching the effect the temperance societies were having before he “again unfurled the banner of Repeal.”<sup>42</sup> When the new campaign was launched the following year many teetotallers in Limerick, as throughout most of the country, were prominent in the agitation for Repeal that was to dominate Irish politics for the next few years. In 1843, when the Repeal movement had reached its peak, a report from the Police Inspector in Limerick, in reply to a circular from the Constabulary Office in Dublin, reported that teetotallers were then “identified with Repealers, which is now the case almost completely.”<sup>43</sup>

The *Dublin Evening Post* fumed against “these odious, unprincipled and shameless libels” of Father Mathew’s work in Limerick, and expressed regret that Catholic newspapers did not “breathe a single syllable of dissent” against the charges. The *Statesman and Dublin Christian Record* attacked the *Limerick Chronicle* as having “forfeited all character as a Protestant journal by the part it has acted in giving aid to this shameful delusion.”<sup>44</sup> To its credit, the *Chronicle* continued to draw attention to the benefits of temperance, and at the end of the month carried an article describing the peaceful scenes in Limerick on Christmas Eve, as crowds awaited the ringing of the midnight bells at St. Mary’s, contrasting them with the disorderly behaviour on Christmas Eve in previous years.<sup>45</sup>

Whatever the critics may have felt about events in Limerick, from the point of view of Father Mathew and the Irish temperance movement, the visit revealed the immense possibilities for conversions to teetotalism that awaited Father Mathew if he could arrange similar meetings in other cities and towns, possibilities which he was able to explore almost immediately with the acceptance of an invitation to visit Waterford from Bishop Foran. But what about the effects of his mission in Limerick: did they last beyond Christmas? It would appear that they did. As might be expected, convictions for intoxication not only fell dramatically in December (31, compared with an average of 165 for the previous eleven

<sup>40</sup>Temperance Reports: Limerick city.

<sup>41</sup>*Dublin Evening Post*, 14 Dec., 1839. The *Post*’s attitude was perhaps appropriate for a newspaper that for much of the decade had been a ‘Castle newspaper’ though never a whole-hearted one; see Brian Inglis, *The Freedom of the Press in Ireland 1784-1841*, London 1954, p. 207.

<sup>42</sup>*Limerick Reporter*, 10 Dec., 1839.

<sup>43</sup>Circular addressed . . . . to the County Inspectors of the Constabulary Force, with the several answers . . . . (1843). Copy in Box 34, Papers of the Earl of Derby, Liverpool Record Office.

<sup>44</sup>*The Statesman and Dublin Christian Record*, 6 Dec., 1839.

<sup>45</sup>*Limerick Chronicle*, 28 Dec., 1839. Even the Wren Boys didn’t appear on St. Stephen’s Day, much to the approval of the *Chronicle*.



months of 1839) but the low rate of convictions continued into the new year, with an average of 63 per month from January to June, 1840, compared to an average of 194 for the same period the previous year.<sup>46</sup> In a petition to the Lord Lieutenant in 1842 the City Corporation requested, among other things, that the Constabulary Force be reduced from 46 to 22 because of the decrease in drunkenness and other crimes.<sup>47</sup>

There was indeed a great reduction in serious crime in the city of Limerick in the years following Father Mathew's visit there, but it needs to be remembered that this reduction could have been influenced by other causes besides the temperance movement. From 233 convictions in 1839, there were 126 in 1840, a reduction of 46% compared with that of 7% for the country as a whole. The improvement continued into the following year and criminal convictions remained low up to 1845.<sup>48</sup>

The benefits of temperance were also in evidence away from the courts. The stipendiary magistrate Major T. P. Volkes reported to Dublin Castle in March, 1840, that despite a rise in the cost of provisions (turf alone had trebled in price) the poor were less destitute than they had been because they no longer spent their money on drink. He had been informed, he wrote, that savings bank deposits had increased, a fact confirmed in a report from William Williams, the Sub-Inspector of Police for the city who, reporting a few weeks after Volkes, put the number of new depositors since December 1839 at between five and six hundred.<sup>49</sup> The secretary of Barrington's Hospital confirmed that in the year since the beginning of the temperance campaign cases of accidents treated by the hospital had been less frequent and of a less serious nature.<sup>50</sup>

Early in 1843 William Smith O'Brien, M.P. for Limerick County, speaking at an assembly in honour of Father Mathew at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, referred to his constituency as an area that had felt particularly the benefits of temperance and that the people there 'beyond all others, had observed with inviolate fidelity the solemn engagements entered into.'<sup>51</sup> Father Mathew often returned to Limerick city and always got a good reception there.<sup>52</sup> O'Brien's remarks on the loyalty of the county were probably equally true of the city. *Thom's Directory* for 1846 lists the officers of the Temperance Society of St. Michael's parish, and a list of thirty-eight Limerick societies between 1840 and 1850, compiled from records of the Limerick Savings Bank, contained as many as six temperance societies.<sup>53</sup> Sir John Forbes, a doctor and temperance advocate who travelled around Ireland in 1852,

<sup>46</sup>*Consolidated Return of . . . . Convictions before Magistrates*, Public Record Office, London, H.O. 100, Folders 259-262. The figures are for the County of Limerick, as those for the city and county were not distinguished until March 1840.

<sup>47</sup>Maurice Lenihan, *History of Limerick*, 1866, p. 499. English Quakers visiting Limerick in 1842 found the Thomond Gate distillery closed for lack of customers. *Temperance Recorder*, Aug. and Nov. 1842. Figures for drunkenness in the city remained low until 1845, when they began to rise sharply. *Number of Persons taken into custody for Drunkenness and Disorderly Conduct (Ireland)*, British Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3 (531) LXXXI, pp. 300-301. By this time the distillery was operating again. Anthony Marmion, *The Ancient and Modern History of the Maritime Ports of Ireland*, London 1855, p. 492.

<sup>48</sup>*Comparative Table showing the number of persons committed or bailed in each county in Ireland for each of the last seven years, and the result of proceedings*, British Parliamentary Papers, 1846 (696) XXXV, p. 180. Criminal convictions for the County, as opposed to the city, did not show any reduction up to 1842.

<sup>49</sup>Temperance Reports: Limerick city.

<sup>50</sup>Father Nesson, "The Total Abstinence Movement," *The Capuchin Annual*, 1956-57, p. 136.

<sup>51</sup>*Nation*, 28 Jan., 1843.

<sup>52</sup>He even found time to go there during the Famine, when he was heavily involved in relief work. Following a visit there early in 1849 he said that there was no city in the world more temperate than Limerick; *Cork Examiner*, 9 Feb., 1849.

<sup>53</sup>*Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory for the year 1846*, p. 635; A. G. Fitt, "A List of Societies in Limerick 1840-50", *J. Old Limerick Soc.*, 1:1 (Dec. 1946), 36.

visited one of the Limerick societies which had survived the Famine when he was passing through the city. He was informed that it once had 1,100 members but now had around 300. With one exception, the main features of a pre-Famine teetotal society, like that of St. Mary's, Limerick, mentioned earlier, were maintained: there was a mutual benefit society and a library where newspapers were taken in; political discussion was forbidden and there were no restrictions on membership on the grounds of religion. The exception was that with local priests now administering the pledge there was no longer any need for members to provide testimonials from Father Mathew.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>John Forbes, *Memorandums made in Ireland in the Autumn of 1852*, London 1853, vol. I, pp. 193-194.