

the ways in which contemporary Australians and subsequent, male, historians represented it. In so doing, Kirkby contributes to a wider history on the complex meanings of work for women, and changing constructions of femininity, masculinity, public space, and drink.

JULIA ROBERTS, NEW DUNDEE, ONTARIO  
julroberts@rogers.com

John F. Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade: Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and Irish America*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002.

Paul A. Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance and Irish Identity*, Dublin and Portland: Irish Academic Press, 2002.

These two books have much in common. Most obviously, they deal with the same topic: Fr. Theobald Mathew (1790-1856) and his major Irish temperance crusade of the 1840s. Both books are based on Ph.D. theses completed at American universities during the 1990s: Quinn's at Notre Dame and Townend's at Chicago. They are extensively researched and lucidly written. Neither book is strictly speaking a biography, as both concentrate on Mathew's temperance work during the 1840s and treat the rest of his life in fairly cursory fashion.

These books also share the same publication date, 2002. Leaving aside several nineteenth-century mainly popular works, twentieth-century studies of Mathew's crusade were few. Two hagiographical accounts appeared in the 1940s (Rogers and Augustine), an American thesis in 1978 (Bretherton), academic chapters in 1979 (Kearney) and 1986 (Malcolm) and in 1992 a short monograph (Kerrigan). Probably partly due to the limited amount of research done, during the latter part of the twentieth century Irish historians as a whole demonstrated little interest in the temperance movement. Current standard histories of modern

Ireland, such as those by Lyons (1971) and Jackson (1999), do not mention Mathew at all, while others, such as Foster's *Modern Ireland* (1988), Hoppen's *Ireland Since 1800* (1989) and volume 5 of the *Oxford New History of Ireland* (1989), make but brief reference or relegate him to a footnote. Therefore, taken together, the two books under review constitute the largest amount of scholarly work ever published on Mathew and his crusade.

Despite similarities, however, the books are different in major ways. Some of these differences are obvious from their titles. Quinn lays particular emphasis on Mathew's career abroad, mainly in the United States, while Townend is preoccupied with the progress of the crusade in Ireland itself and dismisses the American crusade as it failed to assist the Irish one (Townend, 259). Quinn, while announcing that his work is not a biography, nevertheless says he intends to concentrate more on the man than had either Malcolm or Kerrigan (Quinn, 6-7). Townend, on the other hand, argues that previous works paid too much attention to Mathew the charismatic leader and not enough attention to the movement. There has been, he says, 'the tendency to lose the movement in its leader' (Townend, 3). Townend suggests it is this focus on Mathew the man that has obscured the crusade's importance, as illustrated by recent Irish historiography.

But Quinn obviously considers the man crucial, especially to an understanding of the remarkably swift rise of the crusade and its equally swift demise. In a country bitterly divided by class, religion, culture and politics, Mathew exercised an extraordinarily broad popular appeal. And he was a modernizer Quinn argues – reflecting Kearney's views – promoting economic development, education and social reform. Yet, at the same time, he was arrogant and thin-skinned and unable to collaborate with other temperance advocates. In addition, Quinn claims that he was "a cleric of the *ancien regime*" in his anglophile and ecumenical views and thus at odds with the main trends in early nineteenth-century Irish nationalism and Catholicism (Quinn, 7). Quinn offers a complex and intriguing portrait of Mathew – arguably the

most persuasive presented so far. Here is a man who was naïve yet calculating, idealistic yet pragmatic, progressive yet reactionary. Overall, Quinn concludes that Mathew was out of step (Quinn, 34) with his times and, while this had some initial advantages, ultimately it was to prove fatal to the temperance cause.

The book is structured chronologically and its approach is fairly conventional – indeed, it could be characterised as traditional. Rather surprisingly, much of Quinn’s discussion of the upheavals of the 1840s, notably the Great Famine, does not engage directly with the intense debates about the period conducted by Irish historians during the 1980s and 1990s.

Quinn is obviously not a controversialist and, perhaps for that reason, he appreciates Mathew’s efforts to avoid divisive issues, especially political ones. In his interesting chapter on Mathew’s American tour (Quinn, 154-168), Quinn portrays the man as behaving highly pragmatically. When faced with the fiery abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison, demanding that he denounce slavery, Mathew demurred, says Quinn, partly because he “planned to spend much of his time in the South recuperating from his stroke” and so did not want to alienate southerners (Quinn, 161). But many southerners were well aware that he had lent his support to the abolitionist cause previously in Ireland and shunned him on that basis. Nevertheless, Quinn assesses Mathew’s American crusade as “largely a success.” He administered the pledge to between 500,000 and 600,000 people. Many lapsed, but some of his recruits persisted in their abstinence. Mathew had demonstrated to Irish Americans that teetotalism was not a “Protestant preserve” and thus “laid the groundwork for later Irish involvement” in the American temperance movement (Quinn, 168).

Quinn presents a wide-ranging, detailed and judicious assessment of Mathew and in doing so makes much of Mathew’s role in promoting temperance in the United States. It is a pity then that he does not have more to say about Mathew’s impact on England, where he spent three months in 1843 (Quinn, 102-109).

Quinn's focus on the man also means that he does not consider Mathew's influence on temperance movements in places he did not visit. In far-away Australia, for instance, the Father Mathew Temperance Society, based in Sydney, was claiming a membership of 1,400 in 1847 when the city's population was only a little over 30,000. The international Catholic temperance movement initiated by Mathew is an important phenomenon, which has still not been adequately explored.

The cover of Quinn's book is graced by a striking photographic portrait of Mathew taken in 1849 by Matthew Brady – a picture that, as far as I'm aware, has not been reproduced before. Townend's cover reproduces a contemporary Irish print of Mathew surrounded by kneeling pledge-takers. That Quinn's cover shows the man in isolation while Townend's shows him in relation to his followers says much about their different approaches.

Townend's book, despite covering similar ground, is markedly different, not only in approach, but also in style and tone. Whereas Quinn is restrained and balanced, Townend begins his introduction with the bold claim that Mathew's crusade was "the single most extraordinary social movement that occurred in pre-famine Ireland." And he goes further, asserting that "it must rank among the more unique and under-examined mass mobilisations of men and women in modern European history" (Townend, 1). That the crusade has not received the attention it warrants from historians is certainly true, but Townend ascribes a significance to it that no previous writer – outside the realms of hagiography – has ever suggested.

Townend is no hagiographer, however, as Mathew is not the focus of his study. He is interested in the movement rather than the man. "More important," he says, than what happened in temperance societies when Mathew was present was what happened when he was absent (Townend, 120). At times Townend seems almost determined to write Mathew out of his own crusade, characterising his influence as "limited" (Townend, 265). He is

strongly in reaction against the biographical approach that has characterised all previous work - and which characterizes Quinn's book.

That the crusade had a remarkable impact on Ireland in the three years from the end of 1839 to the beginning of 1843 is undeniable. Early in the latter year Mathew was claiming a membership of 5.5 million, at a time when the total Irish population was around 8.5 million. Townend dismisses this figure as almost certainly an exaggeration, but he does think that as many as 4.0 million, or perhaps half the adult population, had taken the pledge (Townend, 72). Per capita consumption of legally produced spirits plunged, as did detections of illicit distillation, and public drunkenness, previously common, almost disappeared (Townend, 73-74). There was a fall in public drinking of sixty percent or more (Townend, 78). Quinn does not present statistics as systematically as Townend, but what figures he offers (Quinn, 112-114) are in general agreement. That a major social transformation had occurred in a remarkably short time is obvious.

While Quinn looks mainly to Mathew's charisma to explain these extraordinary achievements, Townend's interpretation is more complex. He notes that contemporaries tended to offer four main explanations. These he labels the divine, the rational, the conspiratorial and the superstitious (Townend, 43-45). Mathew himself was convinced that the movement was inspired by "Divine Providence" for the moral regeneration of the Irish people. Rational explanations, on the other hand, highlighted the horrendous social and economic problems caused by alcohol and saw its elimination as a panacea for Irish poverty and oppression. Rationalists were often nationalists and so for them economic betterment was linked to political empowerment. Conspiratorial explanations were to the fore in both the Irish and English Tory press. These portrayed the crusade as a "powerful engine" in the service of some approaching Irish rebellion" (Townend, 45). Such critics also made much of the irrational and superstitious aspects

of the movement. In their view, the conspirators behind the crusade were using “Priest Mathew” to play upon the child-like ignorance, superstition and gullibility of the unruly Catholic Irish.

Townend is obviously not inclined to providentialist or conspiratorial interpretations. Nor does he think superstition is an adequate explanation of itself. He leans rather to the rationalist and nationalist view. He analyses Mathew’s main lieutenants; he studies the areas of the country where the crusade was most successful; he dissects the movement’s rhetoric in terms of speeches and pamphlets; and he explores its relations with the Catholic Church and with nationalist politics.

The crusade offered, argues Townend, “a consistent, coherent and clearly expressed ideology which centred around the complete transformative regeneration of a particular people and nation, all accomplished as an expression of the will of God” (Townend, 112). Temperance ideology drew heavily on traditional Irish loyalty to “faith and fatherland,” and yet, ironically, it was the clergy and the nationalists who were to be the crusade’s undoing. Townend portrays Mathew and his lieutenants as totally unprepared for the rapid and overwhelming success of their cause and thus unable to consolidate their gains. They could, he claims, “attract but not lead, direct but not control, and inspire but not sustain” (Townend, 265).

Quinn and Townend, while at odds over the importance of Mathew’s role, are more in agreement on the reasons for the rapid decline of the crusade in Ireland, which was evident even before the onset of famine in 1845-1846. Many of the elite, both lay and religious, Catholic and Protestant, held aloof and some became vocal opponents. Members of the mainly Protestant landed and professional classes, as well as a number of Catholic bishops and archbishops, were alarmed by the mass euphoria whipped up by the temperance crusade, by its indiscriminate mixing of classes, sexes and denominations and by its aspirations to transform society. They feared - rightly as it transpired - that such a movement would inevitably become a threat to the political, as

well as the social, status quo. Both authors chart the way in which the temperance crusade was indeed coopted by the nationalist leader, Daniel O’Connell, and used to underpin his campaign of the early 1840s for Irish self-government. While seeing the crusade as falling prey to O’Connell’s “merciless political opportunism” (Townend, 264), at the same time, Townend acknowledges that O’Connell gave “political form” to the temperance crusade’s moral revolution (Townend, 233). The “connections between Repeal and Temperance, therefore, were much deeper and more complicated than has generally been recognised” (Townend, 234).

Given the lack of substantial and scholarly studies of the impact of Mathew’s temperance crusade in Ireland, England, the United States and elsewhere, two major new books on the subject are to be welcomed. This is especially so when they view the crusade from very different angles. Quinn’s focus is directed at the top, at Mathew himself, and we see the development of the crusade very much through his eyes. Townend, on the other hand, looks at the bottom and attempts to understand how ordinary Irish pledge-takers experienced the temperance movement. There are inevitably gaps in both accounts, but they do complement each other to a considerable degree and together offer a far fuller - although certainly not complete - picture of this remarkable movement than has been available previously. Irish historians can no longer have any excuse for ignoring or underestimating its significance.

ELIZABETH MALCOLM, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE  
elmalc@unimelb.edu.au

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Lori Rotskoff, *Love on the Rocks: Men, Women and Alcohol in Post-World War II America*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

There are many intriguing historical issues raised in the versatile *Love on the Rocks*. This richly researched and well-crafted book is social history at its best as it organizes a history of gender and family roles around the topic of drinking in American society. The shifts from a view of drinking as morally repugnant, downright sinful, and male gendered in the 1880s, to a view of drinking as a disease by the 1930s, and as a family mental health problem by the 1950s, involved changing definitions of gender and gender ideals. This intriguing story is neatly played out in five chapters. While each