

You Want the Best? THEN USE "SALADA" CEYLON TEA—it has no equal. HIGHEST AWARDS ST. LOUIS, 1904

SOGGARTH AROON When I served on the English mission, frequent house-to-house visits in my district formed, as I remember with mixed feelings, no unimportant part of my ordinary duties.

To go among them was a source of pleasure to me in one sense, and of pain in another. It was a pleasure to receive their warm, friendly Irish welcome; and it was a saddening, painful thing to see how indifferent many of them had grown in the practice of their religious duties.

I confess it often brought a lump into my throat to see, in my rounds among them, an aged Irishwoman sitting by a cold, cheerless grate, or stove, in some miserable sium-house with a sad, far-away look in her tear-dimmed, weary eyes, plainly intokening to my fancy that she was dreaming of a cottage in holy Ireland, situated, mayhap, on a pleasant green hillside or in a smiling valley, in which she spent her happy girlhood, but which she could never see again. I must return, however, to my theme, which is the Mountain Parish.

Some time after I was fairly settled down in the Mountain Parish, the bright thought struck me that, as I was overburdened with work, I might, profitably to my people, and with agreeable variety to myself, introduce the English system of house-to-house visitation among them.

I may say, in passing, that I considered this book defective and incomplete in many particulars; and it was my intention to bring out an improved and amended edition of it, with marginal notes regarding the different entries,—notes that might, perhaps, prove useful to future curates. This, to my mind, was a further proof of the necessity of the course on which I was about to embark.

I noticed, in looking over the book, that the compiler had been careless, at times, in registering the ages of the members of the various families, in cases more especially where they were all grown up. Thus in the record of "Honoria Duffy, widow," whose family consisted of five girls and one boy, the youngest, the latter was registered as twenty-six years of age; and after the name of the oldest girl, Mary Brigid, there was, in the age column, a note of interrogation, with ditto down the column opposite the names of the other girls.

I noticed, after I had made some few visits, that my going around in this manner, book in hand, caused no small commotion among the people. They were not used to see their curate perambulating the parish in this systematic way, except when on his "outsquest"; and as that was then over and past, it evidently puzzled them to know what could possibly be the object of this strange manoeuvre of mine.

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seemed certainly a plausible and not improvable one. Some houses were forewarned of my coming by lynx-eyed youngsters who saw me from afar and scurried home from the meadows or cornfields to startle the household with the news: "The priest is coming!" In such cases I found the kitchen "swept and garnished," and the woman of the house and her daughters in immaculate aprons, and with hands and faces suspiciously clean and fresh-looking for a working-day.

The good woman of the house, however, generally held her ground and received me, all unrepresentable though she might be, in an apron made of cheap gingham. Although I waved the matter as utterly beneath my notice, she would insist on making profuse apologies for having been "caught in the dirt," and bewailing her want of foreknowledge of my coming: while at the same time she wiped a chair for me to "sit and rest"; and brushed dog, cat or hen out of the way, in a strenuous effort to show me all the attention possible in the circumstances. I charitably tried to make it appear that I did not notice the embarrassing situation, although I could not help seeing many laughable things while seemingly absorbed in my census book. I think, anyway, that I observed more than the most suspicious of them would give me credit for; but it was with a sympathetic eye, not a cynical or unfriendly one.

As for the little children, they showed no disposition to evade me, no matter how utterly and unappealingly unrepresentable they might happen to be. Despite frowns and mute warnings from the women to induce them to stay in the background, they crowded around in their scanty, well-ventilated garments, and regarded me in wide-eyed wonder; and the more irresponsible of them ventured so far as to finger my bran-new, silver-mounted umbrella—one of my Liverpool presents—with hands recently employed in kneading a mud-pie.

"It's very hard to keep a stitch of clothes on them at all, Father," one woman said by way of apology for the scarecrow, tattered appearance of a half-dozen gossoons of hers. "The way they tear and tatter and flitter everything, they'd want clothes made of leather, so they would. Sure, I'm worn out tryin' to mend for them; for it isn't often poor people can buy new clothes for their children, the creatures, God help them!" In this manner I continued my visitations for a few hours, correcting my predecessor's census book in many particulars, and adding copious annotations. When I inquired, however, about ages in order to supply omissions which I found here and there in the book, I got rather dubious information. The girls were not sure about their natal year; and their mothers, through "bad memory" and the "confusions" of life, had quite lost count of Mary's or Brigid's age. It dawned on me at last that, as the girls were unmarried, and had a seasoned look about them, to boot, there might possibly be good and sufficient reasons for withholding from me the desired information.

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All this, no doubt, was very flattering to weak human nature, and calculated to foster in me an overweening opinion of my own consummate wisdom and importance. But the corners had been pretty well rubbed off me by my English experience, a circumstance that made the chances of my being spoiled by kindness here more remote than might otherwise have been the case. Hence, although the Mountain Parish was my first curacy in my diocese, it found me a veteran missionary—in my own estimation, at least. I must, however, indicate some few of the multifarious offices I was now called on to undertake as curate of this obscure Arcadian parish. I speak of course of offices and honors of a quasi-secular kind, thrust on me, willingly, by my parishioners, and not immediately or directly concerned with my purely spiritual duties. It was plain to me that these faithful, devoted people regarded me,

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