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PARISH VISITATION.

WE say visitation rather than use the common term, the visits of the clergyman. In late quotations from the *Church Times* we pointed out in our columns, the paramount importance of reading as a first and daily duty of our clergy. We did not mean to make light of the duty of parochial visitation. We know that the latter is the most difficult because the most distasteful duty of the ordinary parish priest. But for this reason it must not be shirked. We have no patience with the young clergyman who says: the people must come to me, they will find me at home in my hours. To visit the flock in their own homes, to seek out the wanderers in their own haunts, to go after the wayward and careless, is no less the duty of the parish priest, than to feed the flock from the pulpit or at the Holy Sacrament. A house-going parson makes a church-going people, is a saying which, though it is liable to abuse, is yet full of truth. Much of the effect of parochial visitations is lost by want of system. Of house to house visiting in every parish, there are two kinds—one we will call general and the other to the sick. As to general parochial visiting, the clergy of the parish should see the inside of every parishioner's house if possible, at least twice in the year. We deal with masses from the pulpit, with individual souls in the private house.

Now, suppose that the parish priest makes a spring and an autumn visitation. Let him conduct it with system, that he may waste as little time as possible. First, beginning at one end of his parish let him never cease his visitation until he has seen every parishioner. This is far more effectual than dropping into people's houses at unexpected hours and seasons.

Before setting out for an afternoon's visitation, he considers carefully the record of each family he intends to visit. So, when he enters a house, he has a special message—to one a charge to approach the Lord's Table, to another an earnest invitation to Confirmation, to another some work of piety or charity, and so on. He does not leave that house till he has (if possible) delivered his message to each soul. Nothing is so sure an ally in staying off the great bane of clergymen's visits, gossip, as the having some special message from the priest to his people. We say, avoid gossip—we say it advisedly; for, to our shame be it known, that it is no uncommon sneer among the laity that the

clergy are very fond of gossip. But the parish priest will do well to avoid the opposite extreme, that is, so resolute a determination to give his message as to turn a cold ear to the troubles or joys of the family visited. Listen patiently to family troubles and family joys, show sympathy, give advice, but directly that is done and the conversation tends to gossip, introduce your own business, deliver the message of the Master and leave.

A few more practical thoughts on parochial visitation and we must end. Unless absolutely necessary, never stay to a meal in a parishioner's house, at any rate, during the course of that which the parish knows is your regular parochial visitation. Instead of leaving your card, leave a tract. Whether upon a regular parochial visitation, the priest invites the members of a house to family devotion, must depend entirely upon the circumstances of each visit. We can only say that sometimes it is wise to do so, but that in other cases it is most unadvisable.

In visiting the sick regularity rather than frequency should be the object. In cases of chronic long standing illness, a patient is best disposed for the coming of his priest, when he knows the day and hour. Visits to the sick should not be lengthy, we do not speak now of cases *in articulo mortis*, such cases must be governed each by its circumstances. In the sick room simply allow no gossip. If a patient is inclined to speak of his own illness, his cares or his joys, his sorrows or his hopes, by all means bend the listening ear, but a priest must never forget that he is before all things, a physician to the soul. Sympathy with bodily sufferings and cares often opens a path to the inmost soul. Whilst we do not advise a slavish use of the order in the Prayer Book for The Visitation of the Sick, we think that the Office should be used at any rate once, in its entirety, although weakness of spirit or body, may render it advisable to use part at one time and part at another. In any other devotions by the sick bed, we should advise adherence to the plan of the Prayer Book Office.

Our own experience tells us that there is no better introduction of the priest to the sick and to those who may be present at his visit, than the formula of the office: *Peace be to this house and to all that dwell in it.* Among other practical hints for the conduct of a priest in a sick room, let the following suffice for the present. A quarter of an hour is generally long enough for a visit, often a very much shorter one is desirable. Except in most exceptional cases, visit no sick man more than once in a day. Keep an appointment most rigorously, for the strain of waiting is severe on the weak. Never allow a patient to be awakened—rather call again. Don't whisper. Never preach or pray at the sick: trust to private intercession, and pray in the first person "we" "us," not in the third.

Do not begin arguing, find some point of agreement. It is very important to remember that Repentance and Faith are necessary to salvation, and that the former consists in contrition or godly sorrow, confession, and restitution.

PAPERS ON MUSIC.

II.—ON TUNE.—(Continued.)

A SERVICE that is measured in "time" and monotonous in "tune" is much preferable to the confused murmur of a congregation attempting to do violence to the laws of their own nature and those of the Church, by independent responding in a colloquial tone of voice. But such a service,

though lively and animating beyond all comparison with the service as commonly rendered, is not the best that can be done with the English Prayer Book. If monotone alone be used, the service is unquestionably marked by a sameness that the ear does not love. The Church, recognizing this longing of the human ear, provides for its gratification by lightening the sameness of a monotonous service by those beautiful cadences and inflexions in the Choral Service, which utter so touchingly the very breathings of fervent supplication, and which are hallowed by centuries of devout use.

We are confident that those arguments are incontrovertible, and prove beyond question that the application of "time" and "tune" to the service of the Church is essential to the carrying out the real intention of a liturgical service, and to its producing its full and proper effect upon the hearts and minds of men. It is demanded by the laws of nature, and by the rules and usage of the Church in every part of the Christian world.

Argument, however, has often little effect upon those prejudices which are the growth of custom and early habit, and the majority, who seldom reason, are always under the impression that whatever *they* happen to have been accustomed to must infallibly be right. But what "most people were accustomed to" for many years was certainly not what the Reformers desired to hand down to future generations, and went to the stake, hoping to secure the right of using for their children's children.

"Most people" have been accustomed to muddy roads and rickety sidewalks, but they would not on that account object to having both repaired and the ravages of time made good. Many, however, who feel their utter inability to meet and overthrow the arguments which have been adduced, will nevertheless continue to denounce the plain song of the Church as "unnatural," "indecent," and, worse than all, "Romish."

As regards the objection of its unnaturalness, the utter unreasonableness of such a charge has been already demonstrated, the "plain song" being the very voice of nature in our approach to God's footstool. As regards impropriety and indecency such an objection can be suggested only by want of thought and a presumption that is so often the companion of a corresponding want of information. Thus all allow that in our approaches to the Mercy Seat we should leave the world and its common ways behind us. Hence we have a *place* different in its structure and arrangement from other buildings wherein our most solemn worship is presented. We assume, then, an *attitude* expressive of more profound humility than we ever on any other occasion adopt. And those who minister therein are arrayed in *garments* worn at no other time or place. If, then, there is an acknowledged fitness in offering our prayers in a peculiar *place, posture and garb*, is it not manifestly proper that when we, who are but dust and ashes, take upon ourselves to speak to God we should adopt a peculiar *tone* more expressive of reverence and awe than the colloquial voice in which we address each other? And shall those who have never read nor thought upon the subject take upon themselves to charge with indecency those countless multitudes of saintly men and women who, in every portion of this wide earth, have sent up in this, the universal voice of prayer, the holiest breathings of their souls to Heaven.