

The Neat Little Colony

Nicholson, Asenath

Ireland's welcome to the stranger, or, An excursion through Ireland, in 1844 & 1845

1847

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Misfortune in Clifden—Reverse of Fortune—An Aged Pilgrim—Eager Listeners—Visit to a Dying Man—Glorious Sunset—An officious Policeman—Lady Clare—Arrival in Galway—Obtrusiveness of the Women—A Sermon on Baptism—Journey to Westport—Introduction to Mr. Poundon—A devoted Presbyterian Minister—Sketch of a Christian Missionary, such as Ireland needs—Croagh Patrick—Hazardous Ascent to the Mountain—Grand Prospect from the Summit—Return to Westport—Doubts Removed—Filial Affection—A Poor Protestant.

Saturday morning, while across the street speaking to a blind man, my purse was robbed of three half crowns and a few pennies, by a little servant girl, who had seen me take out some, and run out in haste, leaving my purse and bag upon my bed. Clifden was an unfortunate spot for me. A pair of new gloves had been taken the day previous, my spectacles and breast-pin lost, and now my money. Went out and visited schools, found one in miserable plight, crowded, dirty, and noisy, and the teacher in keeping with the whole. A second was a well ordered one, the teacher a man of sense as well as learning. A family who opened a boarding school, invited me to pass a few days in their house, and I found them with the remains of a ruined fortune, struggling to educate their own children by teaching others. A class of people quite plentiful throughout Ireland are those who once were in higher life, and are now struggling to keep their hold of the crazy boat. But those are generally found to be the better sort of society ; having been schooled in affliction, they have felt the uncertainty of all earthly calculations, and by intercourse with the enlightened class of the community, they have acquired knowledge and habits which make them interesting, and often useful acquaintances. Their pride at the same time has been so wounded, that, if not humbled effectually, they are more condescending and more communicative to such as are below them.

In the family where I lodged resided the mother of the mistress of the house, and she was a character worthy of a place in a better journal than mine. She had seen more than four-score years, yet her intellect was clear, and though infirm, not peevish ; cleanly and attractive in her person. By her bed-side I passed many a pleasant hour, reading to her attentive mind the Word of God. One evening, after reading, she added, “ What blessed words ! what blessed words I and may I ask you what you think of the Virgin ? ” I told her, and added, as I have ever done, the reason why I do not worship her ; “ because God had not enjoined it ; ” and then read the 18th and 19th verses of the last chapter of Revelations. She exclaimed, “ O my God ! what have I done if this be true ? what have I done ? God have mercy on me.” She continued this for some time, she wept, and prayed that God might forgive her ; and during my stay, whenever she heard my footsteps in an adjoining room, she would inquire if I were coming in, and if I would read, still continuing the lamentation about the blessed Virgin. “ What shall I do ! what shall I do ! ” she often asked, and was as often told to go to Jesus ; and I believe she did go.

Sabbath.—I spent five hours reading by the side of her bed, and was surrounded with a roomful of the most attentive hearers, in great admiration—so much so, it was often difficult to proceed. I read a tract on the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, and an aged man

sitting by exclaimed, “ Blessed Jesus, who ever haired the like ! I’m an ould man, and never before knew rightly what was the meaning of the Holy Ghost. Did ye ever ?” he said to the listeners. “ No, no,” was the united answer. The chapel bell was sounding every hour, when one said, “ We hav’n’t been to mass this mornin’.” “ And hav’n’t we haired more than we should there ? The like of this raidin’ we shouldn’t hear in many a day’s walk.” I was obliged to close, five hours of constant reading and talking affected my voice, and I could only commend them to God, and say adieu for ever. As they lingered, blessing and thanking me, one said, “ Aw, no mass was ever like this, I could be listenin’ till the mornin’.” These people are asking to be fed, and their ears are open to instruction ; but the little facility of reading which the adults possess puts it out of their power to attain much information, and their extreme poverty prevents their giving an advanced education to their children.

Thursday, May 15th.—Prepared to depart, gave all the farewells to the family, and while the trembling hand of the old lady to whom I had read so much pressed mine, her still more trembling voice said, “ The Almighty God be with ye, and I do believe we shall meet in heaven.” I felt grateful to God that I had met this old pilgrim, and cheered her a little on her passage to the grave. She knew, she felt, that she was on the confines of the eternal world, and her only desire was that Christ would be glorified in her, and fit her to depart in peace. Mrs. M., her daughter, and the young woman who accompanied me to Tully, went out with me a mile on my way, and we called at a cabin to see a sick woman, who the day previous was present at the long reading. I was now obliged to say adieu to my companions and Clifden for ever. It was painful to leave the interesting girl, who had seen better days in the life-time of her father, and is now destitute of those means of acquiring that instruction which she is so anxious to obtain.

Galway was my destination, and I ascended a car of the common kind, in company with a young married woman, and Wm. Keane, the good man who had offered me a ride from the Roundstone at the Half-way house. He had a noble heart, and some refinement of manner. I begged to stop at the cabin of the kind man who gave me a lodging on the bundle of straw. Mr. K. went to the door, and called him. He crept out, tottering, to the road, a handkerchief about his head ; his pale face, his bright eye, and husky voice telling that consumption was consuming his vitals. “ I can get no good here, ma’am, and plaise God I shall go back to Tralee, if the good God don’t take me away.” I presented him a Testament, telling him it was the good book I read to him when there. “ An’ God bless ye, and warn’t ye a blessin’ to me when in my cabin, and I can do nothing to pay ye.” I gave the children some books, and as he turned away, he spoke in a low tone to Mr. K., “ Take care of that woman ; she’s a blessin’ to Ireland. She was a blessin’ to me ; and God I know will bless her.” This was too much, when I had been so hospitably sheltered from the storm at his expense. It was I who had received the blessing, and as I saw him slowly creep to his cabin, and knew that he must soon stand disembodied before his judge, I prayed that the good seed sown in his heart might spring up to eternal life.

We called at Mr. Steely’s, where I stayed on my way to Clifden ; stopped long enough to roast me a couple of potatoes, and distribute a few tracts. Then passed the pleasant lakes where I read to the old man and his daughter. It was a sunny day, and the mountain and lake scenery was exceedingly beautiful. We reached the Protestant family where I had promised to leave some books, and was entreated to spend a night with them, but could not. “ She is the loveliest woman,” said Mr. Keene, when we had gone out, “ that ever lived on these wild mountains. She’s a Christian.” He was a Catholic, yet her godly example convinced him that she was a follower of Christ.

It was now about sun-setting, and the ride to Outerard was more than interesting. Such a sun-setting and such a twilight by sea or by land I never beheld. When the sun sank behind the mountain, he left a scalloped edge of gold, leaving the lofty peaks below tinted with the richest blue. The sky, the lakes, and the curling smoke from the cabins upon the sides of the mountains, where the poor peasants had built their evening fires to boil their potatoes,—the rustics returning from labor, or from the market at Outerard,—the crescent moon looking out as if modestly waiting to do what she could when the sun should retire, made a scene of the liveliest and loveliest interest.

I almost regretted reaching the town of Outerard, but here found pleasant accommodations, and in the morning passed out to walk through the town while the car was getting ready. A policeman stepped up, “Are ye Lady Clare, ma’am.” “I am not Lady Clare, sir, but Mrs. N. from New York.” “From New York ! and what brought you here.?” “To see you, sir, and the rest of the good people of Ireland.” “To see me, ah ! and you know it’s my duty to inquire of every suspicious person that comes along what their business is.” “Indeed, sir ! every suspicious person ! And is it your duty to ask every person who passes peaceably through your country what his business is, and to give an account of himself ?” “It is, ma’am.” “Then you have duties which no other policeman understands, for I have travelled a great part of Ireland, and the police-officers have treated me with the greatest kindness.” He turned away, went to the sergeant, and asked him if he should arrest me. The officer told him no, to be off about his business ; and the woman who accompanied me lectured him so, severely for “tratin’ a dacent body so,” telling him he was “a saucy red-head,” that he walked away, silenced, if not ashamed.

This Lady Clare I was told, some twelve years ago, was a gentleman in disguise, who went about the country, inducing the laboring people to swear they would not work for less than a stipulated sum, much greater than present wages, with sundry advantages beside. And if the landlord refused compliance, they would turn out in the night, and dig up his meadows, so that he would be compelled to till them. This game it was said was now in operation in Clare, and the newly initiated policeman, hearing I had come to visit the poor, determined to show his loyalty to government by bringing the lady before it in due season.

We reached Galway, and I felt more inclined to be home-sick than in any place I had before been. I took a different lodging from my old one, but found no improvement ; and was terribly annoyed by the Galway women following me from street to street, from alley to alley, fixing their full unblinking eyes upon me. Their ugly teeth, their red petticoats, and repulsive manners made them second to none, even the Connaught corduroys, in all that was to be dreaded.

Sabbath Day.—I went in search of a Methodist chapel ; a young man generously offered to show the way, and I found myself seated in a gallery in a Catholic one. It was late, and the sermon on baptism had commenced. A good exhortation was given to parents to train their children faithfully in the fear of God. The sermon was closed by particular directions how to baptize effectually, should any layman be called, on a special emergency, to perform the rite. We were told emphatically to remark, that in pronouncing the name of the Trinity, if each distinct person in the Godhead were not spoken or named with great slowness and distinctness, the baptism would be good for nothing. This was repeated, that each might be enlightened, and all faithfully enjoined not to forget it. At evening I visited the Protestant Sabbath-school, and listened to a lady explaining the lessons to her pupils, who showed much knowledge of the Scriptures, and appeared to be deeply impressed with their value herself.

Monday, May 27th.—I took the car to Westport, a distance of fifty miles. Stopped while the horses were changing, and asked for a penny's worth of bread and a potatoe. The bread was brought, but was quite sour ; they had no potatoes. Asked for a little milk, a girl went to the cow, and with unwashed hands milked a few spoonfuls into a tea-cup, and presented it fresh from the mint. I refused the fithy-looking beverage, took a halfpenny's worth of the sour bread, and asked for my bill. "Sixpence," was the answer. A York shilling for a cent's worth of bread ! "A good profit," I said. They paid back three-pence. I found in most hotels in Galway and Kerry, what I had not met so much elsewhere, a disposition to take the most they could get, however extravagant the sum.

A few hours brought us to Westport. The coachman provided me a wholesome lodging-place. The next day being sunny, I enjoyed a treat, walking alone over the shady grounds of Lord Sligo, by the side of pleasant water, with all the etceteras of a gentleman's demesne who lived for pleasure. He had died a few months before, leaving his great estate to a son who follows his steps.—"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." A monument erected by the citizens to his agent, in honor of his benevolence, is a pleasing testimonial of gratitude, and says that there is a capability in the Irish heart, even among the most degraded and poor, to reciprocate kindness, and a quick perception of justice when exercised towards them. On my return, called into a Protestant school, conducted like all parochial schools in the country, and by the teacher was introduced to Mr. Poundon, the rich rector, whose estate and splendor, I was informed, were not much inferior to those of Lord Sligo. From him I ascertained that considerable had been done for schools, and the spreading of the Scriptures among the poor ; and I was told by others that he is a man of benevolence, improving the condition of many around him. My next call was to the house of a Scotch Presbyterian, named Smith. I mention his name because I delight to dwell upon it ; the remembrance of those "mercy-drops" in the desert, where I was often hungry and thirsty, is pleasant to the soul. His wife, who is of a good family in England, received and welcomed me with all that Christian courtesy that made me feel myself at home among kind friends. Something was immediately brought me to eat, and presented in that manner and abundance that said, "you will oblige me greatly by partaking unsparingly." Reader, did you ever eat a slice of the "bread of covetousness ?" I assure you I have, and it is bitter, sour, indigestible, and quite unfit for a healthy stomach. This was not such bread.

This family's benevolence was on the lips of all the poor in the vicinity ; though with a stinted salary, that salary is divided among the children of want, till, as I was informed, oftentimes a scanty supply is left for their own necessities. Would to God, Ireland could boast many more such among the full-fed, over-paid clergy of the country. Here I found a devoted, active, efficient Bible reader, with a salary of thirty pounds a year, who goes from house to house among all classes, and explains the Word of God to those who have not access to it. He met in most cases with a kind reception, and why ? Because he went with the love of God in his heart, and talked of this love ; held up Christ and him crucified, which is all the sinner needs. If love will not melt the flinty heart, will bitterness do it ? I truly believe that the Word of God would not only have been received with willingness, but sought after by the greater part of the peasantry of Ireland, had it been presented with no sectarian denunciations, and had all the teachers, like this one, been humble, self-denying, and kindly. It is a most important item in the qualification of teachers, that they understand human nature in its various developements. It is not enough that they can pronounce well, elevate and depress the voice according to the rules of punctuation, expatiate on the eloquence of St. Paul, or the sin of Ananias. They should know well not only the broad avenues to the heart, but the narrow streets ; yes, and every repulsive forbidden alley. They should know, too, the time of day when these paths can most prudently and easily be trodden. There is not a heart but has its waxings and wanings ; there is not a temperament but has its ebbings and flowings ; and, like

the skilful mariner, they should know where to cast anchor, and when to trim the sails. They should know when in deep water, and when near shoals and quicksands. In travelling the entire coast of Ireland, I needed not to see a Bible-reader, to know his abilities or faithfulness. The Irish peasantry have an uncommonly just conception of propriety and impropriety, right and wrong, benevolence and covetousness. A dabster at his trade, or a filthy-lucre laborer is quickly discerned.

“ Lay not careless hands,” &c.

I was now in the vicinity of the celebrated mountain, where we are told St. Patrick stood, when he banished the venomous serpents from the island. Its lofty sharp peak, at a distance, towering to the skies, looked as if it could scarcely afford breadth for more than one foot at a time. But here we are told the holy saint stood, and here we are shown the prints of his knees where he prayed. Here, too, is an altar for worship, and here the inhabitants of the adjacent parishes assemble yearly, at an early hour, on the last Friday in July, to perform what they call stations. Multitudes are seen climbing the difficult and dangerous ascent, from the town of Westport, to mingle with fellow pilgrims from other parts ; to go nine times around a pile of stones, call their sins to remembrance, ask forgiveness, and promise better lives in future. A sprightly young girl I had met on the path offered to accompany me at an early hour to the mountain. I called at her door and knocked ; the girl was asleep, and I passed on. A country school-master soon accosted me, and learning who I was, walked a mile with me, to give a history of his school and country. Like most country school-teachers, he had become acquainted with the hearths of all the domestic domiciles in his parish ; and to appearance he could rival Goldsmith's controversialist : —

“ For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still.”

He told me it would be presumptuous to attempt the ascent of the mountain alone, and begged me not to think of it. “ You will be lost, and never find your way ; and should any accident befall you, no one could know it, and you would perish alone.” This was all good sense, and I was more than mad that I did not heed it. Reaching the foot of the mountain, a cabin woman met me, and offered her bright lad as a guide, for any trifle that the lady might please to give. I offered as a trial two pence half-penny, for I did not intend taking a guide if possible to avoid it. “ Oh, he shall not go for that ; but as you are a lone solitary creature, he shall go chaper than he ever did, and that's for a six-pence.” happily got rid of the annoyance in this way, and heard, after passing the door, “ She'll be destroyed.” I went on, and inquired of another the best path. A man answered, “ And do ye think ye could reach the top alone ? no mortal being could do it. But one man ever did it, and then declared he wouldn't do the like again for all the parish. But I have as sprightly a little gal as is in all the country, who will show ye every inch.” I made the same offer as to the woman, and received the same answer, and I found him willing to run the risk of having me killed, which he assured me must be the case, rather than lend me a guide for a trifle. I mention these two cases, as the only ones I now recollect in all Ireland, who refused me a favor for a small equivalent.

It was now two o'clock : three Irish miles from the main road was the top of the mountain said to be : I looked up, the sun was shining, the air was breezy, my strength and spirits were good, and why should I hesitate, when I had so many times in Ireland done more out-of-the-way “ impossibilities ?” I went on, but soon was lost in miry bog, and intricate windings of deceitful paths, for two hours. At last I lost a beautiful Testament, which had been my companion for many a mile ; and when looking for that, a man called out, “ Ye ar'n't thinkin' ye can go up the mountain to-night ? Darkness'll be on ye before ye reach the top, and ye'll perish there. Go home, and some long day bring a friend with ye. Ye're out of the path ; the

fowls might pick yer bones upon this mountain, and not a h'porth be haird about it." This looked a little discouraging, and I sat down to consider. I looked up at the dizzy height above, then at the sun ; thought what a prospect I should have at the top, of the beautiful islands, the sea, and the lakes under my feet ; and I made the fruitless effort to find the path. It was a fearful undertaking, and I record it not as a proof of valor or wisdom ; it was the height of folly, if not recklessness. By crawling and pulling, a little was gained, till a-head I saw a white track, taking a circuitous route around a smaller mountain, which was to lead to the great one in view. I reached it and sat down ; the prospect here was beautiful, was grand. I solaced my eyes, and endeavored to make up my mind that this would answer without proceeding. But this could not satisfy me. I was in Ireland, on the side of one of its loftiest and most celebrated mountains, and though a dangerous ascent, yet younger and older feet had reached the top, and what others had done I could do. But I was alone, and the hour was late. What if some joint should be dislocated, or I should stumble and go headlong ? I might suffer days, and die at last unheeded. " I will go a few yards more and then stop." The few yards were attained. I sat down and said, " Am I tempting my Maker ?" A little refreshed, and another point was gained, till a dizzy and almost perpendicular steep, with white round stones for a path which had been washed by water till a channel was formed, in which lay these stones—was my only road. I made a desperate effort, crawling and holding by the heath where I could, till almost exhausted, I ventured to look again, and saw a large pile of stones upon the top, and knew they must be the stations around which the devotees performed their penances. Another effort, and my feet stood upon the grand pinnacle.

The first sight was so picturesque and dazzling, I supposed my eyes were deceiving me, that the almost supernatural exertion had dimmed the true vision, and false images were flitting before them. Not so. A true map of the most beautiful varied finish was beneath me. Hundreds, yes, thousands of feet below me, were spread out lakes and islands in the ocean. Fifty islands I counted upon my right hand, bordered with various colors, some fringed with sand, and some with gavel, some with grass reaching to the water's edge. On the left was the bold island of Clare, looking like some proud king over all the rest. The sun was shining in full splendor, giving to all the appearance of a fairy land. The top of the mountain is oblong, and so narrow, that, had the wind been violent, I should have feared that I could not retain my footing, for the descent on every hand was almost perpendicular. Here is an ancient pile of stones, and a kind of altar, on which the prints of St. Patrick's knees are shown, which he wore in the stone by constant kneeling. Here, by some mystical virtue or power, he banished all the serpents ; and whether, like the devils which entered into the herd of swine, these serpents had the privilege of entering into some other animals, or into men, certain it is that they do not show themselves in any tangible shape in Ireland. The sun was declining. I sang, and called to the inhabitants below ; but they neither answered nor heard me. The descent was now the difficulty. There was another and safer path upon the other side, but this I did not know, and the frightful road was undertaken. One misstep of my slippery Indian rubbers, one rolling of a stone upon which I was obliged to step, would have plunged me headlong. I felt my dependence, yet my nerve was steady. I trembled not, nor was I fearful ; yet I felt that the cautions given by the schoolmaster and others near the mountain were no fictions. The sun had not two hours to shine upon the pinnacle, and I on its slippery side, nearly three miles from the abode of men. God's mercy never to me was more conspicuous than when I found myself unhurt at the bottom, for this mercy was shown me in my greatest presumption. I was not going here to see the poor, to instruct the ignorant, or to do good to any child of want. I went to gratify a desire to see the marvellous, and in the face and eyes of all kind caution to the contrary. I pray God I may never be so presumptuous again. When I reached the cabin where the boy was refused, I told the mother that had she sent him, I should have paid him well ; but when I found her great concern for my safety was only to make a shilling, I would give him nothing. She immediately brought forth a plate of potatoes and a fish in re-

turn for my lecture, without a reproachful word, put them on a chair before me, and I ate a potatoe and went home to Westport, fatigued, yet happy that I had seen what I had, and had accomplished a feat which I was told neither man nor woman could accomplish alone.

The next day a fair was held in Westport. Nothing new or interesting marked the occasion. The people in and about the town are tolerably tidy-looking peasantry, and though they could not wholly refrain from staring at me, yet I was not in that imminent danger of being swallowed alive, that seemed to threaten me in Galway. Another pleasant call at Mr. Smith's made the day pass profitably. He invited me into his place of worship, which was near his house, and while there I had occasion to speak of a clergyman in Dublin who was a friend of Mr. Smith, and from whom I had just received a letter. I read the letter to him ; he seemed pleased, as if a doubt had been loosened but not removed respecting my good character and intentions. Pausing a moment, he said, " And is that letter from my friend ? Let me see the handwriting." He took a letter from the same clergyman out of his pocket-book, compared the writing, and seeing there was actually no forgery, he was apparently much gratified.

I was more pleased with the good man now than before ; for though he had not intimated by a word that he was jealous of my real character, nor did I let him know that I understood his doubts about the letter, yet I now saw he had been vacillating ; and notwithstanding, had he known me to be a saint, he could not have treated me more kindly in word and action than he had done. Though his Scotch caution whispered that he must be upon the watch-tower against deceivers, yet he was " careful to entertain strangers" until he proved that they were not impostors.

The next morning I had hoped to visit the island of Clare, a distance of fourteen miles, but was disappointed in getting a boat, and turned my steps through a beautiful wood on Lord Sligo's estate. Half a mile took me to a house, out of which came a mother, two daughters, and a grand-daughter of six years old. This child's mother was in America, and had been gone nearly four years ; but so indelibly fixed was the mother in the mind of the child, that every woman that is a stranger she hopes may be the one she ardently desires to see. When she found I was from America, it was affecting to see the imploring look she cast upon me. The mother bade her daughter to accompany me through the wood, telling the grand-daughter to go into the house. The child obeyed, but we soon heard her in pursuit. She plucked the bluebell and primrose, and presented them to me; broke great boughs from the hawthorn, and filled my hands ; looking with such a winning confidence into my face, that I wished her away. She followed me to the cabin where I stopped, and for three hours sat near me ; her aunt could not persuade her to return, neither could I, but by giving her a look ; and then she lingered and looked after me till she could see me no more. I found myself surrounded by a group of listeners, all Protestants. One aged man, who had renounced Popery, entered, and the meekness of his appearance distinguished him from the ordinary Christian. He was truly " meek and lowly." I presented him an Irish Testament, which he could read well, and he received it with the greatest gratitude. Reader, he was a beggar, going from cabin to cabin to ask his potatoe ; one of the members of Christ's body, and a member of a rich Protestant church ! Here was Christ presenting himself; and they all recognised him as a rare example ; yet they sent him, poorly clad, hungry, and weary, from door to door— asking for what ? A potatoe ! Look at this, ye proud professed disciples of the Lord Jesus, and say, " What will ye do in the end thereof ?"

I found these cabiners warm-hearted, and a tidy industrious people. The poor widow where I first stopped supported a family by weaving, working from sun to sun for ten-pence a day at the loom. I was escorted through the neighborhood, invited to stay all night, and in

the evening read to both Catholics and Protestants. The hearing of the ear is certainly given in these places, if not the understanding of the heart. I blessed God, after I passed away, that I had fresh proof that all was not lost that was done for these poor people.

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Sunday Sermons—Newport—A Relic of Better Days—Arrival at Achill Sound, and Kind Reception from Mr. Savage and his Family—Visit to the Colony—Mr. Nangle's Protestant Missionary Settlement—Molly Vesey's Lodgings

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Sabbath—I heard Mr. Smith preach a solemn discourse from Peter, "Seeing that all these things must be dissolved," &c. He invited me to his house, and gave another proof that he obeyed the Apostle's injunction, "Given to hospitality." Heard a fluent Derbyite give a discourse from, "Behold the Lamb of God." These people preach Christ in a clear and convincing manner, and show that they have been taught of him.

I now prepared to visit Achill, which had from my first visit to Ireland been the spot I most ardently desired to see. I had heard that it was a little oasis, where the wilderness had been converted into a fruitful field. I walked six miles to Newport, and called on the Bible-reader of the Independent church, and by his hospitable wife was made most welcome. A breakfast was soon before me, and an invitation to stop ; but as her husband was absent, I engaged on my return to call and spend a night with them, hoping to hear more particulars about his mission. I passed on, overtook a poor man walking slowly with a pack upon his back, and said to him, " We are walking the same way, and you look in ill health." He was cleanly dressed, and his whole appearance said he had seen better days. I am palsied, ma'am, on one side, and can move but slowly." His history was, that he had been a police-officer, had been struck with the palsy, and was dumb for three months. He went to Scotland, England, and France to be cured, spent all he had, became a beggar, and finally by teaching had been able to purchase a few goods, which he was trying to sell about the country. He was a Roman Catholic, and said he always kept a Bible till he was palsied ; it was then lost, and he had not been able to buy one since. He added, " I am a sinner, and fear I shall never be saved." " Go to Jesus," was my reply. His ready answer was, " But I must go in faith, and how shall I get that faith ? I must go, nothing doubting, for ' he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea.' " This was sound doctrine, and I sent up a hearty petition that God would put suitable words into my mouth, to speak in season to that inquiring soul. I endeavored to do so, he thanked me, and gave an interesting recital of the exercises of his mind during his sickness, and since he was able to move again upon the face of the earth. I presented him a Testament. He took it, much gratified, and promised to read it daily ; he had already been enlightened by the Holy Spirit into many of its truths, and could teach many who had read it much more. He walked so slowly that I bade him good morning, and passed on to stop at a house and rest a little. While there, he went by, and we fell in company again, and soon overtook a tidily dressed woman, who was his wife. Again we talked on the same good subject, but the mind of his wife was still in darkness. They left me at a poor town, I supposed for ever, and I reached the Sound at eight o'clock. It was a desired haven for my weary feet, and yet I dreaded to enter it. I looked about on the wild shore, to ascertain where I should find shelter if not received at the hotel. I saw nothing, and made an ingress in the only door I saw, which took me to the kitchen, and asked a little girl if I could have entertainment. She could not tell, but would ask the mistress. The mistress in a moment was before me ; and when I saw her uncommonly tall figure, I shrank ; but when her kindly soothing voice said, " You are fatigued, and you had

better walk down to the room," I felt it was the voice of a friend. In this room were no pigs, hens, calves, or goats. It was a well ordered, inviting place ; an air of comfort, health, and peace said, here is the mother whose daughters shall " arise up and call her blessed." Every question was put to ascertain my wants ; they inquired not the strange object of my journey, nor my pedigree, but, " What can we do to make you most comfortable ?" O, these are mercy drops to a lone stranger, far, far from home. These are kindnesses which Christ will remember when he shall say, " I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

A fine little ruddy boy of twelve months was laughing in a sister's lap, and saying, by the clapping of his tiny hands and sparkling of his eyes, " Welcome, welcome, stranger." This boy was the twenty-first child of that mother, all in the dust but four ; three lovely daughters moved in that house like young blossoms of future promise. Gladly would I have stayed for weeks ; but when two nights and a day had refreshed my weary limbs, and healed a little my irritated feet, I looked across the Sound, and made preparations for leaving their comfortable carpets, cheerful fires, and wholesome beds, and felt that I was leaving home. " Go," said Mrs. Savage, " and stay a week upon the island. Visit the schools, and the cabins, and the curiosities of the island, and you will be well paid."

I had heard much of the indefatigable Mr. Nangle, and wished to hear from his own lips the success of his mission, his sacrifices, and future prospects. I had heard that a fault-finding tourist had been that way, and carried out some evil reports ; and I had heard that persecutors had risen up around him, and he sought redress by the arm of the law. Though that law gave him the victory, yet some few lips that had read the gospel whispered that " carnal weapons" never fitted for the missionary of the cross. I had heard that the benevolent Dr. Adams had left all, and devoted himself unpaid to that arduous work, and that the faithful humble curate was a meek pattern of humility to all around him. On him I was requested to call, and was offered a note to him from Westport for that purpose. These different items made up the sum total of information I had gathered about A chill, and, putting all into the account, my impressions were more favorable than otherwise.

At an early hour I crossed the Sound, intending to walk till the public car should overtake me. I entered the colony without the car, and inquired for Mr. Lowe, the curate. He was not at home. The man of whom I inquired invited me into his house, and told his wife to put on the tea-kettle. Telling her I did not use tea, she presented me with good domestic bread, milk, and potatoes. When the dinner was finished, I was shown into the dining-hall, where dinner for the orphans was preparing. Nearly one hundred, I was told, were here fed, clothed, and taught to read and work.

It was neat and inviting, and the food wholesome and abundant. I certainly was more than pleased. I was grateful that my eyes had seen, and I could testify for myself, that here was a group of children from Ireland's poor that needed no pity. The neat white cabins, and the colony as a whole, looked to me attracting ; a barren soil had been converted into a fruitful field by the hand of industry. It was now nearly sunset, and lodging must be found. The hotel was not quite in readiness, and no private lodgings I was told were in the colony, and I was directed to a hill out of the colony, to a " respectable tidy house kept by Molly Vesey." I walked and waded through deep sand till the hill was ascended, and the huts, of rough, stone, flung together without mortar, without gables, and circular at the top, made one of the most forbidding looking spots that I had ever seen. Winding among the huddled kraals, to ascertain whether it was possible that a being who had breathed a civilized air could tarry there for a night, I at last was directed to Molly Vesey's. As I looked in, " And is this in truth the tidy lodging-house, where the good people of the colony directed a stranger to lodge ? Is this the domicile where the thrifty manager has gathered two hundred pounds, and put it in safe

keeping for posterity ?” A cow was in the kitchen ; a man not of the “ finest and fairest” was smoking in a corner ; a two pail-full pot was boiling a supper of lumpers, but Molly was not in. I sat down, and she soon entered, and making my wants known, I was invited “ to walk down.” Hope revived—something better might be in reserve. My fate was fixed. I turned my eyes upon the frightful bed on which I was to be laid, and said, must I drink this bitter cup ? A pile of stools, barrels, and such like etceteras, with a long table, made up the furniture, and in the midst of this I was seated. I was for a few moments in a profound reverie. And is this the outer porch of the superb temple I had come to visit ? Surely the architect must have a few mouldings and trimmings yet to put on before the fabric will be quite finished. My meditations were soon broken by Molly’s entering with a feather bed, and placing it upon a bench ; the long table was drawn into a central part of the room, a chair put at one end, and a half barrel across it serving two purposes—to lengthen the table, and elevate my head. Seeing what was in reserve, I asked, “ What are you doing ?” “ Making you a nice bed, ma’am.” “ Why not put me upon the bedstead ?” “ A stranger sleeps there.” “ A stranger ! Who is this stranger ?” “ A nice man, ma’am.” This was the man who was smoking in the corner when I entered. “ And you mean, madam, to put a man into this room to-night ?” “ What harrum, what harrum ?” My indignation was aroused, nor did it settle entirely on the head of Molly. In the mouth of two or three witnesses was it established at the colony, that Molly Vesey was not only a respectable woman, but kept a respectable tidy house ; and yet that same Molly sold whiskey, and by this got her wealth. Is this then the standard of morality, propriety, and tidiness elevated by the colonists for strangers to gather about ? Do you ask the names of these witnesses ? I do not know, or gladly would I put them upon this paper. “ You may, please, carry your bed away, good woman. I shall not sleep upon it.” A whisper was given to the girl, and then, turning to me, “ You shall sleep on the bedstead.” I was the loser on the score of cleanliness. Had I slept upon the barrel, I might have had a clean cover for my pillow ; but I had the room, with all its indescribables, to my own independent self, and in the morn-ing awoke to a brighter view of what appertained to this “ tidy lodging-place.” A plate of potatoes was offered, which I declined, paid for my accommodations, and was about to depart, when a loquacious teacher gave me a few new ideas and proofs of the merits of the Romish church ; he certainly had tact, he certainly had words, and he certainly knew something of the history of both the Romish and Protestant church. After an hour’s listening, my escape was effected, through sand and difficulties, to the neat little colony.

Ireland’s welcome to the stranger, or, An excursion through Ireland, in 1844 & 1845, for the purpose of personally investigating the condition of the poor (1847)

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