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AMONG THE TRAPPISTS.

years hence it might answer well enough; but not now."
"Eight or nine years hence wouldn't answer particularly well for Miss Holland, though," Lord Borroughdale replied decisively, with which remark he picked up his big stick and collected himself gradually together to depart.

From Good Words.
AMONG THE TRAPPISTS.

A GLIMPSE OF LIFE AT LE PORT DU SALUT.
BY SURGEON-GENERAL H. L. COWEN.*

The monastic order of Trappists—a branch of the Cistercian—possesses monasteries in many parts of Europe, one, composed of German brethren, being in Turkey. Some of these establishments are agricultural or industrial associations; others are reformatories for juvenile delinquents; while some have been instituted for effecting works that might be dangerous to health and life, such as draining marshy lands where the fatal malaria broods.

The Monastery of La Trappe du Port du Salut, the subject of the present description, stands near the village of Entrammes, at Port Raingard, on the river Mayenne, on the borders of Maine, Anjou, and Brittany. Its site has been most picturesquely chosen in a charming nook, where the stream having rapidly passed through some rocky cliffs suddenly expands, and flows slowly through rich pasture lands. With its church, farms, water-mill, cattle-sheds, gardens, and orchards, the whole settlement looks like a hamlet surrounded with an enclosure (*clôture*) marking the limits of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. A narrow passage between two high walls leads to the entrance gate, bearing the inscription, "Hic est Portus Salutis."—"Here is the haven of safety." A long chain with an iron cross for a handle being pulled and a bell rung, a porter opens a wicket, bows his head down to his knees—the obligatory salutation of the Trappist—and in silence awaits the ringer's interrogation. The latter may have come simply from curiosity, or he may be a traveller seeking for shelter and hospitality, a beggar asking alms, or even a wrong-doer in search of an

* The writer is greatly indebted for the substance of the information this article contains, to his friend, Professor E. S., who has resided in the monastery of Le Port du Salut, both as a guest and as a temporary secretary to its abbot, Dom. H. M.

asylum; he may be rich or poor, Christian, Jew, or Mohammedan—no matter! the porter at once grants admittance, conducts him to the guests' reception-room, and summons the hosteler.

A monk in white robes appears, his head shaken with the exception of a ring of hair. He bows as did the porter. If the visitor only contemplates a stay of a few hours no formality is gone through; a meal and refreshments are offered, and he is conducted over the monastery. But if he proposes to sleep there, the monk, whose rules are to consider that every guest has been guided to the place by our Lord himself, says, "I must worship in your person Jesus Christ, suffering and asking hospitality; pray do not heed what I am about to do." He then falls prostrate on the ground, and so remains for a short time, in silent devotion. After this he leads the way to an adjoining room, and requests the visitor to write his name in a book, open here, as elsewhere in France, for the inspection of the police. The entry made, the father hosteler (as he is called) reads from the "Imitation of Jesus Christ" the first passage that attracts his eye. In the case of our informant it was, "I come to you, my son, because you have called me." But whatever the text may be, he adds, "Let these words form the subject of your meditations during your stay at La Trappe."

The *communauté* is the name of the monks' private buildings, where no strangers are permitted to penetrate, except by special permission and accompanied by a father. Here perpetual silence is prescribed, save during the times of religious service, and the visitor is warned that in his tour around the domicile he is to kneel, pray, and make the sign of the cross when and where he sees his companion do so. This proceeding would at first sight seem to exclude from the monastery all non-Roman Catholics. The member of any religious communion, however, is welcome, provided he pays a certain deference to the rules, and as the Trappist guide walks in advance, and never turns round to observe how his guest is engaged, all derelictions in minor matters are purposely allowed to escape his notice. Were it otherwise, he would at once retrace his steps, lead the way to the entrance door, show the visitor out, and without uttering a single word, bow and leave him there.

The church is a part of the *communauté*, and is plain in architecture and simple in ornamentation. Here it is that

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each Trappist is brought to die. Whenever any monk is in the throes of death, an assistant of the hospital runs about the monastery striking with a stick on a board. At that well-known summons the brethren flock to the church, where their dying brother has been already laid on ashes strewn on the stones in the shape of a cross, and covered with a bundle of straw. A solemn joy lights up every face, and the Trappist passes away amid the thanksgiving of his companions who envy his happiness. It is the *finis coronæ opus* of his life-work.

The Trappist must always be ready for the grave, and as he is to be buried in his religious vestments, so he is bound to sleep in those same vestments, even to the extent of keeping his shoes on. The dormitory is common to all, the abbot included. The beds are made of quilted straw, as hard as a board, and are separated by a wooden partition, without doors, reaching more than half way to the ceiling. There is not the least distinction of accommodation. The superior rests not more luxuriously than the brethren, because equality rules here as elsewhere in the monastery. For La Trappe is a republic governed by a chapter, the abbot being only the executive for all temporal affairs, and wielding absolute power in spiritual matters alone. But although he holds authority from the see of Rome, yet he is elected by the brethren, who may if they choose elevate the humblest official of the monastery. There are no menial occupations, as the world esteems them, inside the religious houses of the order. The commonest duties may be performed by inmates of the highest social rank.

The chapter house answers the double purpose of a hall for meetings and of a reading-room. The chapter assemblies daily at 5 A.M.—the fathers in their white gowns, the brethren in their brown ones—in order to discuss any matter, temporal or spiritual, interesting to the general community. When the secular business of the day has been gone through the abbot says, "Let us speak concerning our rules," implying that any derelictions which may have occurred during the past twenty-four hours are to be considered. Then all the monks in succession, as they may have occasion, accuse themselves of any neglect, even the most trivial. One may say, "Reverend father, addressing the abbot, "I accidentally dropped my tools when working;" another, "I did not bow low enough when Brother Joseph passed me;" a third, "I saw that Brother

Antony carried a load that was too heavy, and I did not assist him." These and suchlike self-accusations may seem puerile, but they lead up to the preservation of some of the essential precepts of the order, unremitting attention while at labor, deferential demeanor and Christian courtesy towards brethren.

But if any brother may have omitted to mention derelictions of which he himself was not aware it then devolves upon his companions, with the view of maintaining rules, on the observance of which the happiness of all is concerned, to state to the abbot what those faults may have been. For instance, one will say, "When Brother Simeon comes to the chapter he sometimes forgets to make the sign for the brethren who stood up on his arrival to sit down again, and yesterday Brother Peter remained standing for one hour, until another brother came in and made the sign to be seated." Thus warned Brother Simeon rises and kisses the informant, thanking him in this way for kindly reproving him. These accusations are considered by the brethren as showing their zeal for reciprocal improvement.

The Trappist is bound to make the abbot acquainted at once with everything that occurs within the precinct of the monastery, and minutæ of the most trifling and sometimes even ludicrous nature must be reported without delay. To the same ear, and in private, must also be communicated those confessions in which personal feelings—even against himself—are concerned. To quote a single instance. It once so happened that a brother of Le Port du Salut took a dislike to Dom. H. M., the abbot, and came to tell him of it.

"Reverend father, I am very unhappy."

"Why so, brother?"

"Reverend father, I cannot bear the sight of you."

"Why so?"

"I do not know; but when I see you, I feel hatred towards you, and it destroys my peace of mind."

"It is a temptation as bad, but not worse, than any other," replied the abbot; "bear it patiently; do not heed it; and whenever you feel it again, come at once and tell me, and especially warn me if I say or do anything that displeases you."

The common belief that Trappists never speak is altogether erroneous. They do speak at stated times and under certain conditions, and they make use besides of most expressive signs, each of which is symbolical. Thus joining the fingers

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of both hands at a right angle, imitating as it does the roof of a house, means *house*; touching the forehead signifies the *abbot*; the chin, a *stranger*; the heart, a *brother*; the eyes, to *sleep*, and so on with some hundreds of like signs invented by Abbot de Rancé, the founder of the order. Trappists converse in this manner with amazing rapidity, and may be heard laughing heartily at the comicality of a story told entirely by signs. Strange to say, there is no austere gloom about the Trappist. His face invariably bears the stamp of serenity, often that of half-subdued gaiety. The life he leads is nevertheless a very hard one. No fire is allowed in the winter except in the *chauffoir* or stove-room, and there the monks are permitted during excessive cold weather to come in for fifteen minutes only, the man nearest the stove yielding his place to the new-comer. The *chauffoir* and the apartments are the only artificially heated parts in the building.

The Trappist takes but one meal and a slight refection per day. He is the strictest of all vegetarians, for he is not allowed to partake of any other food except milk and cheese. From the 14th of September to the Saturday in Passion week, he must not even touch milk. Vegetables cooked in water with a little salt, together with some cider apples, pears, and almonds, being all that is permitted him, and during that long period he takes food but once daily. The diet is not precisely the same in all monasteries, certain modifications being authorized, according to the produce of the monastic lands. Thus at Le Port du Salut they brew and drink beer, and at other places where wine is made, they use that in very limited quantities, largely diluted with water.

Trappists wait in turn at table upon their brethren. No one, not even the abbot, is to ask for anything for himself, but each monk is bound to see that those seated on either side of him get everything they are entitled to, and to give notice of any omission by giving a slight tap upon the table and pointing with the finger to the neglected brother.

Any monk arriving in the refectory after grace prostrates himself in the middle of the room and remains there until the abbot knocks with a small hammer and thus liberates him. A graver punishment is inflicted now and again at the conclusion of dinner. The culprit, so called, lies flat on the stones across the doorway, and each brother and guest is compelled to step over him as he makes

his exit. I say guest advisedly, for it is the privilege of all who receive hospitality at La Trappe to dine once—not oftener—in the monks' refectory. During meals one of the brotherhood reads aloud, in accordance with Cistercian practice.

The dinner at Le Port du Salut consists generally of vegetable soup, salad without oil, whole-meal bread, cheese, and a modicum of light beer. Though the cooking is of the plainest description the quality of the vegetables is excellent, and the cheese has become quite famous. The meal never lasts longer than twenty minutes, and when over, all remaining scraps are distributed to the poor assembled at the gate. Six hundred pounds weight of bread and several casks of soup are also distributed weekly, besides what the abbot may send to any sick person in the vicinity.

The ailing Trappist is allowed to indulge in what is called *le soulagement*, viz., two eggs taken early in the morning. In cases of very severe illness, and when under medical treatment in the hospital, animal food may be used; but the attachment to rules is so great that the authority of the superiors has frequently to be exercised in order to enforce the doctor's prescription. In the words of Father Martin, the attendant of the hospital, "When a Trappist consents to eat meat he is at death's very door."

The cemetery is surrounded on all sides by the buildings of the *communauté*, so that from every window the monks may see their last resting-place. The graves are indicated by a slight rising of the grass and by a cross bearing the saint's name assumed by the brother on his *profession*. Nothing else is recorded save his age and the date of his death. Three-score years and ten seem to be the minimum of life at La Trappe, and astonishing as this longevity may appear *prima facie*, it is more so when one considers that the vocation of most postulants has been determined by a desire to separate themselves from a world, in which they had previously lost their peace of soul and their bodily health.

Under the regularity of monastic life, its labor, its tranquillity, and either despite the severity of the diet or in virtue of it, it is wonderful how soon the dejected and feeble become restored to health. Out of fifteen novices, statistics show that only one remains to be what is called a *profès*, the other fourteen leaving the monastery before the expiration of two years. A touching custom may be here mentioned.

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Trappists are told in their chapter meeting, "Brethren, one of us has lost a father (or any other relation); let us pray for the departed soul." But none know the name of the bereft brother.

After having taken vows as a profès the Trappist holds a co-proprietorship in the buildings and lands of the association and must live and die in the monastery. Death is his goal and best hope. In order to remind him of it, a grave is always ready in the cemetery; but the belief is altogether erroneous that each Trappist digs his own grave. When the earth yawning for the dead has been filled another pit is opened by *any one ordered for the task*. Each Trappist comes and prays by the side of this grave which may be his own. Neither do Trappists when they meet each other say, "Brother, we must die," as is also generally accredited to them. This is, we think, the salute of the disciples of Bruno at La Grande Chartreuse.

The farm buildings of Le Port du Salut are many and various, including sheds for cattle, a corn-mill, and looms for the manufacture of the woollen and cotton clothing the monks wear. There is much land, outside as well as inside the walls of the precinct, which the monks cultivate, and they may be often seen in their full robes, despite the heat of the summer, working steadily in the fields, and the abbot harder than any of them.

During the twenty-four hours of an ordinary working day the Trappist is thus employed. He rises generally at two, A.M., but on feast days at midnight or at one o'clock in the morning, according to the importance of the festival. He immediately goes to church, which is shrouded in darkness, except the light that glimmers from the small lamps perpetually burning before the altar as in all Roman Catholic churches. The first service continues until three o'clock; at that hour and with the last words of the hymn all the monks prostrate themselves on the stones, and remain in silent meditation during thirty minutes. The nave is then lighted and the chants are resumed until five A.M., when masses commence. The number of hours given to liturgical offices is, on an average, seven per day. Singing, but in a peculiar way, forms a part of the worship. All the musical notes are long and of equal duration, and this because the Trappist must sing hymns "for the love of God, and not for his own delectation." Moreover, he must exert his voice to its utmost, and this being prolonged at

intervals during seven hours per diem proves a greater fatigue than even manual labor.

The distribution of the labor takes place every day under the superintendence of the abbot, the prior, and the *celleriers*, the last named official having the care of all the temporalities of the place, and being permitted, like the superior, to hold intercourse with the outer world. The *cellerier* stands indeed in the same relation to the monastery as does a supercargo to a ship.

Labor is regular or occasional. To the first the brethren are definitely appointed, and their work is every day the same; the latter, which is mainly agricultural, is allotted by the superior according to age, physical condition, and aptitude, but it is imperative that every monk *must participate in manual labor*. Even a guest may, if he pleases, claim what is considered as a *privilege*, three hours of work a day.

After dinner the Trappist gives one hour to rest, but the maximum never exceeds seven hours, and on feast days is materially reduced by earlier rising. The midday siesta over, labor continues until a quarter to five o'clock, which is the hour of refection. Then comes the last religious office of the day, the *Salve Regina*, at which guests as well as brethren are expected to assist. The last word of the hymn at this service is the last word of the day. It is called "the time of the great silence." Monks and guests then leave the church, smothering the sound of their footsteps as much as possible, and noiselessly retire to their respective resting-places; lights are put out, except in case of special permission of the abbot, and a deathlike quiet and gloom reigns everywhere throughout the habitation.

The life of guests at Le Port du Salut differs from that of a Trappist. There is a parlor, common to all, with a fire burning in it during winter, but each one sleeps in a separate cell, and has three meals a day; he may eat eggs from Easter until September, and have his vegetables cooked with butter. Last, though not least, his wants are attended to, and his cell swept and cleaned by the father and the brother of the hostelerie, who are also at liberty to hold conversation with him.

A guest may stay in the monastery for three days without giving any particulars of himself, for fourteen days if he chooses to disclose who and what he is, and for as much as three months if his circumstances seem to need it. After that time, if he be

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poor, he may be sent away to another monastery at the cost of the senders; but the abbot is free to extend a guest's visit to any duration.

Trappists are most useful citizens. They perform, per head, more labor than any farmer; they expend upon their own maintenance the very minimum necessary to support existence; they undertake, at the cost of their lives, works of great public utility, such as the draining of the extensive marshes of Les Dombes, in the south of France, and of La Metidja, at Staouéli, near Algiers, which they are converting into fruitful fields. As horticulturists, agriculturists, dairymen, millers, and breeders of cattle they are unrivalled; for men whose faith is that to work is to pray, cannot fail to excel those with whom work is, if even necessary, a tiresome obligation. Lastly, in all new establishments, the Trappist only considers his monastery founded when a dead brother has taken possession of the land and lies buried in the first open grave.

Such is the real life of the Trappists. It is apparently a happy one; and it is with feelings of deep regret and of friendly remembrance that the departing guest, as he reaches a turning of the road and sees the steeple of the monastery of Le Port du Salut disappear, stands for a moment to cast a last look upon that peaceful abode ere he wends his way again into the wide, wide world.

From The Nineteenth Century.
KARLSBAD: THE QUEEN OF BOHEMIAN WATERING-PLACES.

DR. MACPHERSON, in his "Bohemia and Wells of Europe," says that Karlsbad is, in many respects, the most striking bath in Europe, and one of the most frequented. Last year it was visited by upwards of twenty thousand persons, who all stayed longer than a week, and who drank or bathed in the waters. The proportion of English-speaking visitors was very small. Our countrymen have long flocked to the baths and springs of Auvergne, Savoy, and the Pyrenees; to those of Spa, Aix-la-Chapelle, Wiesbaden, and Ems; to those of Baden-Baden, Kreuznach, Homburg, Kissingen, and St. Moritz. The mineral waters of Bohemia, of which Franzensbad, Marienbad, and Karlsbad are the most famous, find but little favor in the eyes of English mineral water-drinkers. One reason for this may be

that these waters are but imperfectly known to English physicians; another, and perhaps the chief reason, may be that it is not yet the fashion for holiday-makers and health-seekers to visit them. Out of the twenty thousand strangers who visited Karlsbad last year in order to be cured of some ailment, not more than seven hundred and sixty-seven were English. Those who were citizens of the United States numbered eight hundred and seventy; as many as nineteen came from far distant Australia; the total number of English-speaking visitors, exclusive of the tourists who may have spent a day or two there, being sixteen hundred and fifty-six. At some of the watering-places named above the language most frequently heard during the season is English. At Karlsbad, on the contrary, English is the foreign tongue least spoken throughout the year.

There is no evidence that the mineral springs of Karlsbad were known to the Romans. Most of the mineral springs, which are still in high repute, were discovered and used by these conquerors of the world, who seem to have had as keen eyes and as great a liking for mineral waters as the North American Indians. Compared with Wiesbaden, for example, Karlsbad may be called a modern bath; yet, as it has been a place of resort for invalids during six centuries, it stands high in the list of long-frequented and renowned baths. As is not unusual in the case of mineral springs, a fabulous story is connected with the discovery of the Karlsbad waters. The story runs that, on the 23rd day of June, 1370, the emperor, Charles the Fourth, was hunting the stag near the place where Karlsbad now stands. The animal which he pursued suddenly leapt into a valley, whither he descended to the bottom of the valley, they saw the hounds struggling for their lives in a huge natural caldron of seething water. This is the spring called the Sprudel, which spouts several feet from the ground in the form of a small geyser. The temperature of the water is 165° Fahrenheit. That the emperor might have been hunting on the day named is probable, and that his hounds might have been scalded in the hot water is not impossible; but that the Sprudel was then discovered is disproved by the fact of the hot waters of Karlsbad having been known to King John, the emperor's father. It is plausibly conjectured that the emperor Charles the Fourth was really one of the early users of the Karlsbad waters,