# The PALIMPSEST

SEPTEMBER 1922

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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH
*Superintendent*

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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## A Day at New Melleray

For some time as we travelled along the Old Military Road we had been watching for the first glimpse of the Abbey of New Melleray where Trappist monks under a rule of silence live a life of Old World fervor. Suddenly, as we rounded a bend in the road we saw over the tops of the intervening hills the gleam of the red and gray slate roof of the monastery. As we turned off the main highway and surmounted these hills we came again and again into full view of what seemed like a Gothic building of mediaeval Europe. Its white stone walls with arched windows, its buttresses and spires and ornamental chimneys were set on the crest of a hill within a frame of trees and green fields. In reality it was neither mediaeval nor European: the background was an Iowa landscape near Dubuque, and the time was June of 1922. We were coming in a motor car to spend a day at this house of silence.

The road wound past the red brick parish church with its nearby cemetery, down a short hill, and over a small stream to the outer gate of the monastery park. A sign at the side read: "No Visitors Allowed on Sunday". But on this day the open gate foretold our welcome. Through the wide gateway we turned the car, thence up a winding, tree-lined driveway, and came to a stop in front of an inner gate of the park just outside a long, two-story building which later we learned was the lodge or guest house.

No one was in sight at first, but in a moment or two a black pony ridden by a man in a white robe and black scapular emerged from a pine grove at the foot of the hill and, galloping at full speed up the hillside, disappeared behind the barns to the north of us. In a short time the rider reappeared walking toward us from the stable where he had left the pony. As he drew near we climbed out of the car to greet him. A man of striking appearance he was in his priestly robes, his face covered with a dark-brown pointed beard, his feet shod in white woolen stockings and heavy low shoes.

Father Eugene listened respectfully while I explained my errand and asked if I might spend a day at the monastery. Assuring me that I was welcome, he then asked the make of car in which we had come and volunteered the information that he had only recently learned to run the Hupmobile belonging to the monastery. Speaking in a rich brogue, which

confirmed his statement that he had come from Ireland within the year, he said: "I have trouble frequently with the Hupmobile. The garage man says it is in perfect mechanical condition but in spite of that sometimes it won't go."

With a twinkle in his blue eyes he turned to me and asked: "You might be thinking of joining us, perhaps?" My answer that a wife and son disqualified me, even if I wished to do so, brought a genial chuckle entirely inconsistent with an austere outlook on the things of the world which a life of daily piety might be expected to produce.

In reply to our question as to how many monks there were at New Melleray, he said: "Twenty-four now — not enough to do all the work on the estate, and so we hire from fifteen to eighteen farm hands to help in the busy season." The farm, he explained, included some three thousand acres, a large part of it timber, pasture land, and extensive meadows, with three hundred acres planted in corn and small grain. He told us that the Abbot, Father Alberic, had died in 1917, that no successor had been elected by the community, and that Father Bruno Ryan who had arrived from Ireland in 1914 was the Superior or Acting Abbot.

My friends who had brought me to the monastery departed for Dubuque, and Father Eugene suggested that he would take me to Brother Bernard, the Guest Brother, who would show me anything I wished to see. Accordingly we entered the unlocked

gate of the park, which is accessible to both men and women, and passed through the side entrance of the lodge into a hallway. The pious Father asked me to wait in a room that opened off the hallway until he could find Brother Bernard; then silently he left me, moving away with a swinging stride developed perhaps by pacing the cloister. I looked at my watch. It was ten o'clock. My day with the Trappists had begun.

I sat in a narrow room furnished with a kneeling bench at one end and a reading desk at the other above which hung a silver crucifix. In the center of the room extended a long table, oil cloth topped, with several chairs on either side. This room, I learned later, was used on Sundays as a meeting place for the farm laborers to listen to instruction by one of the priests of the abbey. In a few minutes there appeared in the doorway a bearded figure in a brown habit, who welcomed me warmly. His beard and close-cropped hair were of a reddish tint, his eyes blue, his manner mild and friendly. He told me he was Brother Bernard whose duty it was to meet the guests and to cook for the hired men, and asked me what I wished to see first, suggesting that I plan to return for dinner at eleven-thirty.

I asked if I might see the Superior. He motioned me to follow and, passing out through the screen door of the lodge, he led me to an ornamental wooden gateway surmounted by a cross. This gate he unlocked, explaining that although women were per-

mitted to enter the park none but men were ever allowed to enter the inner grounds of the monastery which were surrounded by a fence. Upon my remarking that it was a wonder some women didn't climb over, he replied that only a short time before an automobile with two women and two men had arrived while he was busy in the guest house and that before he could get outside the girls had climbed over the gate and the men had followed. Great was the commotion among the monks when they saw the women and Brother Bernard hurried the intruders from the enclosure.

Inside the enclosure I noticed several monks in the white habit and black scapular of the choir brothers hoeing down small weeds and raking the gravel pathways. One of these my guide pointed out as Father Bruno, the Superior. Trembling a bit inwardly as to my reception by the head of the abbey I removed my hat and addressed him, explaining my errand and showing him a copy of *The Palimpsest.* While he looked at it with interest, the rest of the monks went on with their work, paying no attention whatever to the intrusion. Then in a soft, melodious voice tinged with a brogue even richer than that of Father Eugene he made me welcome and asked me to excuse him a moment while he changed his heavy work shoes and hung up his wide-brimmed straw hat.

While he was gone I sat on one of the wooden benches in the cool shade of the pine trees and looked

about at a scene so strange that it seemed unreal. Here was the Gothic abbey with its pointed windows and doors, its ornamental buttresses, its slate roof and belfries, and its octagonal stone water-tower surmounted by a wrought iron fence. About the grounds were monks in white and monks in brown, mowing the thick turf of the grass plots, smoothing the gravel walks, trimming the deep-green arbor vitae hedge along the east side of the enclosure, and removing dead limbs from the pine trees.

A few minutes later Father Bruno beckoned to me from the east doorway of the abbey. As I entered he told me in a quiet, friendly tone that I could take any pictures I wished. His affable manner and sympathetic interest made me feel that Cistercian hospitality had not dimmed through the centuries.

First he led me through an entrance hall to the end of one of the long narrow cloisters, its green-tinted walls lighted by the sunshine streaming through narrow arched windows along one side. No pictures or statues relieved the bareness of the walls. Only a small sign which read, "SILENCE", reminded the visitor of the practice of the order.

From the cloister we entered a little chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin. Two altars in white and gold, two statues — one of the Savior and the other of Mary — the pale blue walls and white ceiling heavily paneled with oak, and seats that matched the woodwork created a charming picture.

Next we visited the chapter room where the monks sit on low benches along the paneled side walls to hear the Abbot or Superior expound the Rule of St. Benedict or read the Martyrology. His elevated throne is at the end of the room and is covered with a carved wooden canopy. In this room the monks confess their violations of the Rule and receive their penance; and here, too, the assignments of the day are made by the Superior whose word is law in the community. Obedience is a vow which no Cistercian repudiates. A large, oval-topped table extends crosswise of the room at the end opposite the throne, and here on the benches along each side the monks sit and study during the hours for meditation and learning.

We took our leave in silence for an old, grey-bearded monk was reverently making the Stations of the Cross, silently praying before the framed pictures along the two side walls that depicted the fourteen stages of the road to Calvary. The soft light filtering through the stained glass windows upon the oak beamed ceiling and paneled walls painted a picture of sanctity beyond the doorway.

Upstairs we climbed, passing through the sacristy where the vestments and sacred vessels are kept, thence across the hall to the dormitory which occupies almost the entire second floor of the long wing of the abbey. I expected to see a dismal, cheerless place with planks for beds in a tiny darkened cell, for such was the impression I had brought to the

monastery. Instead there stretched before me a room at least one hundred and eighty feet long, with white side walls and blue, vaulted ceiling supported by massive walnut rafters. Many windows along each side supplied light and ventilation. A wide aisle extended down the center of the room, and on both sides, arranged in perfect alignment, were the cubicles or cells where the monks slept. Each cell was a box-like affair, stained dark, about seven feet long, four feet wide, and six feet high, and separated from the next in line by an interval of three feet. Within each cubicle a couch extended the entire length. Cross-slats of wood formed the support for a straw-filled mattress some three inches thick. On this was spread neatly a coarse sheet, two clean wool blankets, and a straw-filled bolster pillow, making a bed fully as comfortable as the regulation army cot or camp bed. Each cell contained, besides the couch, a holy water font and hooks for hanging the habit and hat. The cells were open at the top and a white curtain hung in front of each one that was occupied. Floors, cells, and bedding were spotlessly clean.

From the dormitory we descended the stairway to the first floor and thence down another flight of steps to the basement to visit the refectory or dining hall of the monks. In passing I noted the heavy foundation walls nearly four feet thick and the unoccupied portion of the basement extending under the chapel and chapter room. In the kitchen we found Brother Declan, the cook, preparing the mid-day meal. He

greeted the Superior with a bow, but spoke no word and turned back to his task of picking over lettuce. Heavy white dishes filled the drying racks along the wall of the scullery, and shining pots and pans hung on pegs beside the large range stove.

Through a door at the side of the scullery we entered the refectory, a severely plain room lighted by basement windows along one side. Across the end opposite the entrance stood a table with three straight backed chairs behind it, occupied at mealtime, my guide informed me, by the Superior, the Prior, and the Sub-Prior. Four plain tables with legs painted white and tops scrubbed clean lined each side of the room, behind which on oak stools or benches sit the monks at mealtime with their backs to the wall. At each place was a small name plate, a heavy cup, a steel knife, fork, and spoon, a brown earthenware pitcher, a salt cellar, and a large white canvas napkin. During the meal this napkin is spread out and the dishes placed upon it. Beside each place was a plate on which were two slices of bread — one white, one brown — and a small dish of honey. The dinner or principal meal of the day, Father Bruno said, would consist of bean soup, potatoes, lettuce, bread, butter, and coffee with milk and sugar added.

At dinner one of the monks would sit at the lectern or reading desk which stood by a window midway along one side wall and read from the Bible and some other pious book. Father Bruno opened

the desk and brought out for my inspection a Vulgate edition of the Bible dated 1688 and printed at Venice. Another book — a heavy leather tome — proved to be a collection of sermons and instructions written in beautiful penmanship by a monk at Melleray, France, in 1827. While I was admiring the handwriting and commenting on the immense amount of time it must have taken to prepare such a volume, the ringing of the chapel bell called my guide to his duties in the church and we parted company, he ascending the stairs to help chant that part of the Divine Office called Sext, and I leaving the monastery to return to the lodge for dinner.

The overall-clad farm hands had already returned from the fields and were standing beside the sturdy draft horses at the watering trough or were lolling in the shade on the lawn. The staccato bark of the gasoline engine pumping water shattered the ordinary stillness of the place. At eleven-thirty the ringing of a dinner bell by Brother Bernard summoned the men and myself to a large, plain room on the first floor of the old building where the monks lived while the stone abbey was being built. Here the laborers are now housed and fed. We sat down around a long table covered with a white oil-cloth, before a well cooked and wholesome meal of boiled potatoes, eggs, lettuce, baked beans, brown and white bread, butter, rhubarb sauce, and tea — not a dainty dinner but one that satisfied.

When dinner was finished the eighteen men went

outside and lay down in the shade to rest until twelve-thirty when again they watered the horses and set out to the work of plowing corn and making hay. While Brother Bernard and his helper cleared away the remains of the meal and washed the heavy dishes, I followed Brother Camillus, the farm boss, in his task of directing the afternoon work. He was a short, stocky man wearing a pair of heavy cow-hide boots and an old gray slouch hat, his brown habit held up to his heavy belt by a chain and leather cord on each side. Something about his size and walk, or perhaps it was his black beard tinged with grey or his crispness in giving orders and meeting the problems of the afternoon, reminded me of the appearance of General Grant.

A laborer approached and reported that the cows had broken through the fence of the pasture where a corner post had rotted off. With a few curt questions, Brother Camillus learned of the exact damage done and what would be needed for repairs; then striding to the carpenter shop he asked a workman to take a hammer, wire stretcher, staples, and a new post to replace the broken one. A conference with a horse buyer from Dubuque resulted in the sale of three fine four-year-old colts.

This seemed to be a favorable time to take some pictures; and so, while waiting for the Guest Brother to finish his work, I started out to explore the farm buildings. Half way up the hill northwest of the lodge were the charred remains and blackened stone

foundations of the large horse barn recently destroyed by fire. The loss was heavy. Fifteen of the sturdy work horses had perished in the blaze and tons of hay and large bins of small grain were totally destroyed. Nothing remained of the huge structure except the limestone foundation — a rectangular basement some fifty feet wide and three hundred feet long.

A modern corn crib with a driveway through the center and cribs on each side, the outside of the structure painted white and trimmed in red, stood inside the feed lot east of the ruins of the barn. A gallery extended the entire length along the south side from which corn could be scooped into the cement-floored feeding pens for hogs below.

Northeast of the corn crib two well ventilated cow barns equipped with stanchions around the sides with space for hay in the middle disclosed the care taken of the cows which furnish a large part of the food supply of the institution. Windmills provided a supply of cold water for each of the barns and the hog lot. The white walls trimmed in green, the metal roofs, and the cupolas of the cow barns were conspicuous in the setting of pine and maple trees.

Between the cow barns and the lodge was located a stone one-story carpenter shop where the aged carpenter was at work repairing some broken farm machinery.

Observing Brother Bernard come out of the lodge and sit down on one of the benches in the park, I

rejoined him there and for the next hour bothered him with questions which he graciously answered. He said that from Easter until September the monks take a siesta or afternoon nap from twelve-thirty to one-thirty; but since his duties as Guest Brother require him to stay awake during the siesta he is permitted to sleep until three o'clock in the morning, thereby getting his seven hours of sleep at night. From September until Easter the monks retire an hour earlier at night and dispense with the siesta during the day.

I asked about the churning and laundry work. He answered that both are done by electricity now, and that the old building which I saw to the east, and which in the fifties had been the monastery, housed the laundry and the bake shop. When I remarked about the beauty and well kept appearance of the trees in the park he told me that many varieties were represented there — the hemlock, the larch, the Norway spruce, both hard and soft maple, the basswood, and the white pine.

At his suggestion we set out to look at the shrubbery, flowers, and trees of the park and the enclosure. We were the only figures astir at this drowsy hour of early afternoon — the farm hands had disappeared to the fields and the monks were asleep in their cells. We strolled past the new cemetery where a huge granite cross marks the grave of the late Abbot, Father Alberic, and small, plain iron crosses inscribed with the names of the monks and the date

of their death, face the rising sun in rows. Brother Bernard denied the tale I had heard that as soon as one monk dies a grave is dug for the next and that each day a shovelful of earth is turned to remind the monks of death. The idea sprang, perhaps, from the fact that when a member of the community is buried the place for the next grave is marked out but not dug.

Along the fence of the new cemetery rows of salvia were growing which in the fall would raise their flaming spikes in blossom, and wild flowers, bloodroot, and sweet william joined the roses and peonies in decorating the burying ground. We turned our steps into the avenue of tall pine trees which, extending east, then north, then east again, joined the abbey with the orchard and passed one of the extensive gardens and the vineyard. Overhead the interlocking branches formed an arch and made a shady, silent, outdoor cloister. The June sunshine breaking through fell in bright splotches on the walk strewn with pine needles and packed hard by years of use.

Returning, we passed along the well trimmed arbor vitae hedge — a close packed wall of green over eight feet high and six feet thick at the base tapering to a rounded top. Extending for two hundred yards along the east side of the park and enclosure, it formed one of the beauty spots of the monastery grounds. Close by the eastern door of the abbey another hedge of the same type enclosed

the old burying ground where twenty-six iron crosses mark the graves of the monks who first came to New Melleray in 1849. Within this hallowed spot the grass was closely cropped over the graves whose tops were level with the aisles between them. Two rose bushes and four flaming peonies added a touch of brighter color to the green of the lawn and hedge. A white, wooden cross set in the center of the square towered above the encircling wall.

We had returned to the benches when the bell on the abbey tower summoned the monks from their siesta to the church to recite the Office of None, after which they would work for two hours outside. When I expressed a desire to see the gardens Brother Bernard said that he would turn me over to Father John, the gardener, as soon as he appeared. As we sat down the sound of the chanting of None could be heard through the open windows of the church.

Soon after the sound died away the monks in white and monks in brown emerged one by one from the doors of the monastery — most of them wearing wide-brimmed straw hats, all with the lower part of the robe held up by a chain and strap arrangement fastened to the heavy leather belt. Silently they went about the tasks assigned to them by the Superior. Brother Stanislaus, the bee-keeper, inspected his gable-roofed, cupola-topped hives; Brother Kieran, the herdsman, strode off to the cow barns; while Brother Patrick, the baker, departed to the bake shop to finish the work of the day. My guide

pointed out Father John, and I caught up with him as he trudged with his hoe under his arm down the pine walk to the gardens.

He was a stalwart man and gray bearded; sixty-nine years of age, he said. For twenty-five years he had been a parish priest in Wisconsin before he joined the Cistercians. He took considerable pride in the gardens; and just cause he had, for they showed the careful attention of an expert. Long straight rows of lettuce, parsnips, carrots, onions, early and late cabbage, tomatoes, sweetcorn, and beans filled two plots; cucumbers and melons grew in another; while potatoes occupied a third. He showed me his tobacco patch where thrifty plants were making a healthy growth, then the vineyard from which the monks sold over seven thousand pounds of grapes last season. Prospects for another big crop were good. Before prohibition, he said, wine was made for the refreshment of visitors and for the brothers but now only enough was produced for altar purposes, the rest of the grapes being sold. Blackberries grew wild in the timber, so that it was unnecessary to cultivate them.

We passed through the orchards loaded with tiny apples of this year's crop and went on past the rhubarb bed which filled half the space of one of the large garden plots. Ahead of us an elderly monk was trimming the dead branches of a tree with a hand saw. Father John remarked: "Brother Nicholas there is eighty-nine years old. He can eat as

ABBOT ALBERIC IN THE GOWN OF A CHOIR BROTHER

good a meal as any man in the house. Of course he hasn't any teeth, but he slides it down just the same. He will take a bowl of soup with onions in it and digest it perfectly. Sure, it would kill me to do it."

We chatted awhile about the best sprays to kill insects and the best varieties of vegetables to raise. Then, leaving Father John hoeing a dust mulch around the late cabbage, I started out to visit the saw mill and blacksmith shop.

The whir of a circular saw in the mill, shaping logs into lumber for some of the nearby farmers, mingled with the ringing of steel on steel in the blacksmith shop. Through the doorway of the latter I saw the figure of the brother standing in the ruddy glow of the forge, his arms bare, the picture of strength, and it seemed hard to realize that all the brawn and muscle which stood out upon his corded arms was the result of a diet of milk, bread, and vegetables with no meat or fish. As I entered the doorway he looked up and smiled, but spoke no word, and went on with his task of welding a broken iron rod.

Retracing my steps to the enclosure I was admitted through the locked gate by Father Eugene who had returned from a business trip to the little town of Peosta, the post office of New Melleray. His duties as Procurator or business manager occasionally take him on trips to Dubuque or neighboring towns to sell the surplus products of the community, to purchase the few necessities not raised upon the

estate, to pay the taxes, or to buy needed machinery. He led me to a guest room in the downstairs portion of the east wing of the main building which we reached by entering a side door and passing through a hall. Then he excused himself to bring me some books and pamphlets dealing with the subject of monastic life in general and the Trappists in particular.

The room assigned me for the night by the Superior was clean and furnished with a single bed, a walnut dresser, a round-topped reading table, a rocker, and two straight backed chairs upholstered with horsehair cloth. All of the furniture was of the period of 1850 to 1860; it reminded me of one of the sets in John Drinkwater's play, "Abraham Lincoln", and would have delighted the heart of a collector of antiques. On the wall hung a picture of the Blessed Virgin, another of the Savior, one of St. Augustine, and a fourth showing a group of Cistercians in company with the Cardinal Protector of the Order. The bed composed of a mattress, clean sheets, a pillow, white blankets, and covered with a white spread proved to be comfortable. A small rug lay on the floor beside it.

I had scarcely explored the room when Father Eugene returned with reading material, saying that Vespers would begin soon in the main chapel or church upstairs and that supper would be served me in the dining room for guests immediately after the Vesper service ended. While we talked the tolling

of the chapel bell announced the hour for the last devotions of the afternoon. Together we paced the length of the cloister and climbed the stairs to the church in silence. Father Eugene left me to invest himself in the long white cowl with flowing sleeves worn by the choir brothers when they say the Divine Office, and I entered the single doorway of the church.

Opposite the door an altar finished in white with blue and gold ornamentation reached almost to the heavy, dark-stained rafters that stretched across the nave under the vaulted roof. Above the altar hung a large framed painting of the Savior crucified; on the left, a picture of the Blessed Virgin; on the right, one of the Good Shepherd. The absence of an altar railing emphasized the length of the nave; except for the fact that the altar was elevated two steps and the choir stalls one, there was no break in the floor space from the altar to the doorway.

On both sides of the church extended the stalls of the choir brothers, elevated some eight inches from the floor, and in front of them were placed the semicircular stalls of the lay brothers, six of the former and twelve of the latter on each side. Two stalls at right angles to the others faced the altar, and between them and the door extended ten pews with kneeling benches. In the center of the aisle between the stalls stood a small reed organ; and in front, at the left of the altar, a pipe organ occupied the space.

The soft pink tint of the side walls and the blue of the vaulted ceiling blended pleasantly with the dark stained woodwork and the oak furniture.

As soon as the choir brothers, all in white, had filed into the church and taken their stations in the choir stalls they loosened the heavy brass clasps of the huge Psalters and began the odd and fascinating chant-like recitation of the Office. The lay brothers in brown stood in their circular stalls below and in front of the choir, facing each other across the aisle of the nave, earnestly praying and joining in the responses. Longfellow's poem, "King Robert of Sicily", came to my mind as I recognized an occasional "Gloria Patri", an "Ave Maria", and heard the priests chant the "Magnificat". When the Vesper Office ended the monks prayed silently for about ten minutes until the bell rang again, and then quietly followed the Superior to their supper.

I had scarcely returned to my room when a brown-clad brother entered and motioned me to follow him. He led me down the hallway and through a door into a narrow, high-ceilinged dining room where he had already laid out my supper on the oval-topped table. Here, too, the furniture was of the Civil War period. A walnut, hand-carved cupboard with drawers below and glass doors above stood in one corner: the table, also of walnut and covered with a snowy cloth, filled the center of the room. Six dining room chairs of the low, square-backed, cane-seated type, and a square serving table completed the furnishings of

the room. The brother withdrew to the refectory for his simple meal of bread and butter, lettuce, tea with milk and sugar, and honey while I ate heartily the hot supper of potatoes, poached eggs, bread and butter, blackberry jam, tea, angel food cake, and fruit. Again the far-famed hospitality of Cistercians to their guests was demonstrated.

A little while after I returned to my room my courteous host, Father Bruno, entered to tell me to sleep as late as I wished in the morning and to bid me good-night, for, he explained, after the evening service of Compline, the monks retired to their cells without speaking a word. Upon my expressing a desire to arise at two o'clock to follow through the religious part of a Trappist's day he graciously assented to see that I was awakened, and after explaining that Compline would begin ten minutes after the ringing of a little bell which summoned the monks to Chapter for meditation, he left me to send Father Eugene to my room with an alarm clock. My genial Irish visitor and I discussed the founding and the history of the Cistercians until the bell called him to Chapter.

After a few minutes I strolled down the cloister and ascended the stairway to the church where promptly at seven the brothers followed. Each one as he arrived at his place in the choir saluted the Blessed Sacrament with a profound bow. When the last tone of the bell announcing Compline died away, all the monks faced the altar, made the sign of the

cross and, bowing again towards the tabernacle, began the solemn and beautiful chanting of the last part of the Divine Office.

The slow, deep-toned chant of the Latin with pauses between the verses, the humble bow when the words "Gloria patri, filii, et spiritus sancti" were reached, and the slowly fading light of evening which dimmed the huge rafters and the vaulted roof produced an effect of great solemnity. Except for the green-shaded electric reading lamps that threw their rays on the open pages of the huge Psalters and made it possible for the monks to read the words and notes standing back in their stalls three feet away from the desk, the scene was a reproduction of a monastic chapel of the Middle Ages.

The chorus singing of the famous "Salve Regina" closed Compline — the blending of the rich tenor and bass voices of the monks in the slow deliberate tones of this anthem creating a strain of passionate fervor and pleading. As the last notes of the song died away the chapel bell chimed in, ringing the Angelus, and each brother prostrated himself with head bowed low to recite it silently. All joined then in repeating six "Our Fathers", six "Hail Marys", and six "Glorias", followed by the reciting of "The Litany of the Blessed Virgin". After a few minutes spent in pious examination of conscience the monks filed out in pairs. They were sprinkled with holy water by the Superior as they passed him at the doorway and bowed a silent good-night on their way

to their cells. At this time all refrain from speaking, even to guests: "the great silence" leaves their minds wholly free to think of God.

I followed the procession and turning downstairs passed through the now darkened cloister to my room. At eight o'clock all lights in the monastery save my reading lamp were out; all sound except the scratching of my pen and the rustle of my notes were hushed; all inhabitants of the abbey were in bed except the guest. For two hours I jotted down impressions of the day and skimmed through the booklets left by my genial host. The hands of the "Big Ben" pointed to ten o'clock when I snapped off the light and settled down for a four-hour sleep.

It seemed that I had hardly closed my eyes when the raucous jingle of the alarm jerked me wide awake. Two o'clock! The Trappist's day had begun. I stepped across the pitch dark hallway to the bathroom and bathed my face in cold water to drive away the lingering desire to sleep another hour or two; then dressing hastily, I groped my way along the cloister and up the darkened stairway to the church.

The monks had already risen and had come to the chapel. Their morning toilet had been short, for they had slept fully dressed except that their shoes had been laid aside. The lay brothers were in their places and the choir monks, white-clad and ghost-like in their stalls, were intoning the opening verses of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin from mem-

ory. Save for the dim rays of the new moon which filtered faintly through the stained glass windows and the little tabernacle lamp that shed its reddish glow upon the altar, the church was in darkness. As the clock struck two-thirty the monks began half an hour of silent prayer that ended when the first faint light of early dawn began to make visible the objects within the chapel. At three the reading lamps were snapped on, the large Psalters were opened, and the chanting of Matins and Lauds of the Divine Office was begun. This lasted until four o'clock when each monk prostrated himself to say the Angelus. Then the lights were turned off and they all filed out, leaving the church silent and empty in the gray dawn.

A few minutes later a lay brother reëntered and went slowly to the altar, genuflected, and proceeded to light the two candles prescribed for low mass and a third for the missal. A hooded priest, followed by a second lay brother carrying the missal, approached the altar where he celebrated mass assisted by his brown-clad server. At the conclusion of the prayers that follow this sacrifice the celebrant and his server retired to the sacristy, and another choir monk and his assistant took their place to say a second mass. At the same time the other brothers in Holy Orders were celebrating mass in the smaller chapels across the hall and in the charming chapel beside the chapter room below. At these masses the lay brothers received Holy Communion.

When the masses were finished the monks returned to the church to recite Prime, both in the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin and in the Divine Office, which lasted some fifteen minutes. Then they descended to the chapter room to hear the Invitator read the Martyrology, to listen to a brief expounding of the Rule, and to say the "De Profundis" for their departed brethren. After this they departed to the dormitory to arrange their couches — a short and simple task. My watch indicated five-thirty. Three hours and a half had been spent by these pious monks in religious devotions before the rest of the world was stirring.

While the lay brothers descended to the refectory for their frugal breakfast of bread and butter and tea with milk and sugar, I wandered out to the east court of the enclosure to see the effect of the morning sunlight falling on the red and gray slate roof of the white walled monastery. Smoke curled up from the chimney of the bake shop and from the kitchen of the lodge where Brother Bernard had already prepared breakfast for the laborers. The grass was heavy with dew and the roses and peonies gleamed pink and white against the deep green of the hedges. No sound broke the stillness except the hum of the electric motor filling the stone-towered water tank of the abbey.

Soon Father Bruno appeared in the east door of the abbey to summon me to my breakfast, which he said was awaiting me in the dining room, and to tell

me that the next part of the Divine Office, Tierce, would be sung at seven-thirty and this would be followed by another mass. Thanking him I moved with alacrity to the dining room, for my early rising and subsequent experiences had whetted my appetite. The same brother who had served my evening meal the night before had placed on the table a breakfast of bread and butter, two soft boiled eggs, a plate of tender ham, and a pot of coffee with cream and sugar. Staying at a Trappist abbey as a guest, I thought, was a pleasure.

Breakfast finished I returned to my room to discover that it had been swept and dusted and the bed made during my absence. Shortly thereafter Father Bruno and Father Eugene entered, the former to answer some of my questions about the Order, the latter to offer to run me over to the Military Road in the abbey car when the time came to depart. We discussed the purpose of the monastic state until the chapel bell announced the hour for Tierce.

Once more I visited the church to hear for the last time on this visit the solemn chanting of the prayers and hymns that make up the Divine Office. The singing of the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm in Tierce that preceded the celebration of Holy Mass still rang in my ears as I returned to my room to pack my portfolio and my traveling bag.

Somewhat dazed by my experiences, I reflected that I had spent almost twenty-four hours with the Reformed Cistercians who practice daily at New

Melleray the austerities that originated at Citeaux in 1098 and follow the Rule proclaimed by St. Benedict from Monte Cassino about 535. Here in Dubuque County, Iowa, a few miles from the Mississippi, monks in the white robe of Citeaux and in the brown habit of St. Benedict tread the cloisters in silent prayer and spend their lives in a daily round of labor, prayer, and fasting in a quiet spot hard by a bustling city and modern countryside of the twentieth century.

As the morning sun mounted high in the heavens I took leave of my genial host, the good Father Bruno, and bade goodbye to Brother Bernard, he of the gentle mien. I climbed in the Hupmobile beside the white robed Father Eugene and together we climbed the hills and took the turns that led across the lands of the monastery to the Old Military Road. Over the smooth-topped, graded sections of this highway we rolled, past the old stage coach tavern and twelve mile house, past Fillmore Church and school, through the tiny village of Fillmore, up the long grade of a new section of the road leading to the narrow gauge crossing, and thence to the hill top east of Cascade.

"Yonder is Cascade, Father," I said.

"Ah, so soon," he responded astonished. "Indeed, I must be turning back."

He stopped the car and I alighted, thanking him for his kindness in bringing me back to my destination and for the courtesies shown me at the abbey.

He turned the car around and waving his hand started back to the monastery, eager to return to the daily round of prayer and work — to pray for a world that has almost forgotten how to pray, and to work not for himself but for charity. In imagination I heard the faint tones of the distant chapel bell calling back the absent monk to join his voice in the choir chanting the verses of the Divine Office.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## The Trappists in Europe

The Abbey of Our Lady of New Melleray, located some twelve miles southwest of Dubuque, Iowa, houses the monks of the Reformed Cistercians commonly called Trappists. The founding of this monastery amid the undulating hills not far from the Mississippi three years after Iowa became a State, constitutes a chapter of a story which extends through the centuries.

In the year 1098 a small band of monks, dissatisfied with the laxity of their brethren at Molesme, France, set forth to find a new home where they could follow, unmolested, a strict observance of the ancient Rule of St. Benedict. Led by their saintly Abbot Robert, their Prior Alberic, and their Sub-Prior Stephen Harding, and carrying with them only the necessary vessels and vestments for celebrating mass and a breviary, they came to the dense and cheerless forest of Citeaux in the Duchy of Burgundy. Here in a vast solitude they stopped to clear a space for a monastery. The Duke of Burgundy learning that some pious monks had settled upon his domain sent provisions and gave them cattle and land.

Within a year, however, Abbot Robert was ordered by the Pope to return to Molesme where the

monks were clamoring for his restoration. Alberic succeeded him as Abbot at Citeaux and Stephen Harding became Prior. Under their jurisdiction the white habit with a black scapular was adopted — probably to contrast with the Cluniac monks — the meals were reduced to meager proportions, and lay brothers were introduced in order to permit the choir monks to devote more time to the Divine Office. These reforms, together with the practice of silence and strict observance of the Rule, have characterized the Cistercians through the ages.

With the death of Alberic in 1109 Stephen Harding became Abbot, and, according to the Cistercians of to-day, he was the true founder of the Order. He promulgated the "Charter of Charity", a collection of statutes containing wise provisions for monastic government which are still followed, and applied the rule of poverty to the community as much as to the individual members. During the dark days when it appeared that the glory of Citeaux would fade for lack of postulants, it was he who had the honor of receiving St. Bernard into the Order with thirty of his followers, friends, and relatives, many of whom were of noble birth.

The entrance of St. Bernard and his companions into the ranks of the Cistercians in 1112 was a signal for extraordinary development of the Order. It increased rapidly, branch monasteries were founded, and many congregations came under their rule. The

white-frocked monks acquired wealth through donations, and by their agricultural labors and economy — riches which they expended for the instruction of their followers, for charity, and for the extension of the Order. Travellers spoke of their hospitality. Their intellectual efforts produced manuscripts; their zeal helped spread the Romanesque and Gothic architecture throughout Europe; and they cultivated the arts of engraving and painting. This period of swift and brilliant development was the golden age of their history.

Then came a decline due to many causes. The disorders attendant upon the Hundred Years War led to a relaxation of discipline within the monasteries; the widely scattered abbeys made the visits of superiors increasingly difficult; and the practice of appointing "abbots in commendam" or abbots who might receive the revenues of the office without, perhaps, ever visiting the abbey over which they were supposed to rule, permitted habits of comfort to creep in, far from the intentions of the holy founders. Religious strifes, too, resulted in the formation of branches of the Cistercians.

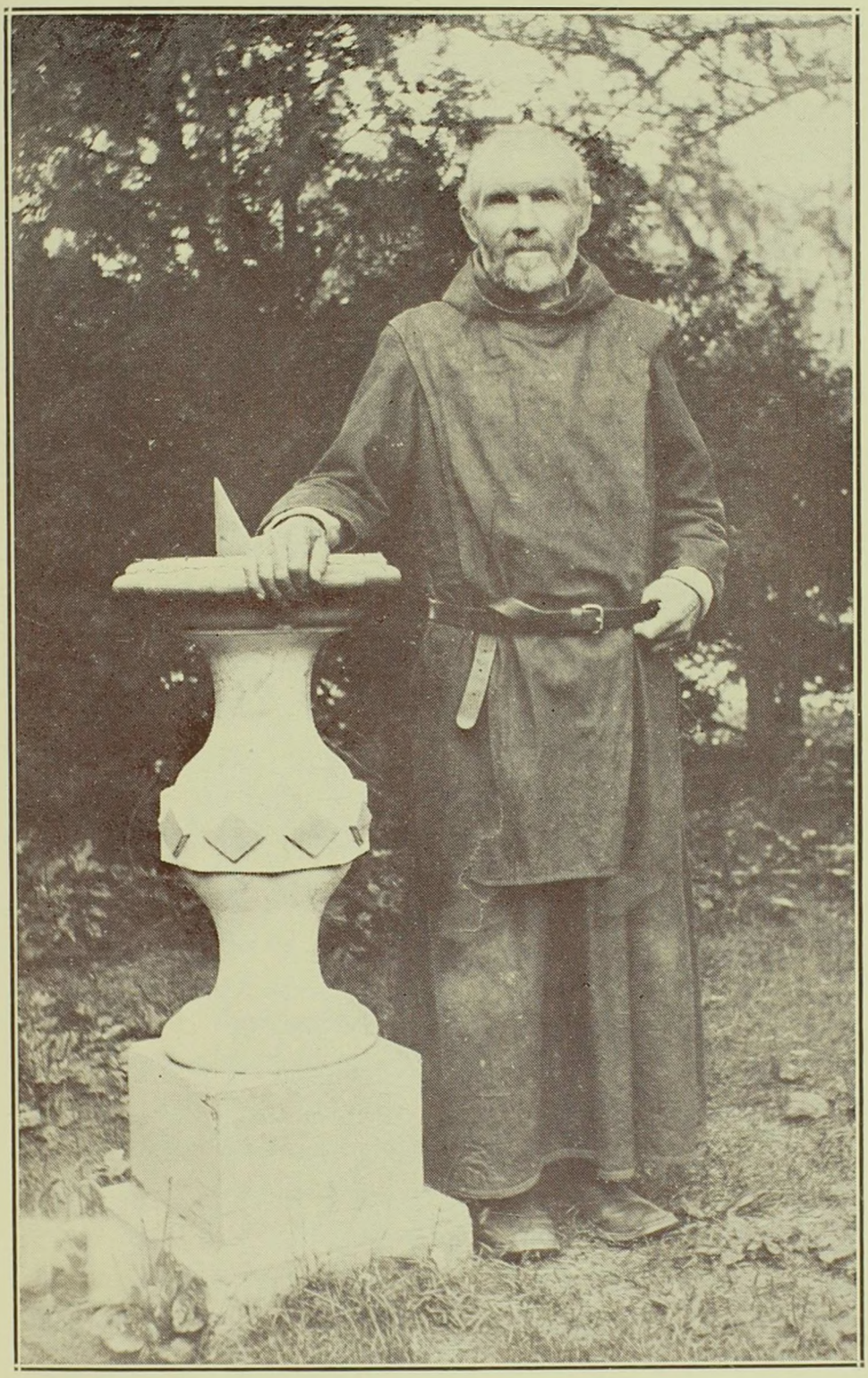
Reform, however, was not far distant. The Abbé de Rancé (1626–1700) after a brilliant start in the world gave up his honors and his fortune and retired to the lonely solitude of the Abbey of La Trappe in the present Department of the Orne near Normandy. There as Abbot he succeeded in re-

instating an observance of the Rule of St. Benedict and the practices of the early Cistercians. The news of the piety and fervor of the monks at La Trappe spread throughout the monastic world. Just as the reforms of Citeaux had earlier restrained the growing laxity among the followers of St. Benedict, so now the reforms of the Abbé de Rancé brought the Cistercians back to their former glory. Thus the term "Trappist" has become indicative of extraordinary sanctity and austerity among the followers of the Order.

Next, the French Revolution played a part in the ancestral history of the Trappist abbey in Iowa. When the wrath of the Constituent Assembly fell upon the monasteries of France in the confiscatory decree of 1790, La Trappe was no exception and the next year beheld the monks scattered, the monastery buildings thrown down, and the land left uncultivated. In this state the abbey remained until it was repurchased and reinhabited after the overthrow of Napoleon.

One group of the monks at La Trappe fled to Switzerland under the leadership of Dom Augustine de Lestrange where they secured the ancient, deserted monastery of Val Sainte (Holy Valley). Here they followed again the austerities of La Trappe, and the Order prospered until the wars of Napoleon again made them wanderers.

In the meantime filtrations of monks had gone out



BROTHER TIMOTHY IN THE GARB OF A LAY BROTHER

from the mother house of Val Sainte to other parts of Europe. The Abbot of Val Sainte turned his attention to Canada also, and plans were made to establish a monastery there. In 1794 a band of monks under the leadership of Father John Baptist proceeded to London on their way to the New World. Although the English laws against Catholics and religious orders were still in force, this band of Trappists was received and protected by the British government under the pretense that they were French exiles. Their friendly reception in England caused them to abandon the Canada project and the monks settled down in a monastery built for them near Lullworth.

Here they remained from 1796 until 1817. Many Irish and English postulants joined the Order and the Abbot, unwilling to conform to the governmental warning to receive only French novices, obtained permission from the French King, Louis XVIII, to return to France. The Abbey of St. Susan of Lullworth was therefore abandoned and the community, numbering some sixty monks, embarked on July 10, 1817, aboard the frigate La Ravanche, which had been loaned them by the French King.

A month later found the community settled in the deserted monastery of Melleray in the Province of Brittany. Its buildings had survived the storm of the French Revolution and, although the lands were held by different owners, Dom Antoine, the Abbot,

secured a new home for his followers, partly by purchase and partly by donations.

But peace was short lived. The revolution of 1830 in France which deposed Charles X and placed the "Citizen King", Louis Philippe, on the throne engulfed the monks of Melleray Abbey in difficulty. They were accused of plotting against the new monarchy, of harboring Irishmen and Englishmen hostile to the new King, and of rebelling against the new régime. Accordingly, the expulsion of those monks under governmental suspicion by the French authorities left only a handful of French monks at Melleray, while the rest, embarking on a sloop of war, the Hebe, at St. Nazaire set sail for Cork, Ireland, where they arrived on December 1, 1831. For many years the abbey at Melleray languished but at length it revived and to-day is one of the greatest monasteries of the Order.

Before the storm had burst upon Melleray, Dom Antoine had sent emissaries to Ireland to seek a location in anticipation of the expected expulsion. Through their efforts a site was secured in the County of Waterford, near the town of Cappoquin, where the land was cleared and a monastery erected. Thus was established the Abbey of Mount Melleray, the mother house of the abbey in Iowa.

The Trappist abbey in Ireland prospered, and grew in numbers so rapidly that in 1835, even before the new abbey was completed, it was necessary to

send a few brethren to England to found another monastery. For a few years the overcrowded condition was relieved but scarcely more than a decade had elapsed before the population of Mount Melleray had again outgrown the monastery. It was in this exigency that the Abbot, Dom Bruno Fitzpatrick, turned his attention across the Atlantic, as a possible location for some of his monks.

Bruce E. Mahan

## The Abbey in Iowa

Toward the end of July, 1848, Father Bernard McCaffrey and Brother Anthony Keating set out from Mount Melleray to seek a new home in America. They inspected a site in Pennsylvania but it proved to be unsatisfactory and the mission failed. During the following January two more emissaries were sent to find a desirable location for a monastery in the United States. They were as unsuccessful as their predecessors.

When it seemed that further efforts to establish a branch of the Mount Melleray community in the New World would be futile an unforeseen incident turned the whole trend of events. Early in 1849 it happened that Bishop Loras of Dubuque, who was travelling in Europe, paid a visit to the Abbey of Mount Melleray and, learning of the unsuccessful attempt to found a Trappist monastery in America, offered the Abbot a tract of land in Dubuque County. Dom Bruno decided to accept the offer if the situation appeared suitable and wrote at once to Father Clement Smythe and Brother Ambrose Byrne, his representatives in America, to view the land. Father Clement sent Brother Ambrose to examine the tract, who, after a careful inspection, decided that the place met the requirements. Remote from the noise and distractions of the world yet it was suffi-

ciently near a city for all necessary intercourse; it was located in an attractive setting of hills and timbered valleys and had an abundant supply of water.

The generous offer of Bishop Loras was therefore accepted and Abbot Bruno set out for America accompanied by Father James O'Gorman and Brothers Timothy, Joseph, Barnaby, and Macarius. They arrived by way of Dubuque, and on the sixteenth of July, 1849, Abbot Bruno of Mount Melleray, Ireland, laid the foundation of New Melleray, Iowa. Father James O'Gorman was appointed Superior and Abbot Bruno returned to Ireland, leaving the small band of pioneer monks housed in a small frame building.

Work began immediately upon the construction of a monastery to accommodate the expected emigrants from the mother house. On the tenth of September, 1849, sixteen more members of Mount Melleray left for the new home in America. They sailed from Liverpool and disembarked at New Orleans. Thence they proceeded up the Mississippi by steamboat to Dubuque. Six of the group died of cholera on the river trip and were buried at different spots along the bank.

While part of the community engaged in breaking the prairie for the next year's crop, the others devoted the time not occupied by their religious duties in building the frame abbey which still stands in a good state of preservation. Work on this building

was pursued diligently during the fall and it was consecrated and occupied on Christmas day of 1849. Neither the sad fate of the brothers who had died on the trip nor the hardships of the journey prevented a third detachment of twenty-three from coming to New Melleray in the following spring. Thus in the course of a year the new monastery had relieved the congestion in the mother house and had begun a vigorous existence with nearly forty members in the new State of Iowa.

During the next ten years careful attention was given to improving the estate, which was enlarged by the purchase of an additional tract of five hundred acres. The prairies were broken and prepared for the seed that yielded bountiful harvests. The land was fenced and stock was purchased. Agricultural development was slow, however, for there was no revenue except from the sale of surplus products. Paying for the land, buying farm implements and stock, and building farm improvements exhausted the yearly income.

After the first decade, however, the community began to prosper. The land was fenced and under cultivation, over a hundred head of stock of the better breeds grazed in the extensive pastures, and the treasury showed a surplus. The brothers began to plan improvements. The year 1861 saw the erection of the mammoth barn — a two-story frame building fifty feet wide and three hundred feet long built on a limestone foundation. It was capable of holding

three hundred head of stock and a thousand tons of hay. Twice since it was built disastrous fires have destroyed the superstructure. Only last spring the great barn was burned to the ground leaving the strong foundation still unharmed upon which the structure will be rebuilt.

The sale of cattle during the Civil War was so profitable that the monks decided to use the money in fulfilling the long cherished wish to build a monastery which would be a worthy reflection of the zeal and piety of the Order. The plans provided for the erection of four large stone buildings in Gothic style around a rectangular court one hundred feet wide and two hundred feet long. Each wing was to be approximately thirty feet wide and thirty feet high with a gable roof of red and gray slate, cupolas or belfrys, ornamental buttresses, vaulted ceilings, and pointed arches for windows and doors. Ground was broken on March 8, 1868, and the building was occupied in 1875. Only two of the four wings have been finished, and the rough ends of limestone blocks still await the hoped-for day when a sufficient increase in new members will make it necessary to complete the monastery.

The north wing contains the dormitory, sacristy, and three small chapels above; the guest rooms, tailor shop, library, wardrobe, and storeroom below. The east wing houses the church above, while on the first floor are the chapel — dedicated to the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin — and the chapter

room. An extension to the north contains the study rooms for the choir brethren, the water-tower, and the bath rooms. The refectory, scullery, and kitchen are located in the basement, while the cloisters extend around the inside wall of the two wings.

The improvements outside the enclosure include a saw mill, a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop, cement feeding-pens, a corn crib, cow barns, and wind mills. The farm buildings are well constructed, painted, and equipped with modern appliances. In agriculture and stock raising the brothers are still leaders in the neighborhood.

A red brick parish church, situated about three hundred yards from the monastery on the road leading to the main highway, affords a place of worship for the neighboring farmers most of whom are of the Catholic faith. One of the monks, Father Placid, serves as the parish priest.

Amid these surroundings the Cistercian monks or Trappists perform their daily round of labor, prayer, and meditation. For seventy years the ancient austerities of Citeaux and La Trappe, modified somewhat by the Holy See and the Constitution of 1902, have been practiced in Iowa.

When Abbot Alberic of New Melleray died in 1917 after a rule of twenty years Father Bruno Ryan was appointed Superior. The Abbot wears no insignia of his rank except a plain ring on his finger and a simple cross of wood suspended from a violet, silken cord about his neck. He has no better food,

wears no richer dress, nor has he any softer bed than other members of the Order. He presides in the chapter room, assigns employments, and imposes penances. He sets an example of piety; while on his business judgment and that of his Procurator rests largely the temporal prosperity of the abbey. He is assisted in his many duties by a Prior and a Sub-Prior.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## The Life of the Trappists

At New Melleray to-day are found the two classes of monks that have characterized Cistercian abbeys since the earliest days of the Order. The choir brothers are men who have been well educated and have a careful knowledge of the Latin tongue. They are the priests of the community and those studying for Holy Orders. Their dress in choir consists of a long white woolen tunic with flowing sleeves, with a capoch or hood attached. When at work they wear a white woolen habit, a black scapular with a hood, and a leather girdle.

The lay brothers on the other hand — among whom are many representatives of distinguished families who prefer the humbler rank — are usually men of less educational preparation than the choir brothers. They do the farm work, the cooking, the baking, the tailoring, the laundry work, and the more menial tasks about the monastery, thereby giving the choir brothers more time to devote to the Divine Office. At religious devotions the lay brothers wear a long brown robe with a hood, and at work their dress is a dark brown habit and a leather girdle. Their hair is close cropped and they wear beards.

The novices or postulants are admitted to the monastery for a probationary period to try their

strength and desire to continue the life. If, after a trial of two years, they wish to persevere, they are admitted by a vote of the community and the first vows are taken. From three to six years later the final vows are made which seclude them from the world. During the novitiate period the choir brothers wear a white robe with a scapular and hood of white, and a girdle of wool instead of leather. Since the use of linen is forbidden to the monks all wear next to the body a light-weight undergarment of wool.

The idea that fasts and abstinences at New Melleray or at other Cistercian abbeys are perpetual hardships is largely erroneous. True, all in good health must abstain from flesh meat and fish at all times, but those who are weak or ill may have meat in the infirmary to repair their strength. Young men under twenty-one in the Order are not obliged to fast. The Trappists now partake of a light breakfast, a full meal at mid-day, and only meager refreshments in the evening. The food consists of vegetables, cereals, fresh bread and butter, milk, and cheese. Eggs are used in cooking and as a supplementary dish for those who have a special need. Fruit, too, forms an important part of the diet, and tea, coffee, and cocoa are used.

To an outsider the practice of perpetual silence seems harsh and austere, a means of penance and mortification of extreme difficulty. In practice, however, observance of the rule becomes relatively

easy, for a number of conventional signs are used to fulfill the common needs of communication. There are also certain exceptions. Any monk may always speak with his Superior. Others such as the Guest Brother, the Procurator, the farm boss, or those whose positions throw them in contact with outsiders have permission to speak. If necessary other members of the Order may obtain permission to talk. Nevertheless the monks feel that the practice is not a hardship but a blessing, believing with St. Ephrem that, "When there is silence in the mind, when the heart rests, when the hush of the world has breathed over the spirit, when the mind self-left, feels its loneliness, then comes the sweet and sacred communication with heaven."

Manual labor at New Melleray, both by the choir monks and the lay brethren, is one of the occupations of the community, but the amount is not excessive. Three to four hours daily by the choir brothers and twice as much by their brown-clad companions, equally divided between morning and afternoon, is the usual time spent at the various tasks of the Order. The distinction in the time allotted for labor is due to the fact that the lay brothers do not recite the Divine Office, although they share in the spiritual benefits derived therefrom and repeat privately a short Office of their own.

For several years the Abbey of Our Lady of New Melleray gave promise of becoming a flourishing community of the Cistercian Order, but of late years

the postulants and novices have been so few that the progress which characterizes the houses of the Order abroad has not been maintained. From fifty-four members in 1892 the number of monks has dwindled to twenty-four in 1922. When the visitor sees the extensive and well improved lands of the estate, the vacant cells in the large dormitory, and the empty stalls in the choir he wonders if this settlement of the Trappists in the Mississippi Valley will repeat the story of Citeaux. Will New Melleray Abbey, which now seems to languish, wax vigorous in the future, spreading its influence afar and contributing to a revival of monasticism?

Certainly the five young monks from Ireland who have added their strength to the community within the past year and an awakened interest on the part of some young Americans in the Order furnish a hopeful portent to the able Superior, Father Bruno, and to the aged monks who have held to the ideals of the Cistercians so persistently during the past quarter of a century.

Bruce E. Mahan

# Comment by the Editor

### TWO BY THE ABBEY BELL

Few people of their own accord arise with the sun, and fewer still retire at dusk. "To bed with the chickens" is a phrase of contempt; while the crowing cock is a discredited morning alarm. The hands of "Big Ben" instead of the sunbeam on the counterpane indicate the time for rising. It seems to be one of the perversities of human beings to prolong the night into the day and extend the day beyond nightfall. Only the inexorable necessities of life are sufficiently powerful to compel a person to face the toil of a new day. The dreadful experience is postponed until the last minute. Even an act of Congress proved unavailing, so the daylight saving law was repealed.

For nearly three quarters of a century the Trappist monks at New Melleray have been setting a steadfast example of daylight saving. No doubt they prefer God's light to human substitutes, but they outdo the sun in early rising. They reverse the usual custom and burn their candles in the morning.

On Sundays the Trappists arise at one instead of two — another reversal of common practice. There is an element of logic in this, however, when viewed philosophically. If one rises early on Sunday he may sleep late the rest of the week.

### THE USES OF ADVERSITY

The asceticism of the silent monks at New Melleray does not appeal to American youth. Religious zeal is not a prominent trait of the times. Monastic life in Iowa seems to be an anachronism. Seclusion is a characteristic of by-gone ages: now, one half of the world is determined to know how the other half lives. Communication between the ends of the earth is almost instantaneous, motoring across a continent is an epidemic, distance is well nigh abolished in fact as in theory, and the whole world is becoming cosmopolitan. When life is so full of adventure and knowledge is not all found in books, who wants to shut himself up in an abbey?

Yet monasticism has its advantages. Pledged to perpetual silence, to unremitting toil, to absolute poverty, to lifelong seclusion, and to intense religious devotion, the Trappist brothers probably experience a peace of mind impossible in the hurly-burly of the outer world. The attainment of spiritual aspirations, they are convinced, rewards the soul far more than the gratification of the natural instincts of an ephemeral life. While the nation is in the throes of war, while the politicians are puzzled with political problems, while laborers strike, while social customs come and go, there at New Melleray the disciples of St. Benedict remain, year after year — calm, devout, abiding. They are free from the turmoil of a nervous world.

### TRAPPISTS AND JESUITS

There are manifold methods of expressing spiritual fervor. Even among the monks there are several orders, each with its own set of vows and each with a different mode of living. Some, like the Trappists, are content with being good; while others, like the Jesuits, seek salvation in doing good. The former are chiefly concerned with themselves; the latter are pledged to carry the gospel to others.

As the annals of New Melleray Abbey are a part of the history of this State, so also the work of the Jesuits has a prominent place in the chronicles of Iowa. First came Father Marquette to explore the Mississippi and to preach to the Indians. He is the "Black-Robe chief, the Prophet" in the "Song of Hiawatha". That was in the reign of Louis XIV — in the glorious days of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. Many were the black robed priests who followed their brother into the Great Valley, suffering the hardships of long and hazardous voyages with only their consciences to guide them and the sign of the cross for protection. Around their names are woven the adventures and achievements of the first white men in Iowa. The story of their exploits in New France is as picturesque as the D'Artagnan romances across the sea.

J. E. B.

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