

are monks at prayer, and monks at work, and the intervals between these two engrossing occupations are cleverly filled up with presumed introspections, in which the monks are supposed to indulge at pleasure. This manifestation of a lively interest in one of our religious orders is gratifying to Catholic readers, who are used to have their feelings disregarded, and convinces us that a body of ascetics, the rigor of whose discipline the Church has been so slow to approve or encourage, is eminently favored, upon whose life and labors a profane writer for a profane journal in a sadly profane age, should bestow so much attention and so many suave encomiums!

But the leaven of the Pharisees which nineteen hundred years of Christian toil have failed to purge out of the world, rises, as we sit and ponder over the kindly interest which seems to have sprung up in men's carnal hearts, all at once, for those who have climbed up the steep heights of moral heroism, and what we took for tender human sympathy are cinders in the bloated hollow loaf. In the next number of *The Century* Mr. Allen writes a story which he calls *The White Cowl*, and he sketches the scene which is laid in Kentucky, and to those whose suspicions he had aroused he reveals his sordid and far-fetched designs.

He has formed the commendable resolution of re-humanizing the de-humanized contemplatives. His morbidly sensitive soul writhes at the thought of the dreadful discord which exists between those self-emasculated slaves of a blind fanaticism and the sensuous exuberant beauty of the Southern June day which is shedding its dazzling yellow sunshine in luxuriant profusion upon the fruitful fields and teeming gardens of the desolate cloister. The thrilling, quivering love notes of the brilliant-plumaged orioles and the cadenced whisperings of the happy drowsing insects, fall harshly, Mr. Allen thinks, upon the "thorn-hedged" ears of a white-cowled Adonis whom he has brought out in vivid relief against a background of golden sunrays and velvet foliage and "lettuces and onions and fast-growing potatoes (?)". He is a manly, sinewy, blue-eyed Adonis, too, but having steeled his young heart against all mundane influences he must, Mr. Allen thinks, be necessarily wan and wistful looking, with the count-

less smothered cravings of his terrene nature overshadowing an otherwise handsome face. And, he is young! The harassing restrictions of the cloister, the cold severity of its punishments, the silent night-watches, the interminable fastings and prayers have not yet extinguished the glowing fervidness of youth within him, and so Mr. Allen, realizing what a splendidly audacious thing it would be to work upon the vulnerable spot in the character of this interesting recluse, proceeds to do so, but in a very common-place and exceedingly disappointing fashion. The custom of amplifying and elaborating the story of Adam and Eve in the terrestrial Paradise, to suit the ever-changing tastes and requirements of successive generations, has fallen into a blessed disuse, and the theory that a woman is at the bottom of every evil is happily no longer a theory, but a truism. Sensible women have admitted that woman's influence, like a great many other good things, is susceptible of the vilest abuse, under certain circumstances and conditions; but these circumstances and conditions are too well known to the world of readers to make them successful elements of a nineteenth century love story. Mr. Allen, however, with the engaging innocence of a child, plucks the same old crimson-hued apple, and despatches the same fair tempter on the same old errand, which, not to destroy the similitude, I suppose, turns out an exact counterpart of its predecessor, by two thousand years. The white cowled Adonis becomes enthralled by a woman who acknowledges that she may be a devil, but he is entitled to an extenuating consideration. Mr. Allen has been pleased to pick him out of the sullied recrement of society, and by an ingenious process, of which no one knows anything but himself, transports him into the clean and sunlit walks of life without the least apparent difficulty. Here, according to the recognized order of inevitable issues, he is overtaken by a swift-footed retribution which drags him down to his original level when the first evil impulse moves him. Mr. Allen might have made a fairer choice without robbing his rare tale of any of its toothsome-ness, for a morally sound religious, with the same temptations would have been a far more interesting study than the poor sin-engendered, sin-begotten wretch, whose virtue, if he ever had any,