

## A RETREAT AT LA TRAPPE.

W. L. Scott, LL. B., in the Catholic World.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

And now I have, as far as space will permit and words allow, described the Trappist and his daily life, yet the sketch gives no just idea of the actual man himself. The reader has doubtless pictured him as unsociable, gloomy—even perhaps morose and severe. Nothing could be further from the truth; and this is one of the greatest of the many surprises awaiting one at La Trappe. He is the very picture of peaceful happiness and contentment, nay even of gaiety, and his smiling bow, when he meets you by chance in the corridor or on the farm, is so friendly and sociable that, though he may never address a word to you during your visit, yet when you leave you feel that you are parting with a friend.

The Trappist, too, is an enduring and conclusive answer to the objector who, when fasting and other forms of penance are spoken of, cries out against the sin of voluntarily injuring one's health. The Trappist rule is of all rules the most severe, and of the novices who attempt to enter the order a large proportion are forced to withdraw before completing their novitiate. Yet of those who persevere the majority are strong and healthy, are rarely ill, and live to an extreme old age. At the time I last visited Oka there had been only two deaths in the community in the eleven years that had then elapsed since the establishment of the monastery, and the one death I have since heard of was due to an accident. The latter case was that of a novice who had both legs taken off by some machinery with which he was working. He lived only long enough to receive the last Sacraments, and to pronounce his final vows, which he begged to be allowed to do in order that he might die a Trappist.

But what has become of the "retreat," the subject of this article? I fear I may be accused, and with some apparent reason, of deviating from the proper subject of my paper. Yet do I not plead guilty to the accusation; for the impression created by much of what I have been endeavoring to describe forms, in my opinion, by far the most important factor in the success of the retreat. To go to La Trappe and see its inmates—see their piety, their mortifications, the holy peace of their lives; hear their heartfelt prayers and their exquisite chants, and experience the saintliness which is stamped on all their actions, and which seems to pervade the very air you breathe in common with them—all this, even with nothing else, is calculated to create an impression more vivid and more lasting than any other form of religious exercise I have experienced. But there is much else besides this. The conducting of private retreats is the direct way—their constant prayers and their powerful example being the indirect—in which they give spiritual succor to the outer world; and one of the first questions you are asked on arriving is whether you intend to make a retreat. On answering in the affirmative the abbot assigns you a spiritual director, who will thenceforth do all in his power to aid you in reaping abundant benefits from your visit. One of his first pieces of advice will doubtless be that you are not to attempt to follow the fasts of the monks, or indeed to fast at all; but that you are to eat three good meals a day, in order that you may not be distracted or disturbed in your devotions by the endeavor to practise severities to which you are not accustomed. He will then lay down a little rule of life for your guidance, conforming more or less to the general rule of the house. In the matter of getting up in the morning you may largely consult your own inclinations. If you do not pro-

pose to attend the various offices in the chapel you need not get up till five; but I would strongly advise any one with any knowledge of Latin to follow all the offices with the monks, and your director will lend you a breviary for that purpose. The prayers laid down by the church for the daily use of her priests can hardly be improved on; and the beauty of the words is, as I have already said, immeasurably enhanced by the touching pathos of those pious voices. It would, however, be useless to attend the little office of Matins and Lauds at two, as the chapel is in total darkness, and you could not therefore follow the text. I was told I might have my own lamp lighted during this office, but my little light down at the foot of the chapel seemed such a desecration of the holy darkness that I put it out and never brought it again. The best hour to get up at is half-past two. This gives one half an hour to dress, and be in the chapel at three for the commencement of the canonical office. Half-past two sounds rather startling as an hour for rising, but it must be remembered that one goes to bed at seven, which gives seven hours and a half for sleep.

The most important office performed for you by your director is what he calls preparation for meditation. Three times a day he comes to your room and spends half an hour in an instruction which practically amounts to a sermon preached for your special benefit. When he leaves you you go on your knees and meditate for an hour on what he has said. This sounds alarming, and is certainly difficult at first. I shall not soon forget my first experience of it. I went carefully over all the points in the discourse, amplified them, enlarged on them, found the floor getting very hard and my knees very sore, felt that I must have been kneeling for at least an hour, and thereupon looked at my watch, to find that I had been on my knees just fifteen minutes! But that was only the first time, and one soon gets used to it; and I need hardly say what a very excellent practice it proves to be. Then there is free time which one can spend in private devotions, in walking over the farm, or else, if so inclined, in giving a helping hand with whatever work is just then going on.

Of the interior delights—the spiritual joys and consolations of the retreat, how can I speak? Let them rather be imagined by my readers, or better still, experienced by those of them who are fortunate enough to be able to do so. One thing I will say. It has frequently been declared, and I firmly believe it to be true, that no one can go to La Trappe and return home unchanged. The change wrought by your visit may be greater or it may be less, but it will be sufficient to mark an epoch in your life. You will have received an impression too profound to be easily, if indeed ever, effaced. They tell of a young man, not many years ago, a votary of fashion and pleasure and an unbeliever, who, seeing a Trappist on the street, and being attracted by his peculiar dress, was led from pure curiosity to pay a visit to the monastery of Aiguebelle, in France. Struck by what he saw he decided to remain, first for a day, then for a time sufficient to allow of his instruction and reception into the church, and finally for his novitiate. He has never passed out of those gates he entered so lightly on his mission of curiosity, and is still a happy inmate of the monastery of Aiguebelle.

And now for a few practical instructions as how to get to the monastery. N. D. du Lac is situated on the road between Oka and St. Eustache, and may be approached from either of these points. St. Eustache is a station on the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, but is eighteen miles from the monastery. Oka, the better objective point, is on the Ottawa River, and

may be reached in summer by steamer either from Montreal or Ottawa, or at any season via Como, a station just across the river on the Montreal and Ottawa Railway. From the village of Oka to the monastery is an easy walk of about three miles; or if you do not feel inclined for walking, you may get a lift on one of the abbot's farm-wagons if one chances to meet the boat, or a conveyance may be hired for a reasonable sum. If you go it would be advisable, though not perhaps strictly necessary, to write to the abbot beforehand to ask when it will be convenient to receive you, as guests are many and the accommodation, though considerable, is of course not unlimited.

You will be received as a guest, and absolutely no charge will be made for the accommodation afforded you. Nevertheless, as the monks have had a hard struggle to pay for their new monastery and other improvements, and are extremely poor, I would strongly urge a donation, in keeping with your means, to the funds of the community.

And now I must bid a reluctant farewell to the Oka monastery and its silent but saintly and happy inmates. Yet not, I trust, without having awakened in my readers some slight interest in this most interesting of religious orders. Would that I could, moreover, hope through the medium of this imperfect sketch to be the happy means, under God, of inducing even one of my readers to partake of the spiritual feast which I have found awaiting me on both the occasions when I have been happy enough to enter on "a retreat at La Trappe."

## A Famous Burglar.

Charles Peace thoroughly deserved to be crowned king of all burglars, house-breakers, and scoundrels in general. Peace always worked single-handed. He had no "receiver," and melted down all his own stuff and sold it as a matter of business. All his stock-in-trade is to be found at the museum. His tools are 10 in number, and comprise a skeleton key, two pick-locks, a center-bit, a large gimlet, a gouge, a chisel a small vice (for turning keys on the outside of doors—used when people leave the key in the lock), a jimmy (about two feet long), and a knife. With these Peace worked. His blue spectacles and case are missing. These he used for purposes of disguise, though when arrested at Blackheath his face was stained with walnut juice in the hopes of passing off as a mulatto. His ladder was quite a unique arrangement. When doubled up it is to all outward appearances simply a bundle of blocks of wood such as any carpenter might carry home for firewood. But it opens out to a length of some 13 feet, working on a bolt with a hole at one end to hook on to a nail in the wall, and so complete facilities were afforded for climbing to window or verandah. In addition to his tools he called into requisition a pony and trap at night. He practically killed the pony with hard work. His false arm was a unique idea. He was minus the forefinger of the left hand, and after he left Sheffield on November 29, 1876, his description was posted at every police station in the country. So he made himself this arm, which he placed in his sleeve, hanging his violin on the hook when engaged in walking about and taking stock of "crackable" residences, and screwing in a fork in the place of the hook for use at meals. So for sometime like two years the irrepressible Peace walked this earth short of a hand, while the police were looking for a man short of a finger!—*Strand Magazine.*

"The flowers that bloom in the spring" are not more vigorous than are those persons who purify their blood with Ayer's Sarsaparilla. The fable Elixir Vitæ could scarcely impart greater vivacity to the countenance than this wonderful medicine.

## Obituary.

Mr. Frank J. McDonald, whose death at Pueblo, Colorado, at the age of 21 years and seven months, was announced in a recent issue, was the only child of the late John J. McDonald, Esq., contractor, well known throughout Canada. His education was begun with the Jesuits at St. Mary's College, Montreal, and continued at Mount St. Mary's, Chesterfield, England. Having spent three years at this celebrated Catholic Seminary, he passed successfully his matriculation examination, and then began the study of medicine at Edinburgh University. Unfortunately, owing to ill health, he was obliged, before the close of his second year, to give up his studies and return to his home in Ottawa. After spending some months there under the most careful medical care, and finding that he was not gaining strength, he was advised to try the climate of Colorado; so, in January last, he went to Denver, and some weeks later to Pueblo, where he died on the 29th of April. Death came rather suddenly in the end, and was a great shock to all his friends, his being confined to his room only three days. His remains reached Ottawa from Pueblo on the 3rd ult., and were taken to the residence of Mr. Roger Ryan, where his friends looked sadly on the youthful face, in which there was scarcely a change since, full of hope of his recovery, he bade them farewell three months before.

The funeral took place on Friday, the 4th instant, at St. Patrick's Church. Solemn High Mass was sung by the Rev. Father Whelan, P.P., and thence to the Catholic Cemetery, Ottawa, where the remains were interred beside those of his father, who died fourteen months ago. The pall-bearers were Messrs. Emanuel Devlin, Roger Horstzky, Alex. Brophy, N. Murphy, C. Kavanagh and C. Bangs.

The deceased had a most winning and cheerful disposition, was manly and kind-hearted, and possessed the faculty of making friends wherever he went. It is sad to record the death of one so young and with such opportunities for a useful life; but it is a great consolation to his friends and relations to know that he died fortified by the Sacraments of Holy Church—his dying request was that Masses might be said for the repose of his soul.

The REGISTER tenders its sympathy to friends and relatives, among whom are his recently widowed mother and his aunts, the Rev. Mother Superior of Loretto Convent, Hamilton, Mrs. Wilson of Toronto, and Mrs. H. Gray.

## Catholic Order of Foresters.

St. Joseph's Court, No. 370, enters upon its second year with very bright prospects. At the regular meeting held last Thursday the reports of the various officers for the year ending April 30th showed that while a large amount of work had been accomplished the affairs of the Court financially were in a satisfactory condition. Brothers out of employment had been assisted, and others who had been on the sick list could testify to the promptness with which their benefits were paid. With regard to the latter item it might be said that the sick benefit by-law, as amended by the high Court, affords the members privileges unequalled by any other society, and gives universal satisfaction throughout the entire Order. The membership has steadily increased, so much so that a new hall had to be secured, which will be ready for occupation about the end of June.

A contingent from Sacred Heart Court visited the Court early in the evening for the purpose of witnessing the installation of officers. The D. H. C. R., Bro. Bachand, who conducted the ceremony, was ably assisted by Bro. Pape. The officers for the present year are as follows: Chief Ranger, Joseph Cadaret; Vice Chief Ranger, Wm. Mitchell; Recording Secretary, John J. Howorth, 30 Brooklyn ave.; Financial Secretary, Richard Howorth; Treasurer, Walter F. Brooks; Trustees, Thomas Finucan, Thomas Kirby; Sentinels, James Finucan, Joseph Kirby; Representative, John M. Quinn; Alternate, Oswald Pape; Medical Examiner, Dr. Wallace; Chaplain, Very Rev. Dean Bergin.

The Chief Ranger's address was attentively listened to, as it showed evidence of careful preparation. In touching upon events which had taken place during the past year, he said that while not wishing to discriminate, he yet could not let the occasion pass without commending the officers for the zeal displayed by them in the performance of their duties.

A deputation from Sacred Heart Court extended an invitation to participate in the annual excursion, which takes place at an early date. A committee was appointed to work in conjunction with the visiting Brothers; and as an early start is being made, this excursion promises to be what it ought to be—a pronounced success.

A very profitable evening was brought to a close with prayer by the Rev. Chaplain. The next meeting takes place on the last Thursday in May. JOHN J. HOWORTH,

Rec. Secretary.