

These Votaries of Silence Are Cheerful and Contented.

One scarcely would look for cheerfulness among those votaries of eternal silence, the Trappist monks. Everybody has heard of their great monastery in Kentucky, where, isolated from the world, the Trappists yet minister by their labors to its welfare, and of the silent and austere life they lead. There are several monasteries of this order in the world, and in all of them the monks are said to be an extraordinarily cheerful and contented lot.

Herbert Vivian, who writes of them in his "Romance of Religions," says: "It is true that they get up at 2 in the morning; that they limit their meals to a small allowance of vegetables, washed down with spring water; that their days are devoted to manual labor, relieved only by frequent intervals of prayer; that they sleep on bedsteads of planks and straw; that their thoughts are constantly centered upon their latter end, and that there is no relief for their hardships, even when at the point of death, when, as a last, most signal object lesson, they are removed from their straw and laid upon a heap of ashes. Yet they are, nevertheless, as contented and cheerful a lot of people," he says, "as can be found among the most zealous pleasure seekers."

He declares that while prisoners who have been condemned to silence and seclusion generally have gone mad, the Trappist monks find that their vows of silence confer a fresh zest upon their chants in church and upon all their devotional exercises, and it is certainly a fact that they enjoy extraordinary health and spirits and generally attain to a good old age.

Upon the death of one of the monks, his body, borne on a rude wooden bier, with his brown cloak as his only winding sheet, is placed in the center of the church. Some half dozen candles in tall wooden candlesticks are lighted around him, and the brothers take turns in praying beside him, never leaving the body alone until the time comes to place it in the grave which it has been one of the dead monk's duties to dig for himself while yet alive. And yet these people, of whose life and death the bare recital gives the ordinary man the blues, are described as jolly, happy, full of spirits and contentment. It certainly does take all sorts of people to make a world.

Sight in Man and Lower Animals.

Dr. G. L. Johnson, whose studies of the eyes of mammals have recently been published in The Philosophical Transactions, calls attention to the fact that men and monkeys alone possess parallel and convergent vision of the two eyes. On the other hand, the lower mammals possess divergent and consequently very widely extended vision. Squirrels, for instance, and probably hares and rabbits as well, are able to see an enemy approaching directly from behind without turning the head.

Littleness.

"It's a small village."
"So small they call a shop a store?"
"Oh, smaller than that. They call a store an emporium."—New York Sun.

Hard to Get a Book.

An Irritating Experience in a Boston Library—Rules for Lending to Unknown Borrowers Bothred the Stranger in Town, Who Feared He Was Doomed to Serve a Term in Jail.

"Well," said the reflective looking man. "I tried to get a book out of the Boston Public Library once, and it honestly looked to me for awhile as if I was going to get juggled."

"I was up in Boston on a couple of months' business, and I took up my quarters at a boarding house in the Back Bay district. I had my evenings to myself, and as there isn't much worth speaking of going on down town in Boston after dark I soon began to feel the need of reading material. I remembered the name of a certain book that had been recommended to me and tried to get it at the Boston bookstores. I couldn't get it, however, because it was out of print long ago. So one afternoon I hiked over to the Boston Public Library to see if I couldn't get the book."

"Have you got such and such a book?" I asked the gloomy looking man at the library desk.

"Yes, we have it," said he suspiciously.

"Good," said I. "I'd like to read it."

"Um—you would, eh?" said the man behind the desk. "Very well."

"He got out a pile of blanks and handed me one of them to fill out. It contained about as many questions as a census schedule ascertaining to the iron and steel industry. As a matter of fact the blank differed in no essential particular from the blank handed to applicants for civil service examinations. I had to give my name in full, age, habits, occupation, residence for the past fifteen or twenty years, state of my health and all that sort of rubbish, and it took me a good twenty minutes to digest that bunch of questions and fill in the answers. Then I pranced up to the desk with the filled up blank and patiently waited another twenty minutes for the solemn looking cuss to pay some attention to me. I handed in the carefully prepared blank to him.

"There you are," said I cheerfully. "I did the best I could with it. Now would you mind getting the book or sending for it for me, for I've got a lot of things to attend to before dark."

"Um—you don't get the book today, you know," said the sulky looking chap behind the counter. "Just leave this blank with me, and your case will be attended to."

"But," said I, "don't you issue books to the public here, and if you don't what have I been spending all this time for filling out that blank?"

"You shall ascertain the reason later on," said the man, with stern reproof in his tone. "We shall perhaps be ready to issue the book to you some time tomorrow if you call around then."

"Well, I was so sore that I clomped out without saying anything more. It was all beyond me the way that library was run, and I determined to let the book slide and to forget all about that repository of printed knowledge as soon as possible.

"I was sound asleep in my boarding house bed at 11 o'clock that night, and I guess everybody else in the house was in bed, too, when there came the most infernal ringing of the front door bell. The ringing was so angry and determined that I slid out of bed upon being awakened and went to the stair landing and rubbed down below to see what the trouble

was. The landlady finally slipped on a bathrobe and went down to answer the bell. When she opened the door, my heart came into my mouth when I saw dimly in the doorway the huge form of a gigantic cop, and when he inquired of the landlady in a deep, gruff bass. "Is there a man named Ta-ra-rum living here?" mentioning my name—say, wouldn't that have deterred you?—I fell into a tremor and began to wonder what I'd been doing, anyhow, to get the law after me. I hadn't been up to any criminal devilment that I was aware of, and yet there was a big cop inquiring for me, and there was a donjon keep staring me square in the face.

"Yes," replied the landlady, "there is a Mr. Ta-ra-rum living here." And I could see her freezing solid over the business. It was 10 to 1, I figured then, that she would conclude that I was a celebrated counterfeiter or confidence man or some sort of a crook that the police were after and that, even if I managed to evade an arrest, she would order me out of her house in the middle of the night.

"Oh, very well," said the cop more mildly to the landlady; "library, you know." And then he executed a swift disappearance into the darkness.

"Now, I've always believed that the best way to meet trouble is to go right after it and give it a bug when it comes your way, and so I slipped on a bathrobe myself and went to meet the landlady as she came up stairs.

"Madam," said I, "I overheard your colloquy at the door with that guardian of the law, and I heard my name mentioned. I am not conscious of having violated the law in any respect, but I feel compelled in case you have conceived any suspicion of me to freely volunteer to give up my room here. You would be wholly mistaken in supposing that you were harboring a criminal, yet I dislike to put you to any inconvenience."

"Then the landlady held on the banisters and laughed loud and long. It was about ten minutes before she was able to control her voice sufficiently to tell me that I was simply a victim of the Boston Public Library's method of investigating its applicants for reading material. Every night the library issued to the police department, she said, the filled in blanks of those who applied during the day for books, and these blanks were sorted over and given out to the cops on the various beats. It was a part of the duty of the policemen to ring up the addresses given by the applicants for books and thus to ascertain if they actually lived at the addresses they gave. And it was this that came so near to giving me the heart disease finish. I never went back to the Boston Public Library after that book; was afraid they might handle me and lock me up in the coal cellar and never let me out again in this life."—Washington Star.

Built on Skeletons.

Richmond, Va., is built over a stratum of what was once a mass of living forms. This deposit has been examined to the depth of more than a hundred feet and extends over an area of more than two miles in diameter. Every cubic inch of this deposit contains the skeletons of 10,000,000 of tiny forms.

If wisdom was to cease throughout the world, no one would suspect himself of ignorance.

The Five Stages Through Which This Weapon Has Passed.

While peering around one of the many old curiosity shops down on Fourth avenue, where are to be found all sorts of interesting curios, I saw a row of five swords hanging on the wall differing in shape and workmanship and apparently placed where they were for some special purpose.

"See," said the proprietor, who showed pleasure because I seemed interested, "that tells the story of the stages that the sword has passed through in its evolution. I divide it into five distinct parts. See that first one on the left, shorter than the others and broader at the point. It came from a ruin in southern Italy and represents unadorned barbarism. It was for sanguinary use and tells us of the epoch of carnage. It was hand to hand and throat cutting in those days.

"Then comes a longer and more elaborate sword that was carried in the days when legends were born and is credited with feats that it never performed. It was called 'good sword' and 'trusty sword' in those days, and, although it did some good work, it was more of a badge (telling of the wonderful things that the owner might do if occasion should require).

"Here is the third one, with its handle in the form of a cross, that tells us of the feudal time and of the piety that prompted the crusades and the killing of the Saracens for a sentiment.

"Then we have this more slender blade that tells us of the days of fencing and of when gentlemen all carried swords as a mark of station and for offensive and defensive purposes when occasion required.

"And here is the last chapter in the eventful history, showing a sword that is a mere military accoutrement, without any idea of being used for any purpose other than a badge of rank. Its glory has departed, its end has come, for it is now being discarded even as an emblem of military authority and will be known only in song and story."—New York Herald.

WONDERS OF THE ALPS.

The Most Impressive Features Neglected by Guidebooks.

Myriads of British and American tourists are year after year delighting themselves with the grandeur of Alpine travel. Nothing in the world's history is more impressive than the story of the Alps. Ten or twelve million years ago, possibly far more, a long unseen line of weakness, a crack or fissure in the earth's crust, stretched away from France eastward hundreds of miles. On this line followed huge volcanic outbursts.

Next ensued a vast slow subsidence which went on through geologic epochs until where Mont Blanc now rears its summit 15,780 feet was a sea fringing an old continent. Large rivers emptied into it. Deposits of mud, sand, gravel, were laid one on another as the sinking went on until the layers became 50,000 feet, nearly ten miles, thick. Then at last commenced a great uplifting. The struggling subterranean forces raised a huge load.

For ages this went on until the rocks, crumbled, crushed, contorted, rose above the waters and continued to rise, forming lines of mountain chains and making Switzerland a tableland. Every hour since then rain and snow, river, glacier and avalanche have been sculpturing into peaks and carving into lakes and valleys that vast platform with its recent sediments.

mentary covering and primeval granite core.

The result is a land of unequal grandeur. Find you this in the guidebooks? Not a word of it. Yet Professor Judd in his charming "Volcanoes" (Kegan Paul) told the tale years ago in half a dozen pages. Would not the traveler look on the Matterhorn, the Jungfrau, the stupendous Spigen, the massive Gothard, the Mer de Glace, the deep lake of Geneva, with quickened interest had he this story before him? And it can be told so easily, but 'tis not there.—London Telegraph.

A Story of Stevenson.

After one of Dumas' plays which he saw presented in Paris and in which a man employs an unworthy stratagem against a woman Robert Louis Stevenson wrote:

"I came forth from that performance in a breathing heat of indignation. On the day when the Francis stairs I trod on an old gentleman's toes, whereupon, with that suavity which so well becomes me, I turned about to apologize and on the instant, repenting me of that intention, stopped the apology midway and added something in French to this effect: 'No, you are one of the persons who have been applauding that piece. I retract my apology.'"

"Said the old Frenchman, laying his hand on my arm and with a smile that was truly heavenly in temperance, irony, good nature and knowledge of the world. 'Ah, monsieur, vous etes bien jeune' (Ah, sir, you are very young)."

Willie Knew a Way.

Four-year-old Willie found a new way to keep a promise the other day. His older brother John hid their sister Nellie's doll and told Willie not to tell where it was. Nellie came in later and asked Willie where it was.

"I promised not to tell you," the little fellow replied.

"Oh, please tell," pleaded Nellie.

"No; I can't tell you, Nellie," replied the boy, "but I will tell mamma, and you can listen."—New York Mail and Express.

Working Under Water.

Submarine divers have not yet succeeded in reaching 200 feet below the surface with all the advantage of armor, air supply and weights to sink them. The effort has been made to reach a wreck in 240 feet of water. The accounts state that at 120 feet the diver began to experience serious trouble. At 200 feet, after suffering terribly, he lost consciousness and was hauled up. Divers cannot work much below 100 feet.

Her Shape.

Kitty—My dressmaker says it is such a pleasure to fit a gown on me.

Edith—Considers it a sort of artistic triumph, I suppose. The true artist delights in difficulties.—Boston Transcript.

Landed.

Agnes—Well, Ferly has finally proposed. I knew he would.

Ethel—Why, you said you thought he had no intention whatever of proposing.

"Well, he didn't have."—Tit-Bits.

Many a man's success is due to the fact that he never attempts to do anything beyond his ability.—Chicago News.

The Juvenile Idea.

A teacher, says the Boston Transcript, had been reading to her young pupils an account of a man "who had lived for some years upon the frontier." When the story was reproduced by a child, to the teacher's surprise it read that he had lived for some years "on his front car."

Another teacher read that a gentleman "had occupied for some time a fine country seat." Upon asking the children what was meant by a "country seat" a dead silence reigned till one little fellow said he thought he knew and to the inquiry of the teacher replied, "A milking stool!"

Still another had been reading to her pupils about the rain. Asking one of them to write a little story about the rain, he, after declaring his inability to do so, upon the teacher's insistence produced the following: "What does the rain say to the dust? 'I am on to you, and your name is mud!'"

Rossetti and His Visitor.

Toward the latter part of Rossetti's life he rarely left his house and garden. He depended upon a close circle of friends for society and in his own way was a sociable man, but he preferred to see his friends and acquaintances by appointment, and voo twice the too intrusive stranger.

One day an enterprising man called who was duly armed with a letter of introduction, and the servant was nearly yielding to the impulsive stranger, where upon the painter of "Dante's Dream" leaned upon the banister and said in firm, mellifluous voice, "Tell the gentleman that I am not at home."—Lippincott's New Magazine.

Dealing in Futures.

Mr. Newed—I have an option on that Blank avenue house. How would you like it for our home, my dear?

Mrs. Newed—Oh, it's a pretty place, but you know it is said to be haunted. Mamma says she wouldn't set her foot inside the door for any amount of money.

Mr. Newed—That settles it! I'll close the deal for the first thing in the morning.—Chicago News.

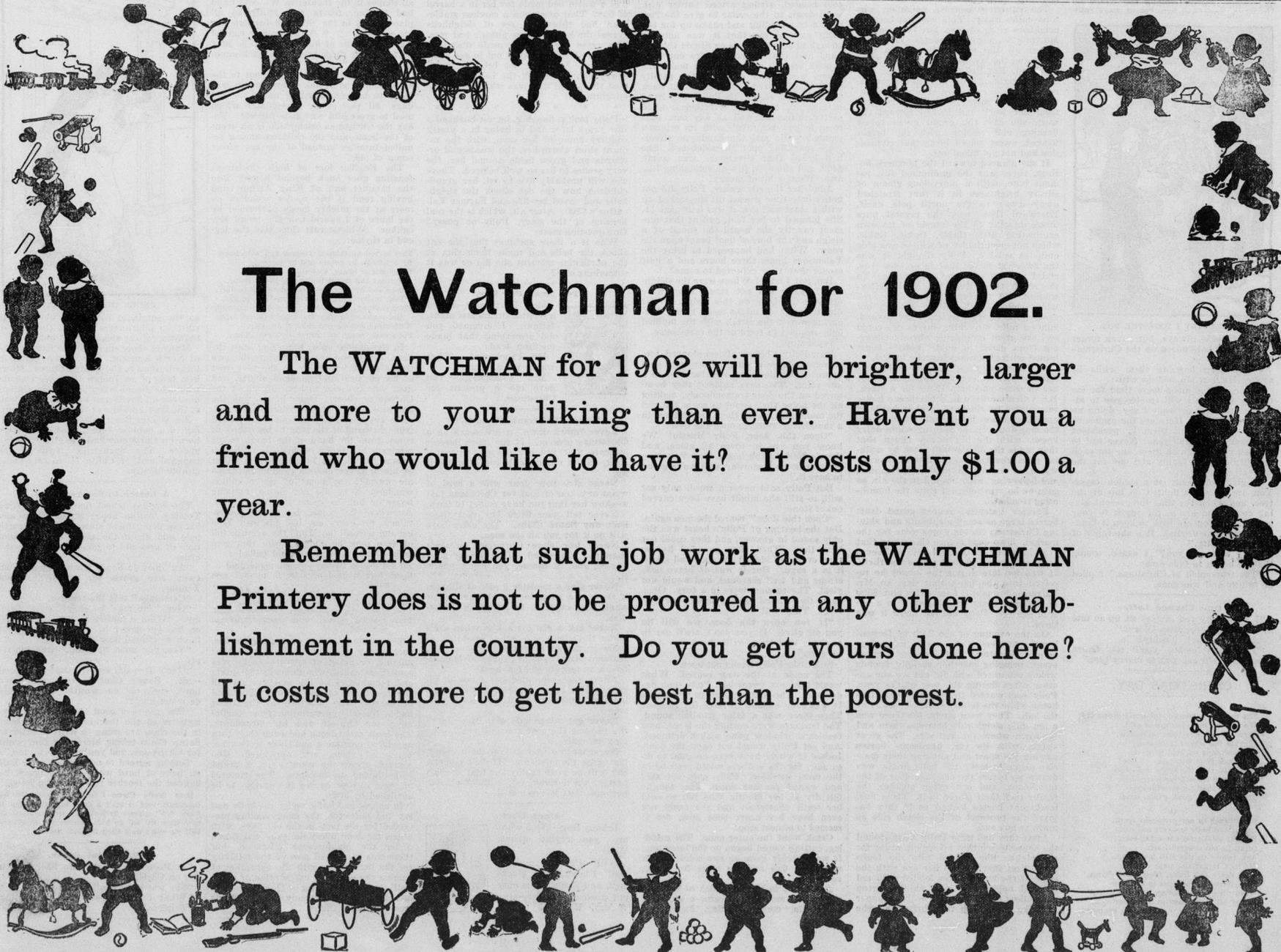
Combination of Ideas.

Little four-year-old Mabel coming into the room one day and finding the baby with the end of the doorknob in his mouth exclaimed, "Baby, take that key right out of your mouth or the first thing you will have the lockjaw."—Glasgow Times.

"The Candle on the Plate."

"The year that I lived in Chicago I noticed one night in passing through the Polish Jew quarter something I have since seen elsewhere," writes the Rev. David M. Steele in 'The Ladies' Home Journal.' "It was 'the candle on the plate.' A man dies, and for want of means to pay the rent his family is to be turned out on the street. The widow sets a plate on the pavement before the door and puts a lighted candle on it. For the length of time that it will burn it is a summons to the neighbors passing by to put in nickels, dimes and pennies, which invariably they do, until a fund is raised sufficient to save the family from eviction. Would the same thing happen on the Stock Exchange if a bank failed?"

Every man desires happiness not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of providential good faith.—Life.



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