

F.A. Gasquet. English Monastic Life. Methuen & Co. London, 1904.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE DAILY LIFE IN A MONASTERY —continued

#### 8. THE HIGH MASS

The daily "*Magna Missa*" —the Conventual, or High Mass—began at ten o'clock. The first signal was given by the ringing of a small bell some short time before the hour ; and forthwith, on the first sound, the juniors and novices laid aside the tasks upon which they were engaged. All book were at once replaced on the shelves of the aumbry in the cloister, and then the monks waited in their places till the second signal. On this being given, talking at once ceased, and the religious made their way to the church. Meanwhile, on hearing the first signal, the hebdomadarian, or priest, who had to sing the Conventual Mass, and the other sacred ministers, after having again washed their hands "to be ready to fulfil their functions at the sacred altar with fitting purity" of body and mind, made their way to the sacristy to vest for the service.

The community having entered the choir and taken their places, the senior members nearest the altar, the prior, who was up to this time waiting outside the door of the church, gave the sign for the tolling of the bell to cease. As he did so, he himself entered the choir and took up his position in the stall nearest to the presbytery steps and

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opposite to that of the abbot when he was present. If Tierce had not already been said at the time of the morning Mass, after the usual silent Pater and Ave, the superior made a signal for that Hour "by rapping with his hand upon the wood of the stall." Whilst the community were engaged in the recitation of the Office, the ministers were completing their preparation in the sacristy, and when it was over, if the day were a Sunday, the priest came into the choir for the solemn blessing of the holy water. He was preceded by the thurifer bearing the processional cross between two candle-bearers, and was accompanied by the deacon and sub-deacon in albs. Two vases of water had been prepared on the first step of the presbytery by the church servers, and thither the procession went for the weekly blessing of the holy water. The cross-bearer mounted the steps and then turning somewhat to

the north, stood with his face towards the priest ; the deacon assisted upon the right hand of the celebrant and the sub-deacon on his left. The solemn blessings of the salt and water were then chanted by the priest, the whole community answering and taking part in the service. When the exorcism and blessing of the salt was finished, the sub-deacon, coming forward, took a little of it on a smaller dish and handed it to the priest to mix with the water. The rest of the blessed salt was then taken by one of the church servants to the refectory, whose duty it was to see that a small portion was every Sunday placed in every salt-cellar in the refectory.

After the blessing of the holy water came the *Asperges*. The priest, having given the book of the blessings to one of the servers, received the aspersorium, or sprinkler, and dipping it into the vat of water, went to the altar, and

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after having sprinkled the front of it thrice, passed round it, doing the same at the back. Meanwhile the vat-bearer with the holy water awaited his return and then accompanied him as he gave the *Asperges* to all the religious in the choir. At the abbot's stall the priest paused, bowed, and presented the sprinkler, so that the superior might touch it and sign himself with the newly-blessed water. When the abbot had finished the sign of the cross, the priest passed down the ranks of the brethren, sprinkling them with the water, first on one side and then on the other. If a bishop were present in the choir, he was treated with the same special reverence shown to the abbot, and to him the blessed water was to be taken first. When all the brethren had received the *Asperges*, the priest accompanied by his ministers went to the choir gates and sprinkled those of the faithful who were in the body of the church.

After this two priests, accompanied by two of the brethren, proceeded to take the holy water round the house. One pair went through the public rooms and offices of the monastery sprinkling them and saying appropriate prayers in each. The other mounted to the dormitory and did the same for each bed and cubicle, and returning through the infirmary, gave to each of the sick brethren the same privilege of receiving the holy water, which their brethren in the church had had.

Whilst this was being done by the two priests and their associates, the community, under the direction of the precentor, passed out of the choir into the cloister for the Sunday procession. First walked the bearer of the holy water which had just been blessed. He was followed by the cross-bearer walking between two acolytes carrying

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lighted candles. Then came the sub-deacon by himself with the book of the Holy Gospels, and behind him the priest who was to celebrate the Mass accompanied by his deacon. These were succeeded by the community, two and two, with the abbot by himself at the close of the double line. Ordinarily the procession passed once round the cloister, the monks signing the Responsories appointed for the special Sunday. In greater feasts there was more solemnity, for then the

community were all vested in copes, which had been brought into the choir by the church servers and distributed to the monks after the *Asperges*. On these occasions, as also on the Sundays, the Hour of Tierce followed, instead of being said before the blessing of the holy water. On the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent also, and on the Rogation days, there were processions ; but these were penitential exercises, and on such occasions the community walked barefooted round the cloister.

If the day was one of the solemn feasts, upon which the abbot celebrated in pontificals, he was vested by the sacred ministers before the altar in the sacristy, whilst Tierce was being sung in the choir. At the conclusion of the Hour he entered with due solemnity, being met at the door of the choir by the prior and others, and he took his seat upon a throne erected before his stall in the upper part of the choir until the procession was formed. The abbot only celebrated at the High Altar on these great feasts ; and never except with full pontifical ceremonies, if he had the right to use pontificalia at all.

In most monasteries several times a year—four or more, according to customs and circumstances—there were exceptionally solemn processions with relics and banners.

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On these occasions every care was taken to make the religious pageants worthy of the best traditions of the monastery. Such processions would be preceded by the vergers of the church with their maces of office ; and the community, all vested in copes, walked in couples with some four feet between them and between the next couple. Every here and there a single individual walked in the middle carrying an appropriate banner ; and at intervals the great shrines, which were the special pride of the house, or the chief notable relics, were borne by the requisite number of religious clad in sacred vestments. At the close of the procession came the abbot in full pontificalia, assisted by his sacred ministers. Finally, following the church servers, walked the *janitor* of the church, or “door-keeper,” “who,” according to one Custumal, “was to raise his rod well above his head, to warn the people who pressed on after the procession, to stand farther away.”

There were the ceremonies preliminary to the High Mass on Sundays and on the greater festivals. Ordinarily speaking , the conventual High Mass would begin either directly after Tierce, or if that Hour had been already recited at the time of the early Mass, immediately the community had entered the choir, and the cessation of the bell-ringing had given notice that the prior was in his place. The two juniors appointed by the cantor had meanwhile taken the graduals and psalters from the presses in the choir, and had distributed them to the seniors, juniors, and novices according to their needs. The cantor of the week, also, had by this time put on his cope, had chosen a book, and had taken his stand at the lectern to be ready to lead the singing. The High Mass

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then commenced and went on as usual till after the Blessing. At the Offertory the prior or some of the seniors brought the oblations to the altar and gave them to the celebrant. On Sundays, after the Blessing, the hebdomadarian priest gave the usual benedictions to the weekly reader, who had come forward from his place in choir to the steps of the presbytery to receive it. The Gospel of St. John was said after the priests and the ministers had reached the sacristy and were standing before the altar there, whilst the community were leaving the choir for the next conventual duty, or were unvesting, if they had that day worn copes or albs.

If the abbot celebrated, the ceremonial was somewhat more elaborate. The prior made the oblation at the Offertory, and assisted the abbot to wash his hands after the incensing of the altar, and before the Post-Communion at the end of the Mass. If the abbot had been taking part in the procession, at the end of it, when the religious returned to the choir for Tierce, the abbot returned to the sacristy, accompanied by the ministers, where he took off his cope and put on the dalmatics and chasuble for the Holy Sacrifice, waiting in the sacristy till the signal was given for beginning the Mass.

## 9. THE DINNER

Dinner followed Mass directly, with only a brief interval for the washing of hands. As a rule, the midday meal would be served about eleven o'clock. The reader and servers were permitted to take some slight refectio beforehand ; and for this purpose could leave the church before the conclusion of the service with the rectorian and kitchener. On Sundays, however, the reader had to

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wait till after he had received the usual weekly blessing, but he might then go straight from the altar to take his bread and wine.

Just before the close of the service in the church, the prior came out into the cloister and either himself began to sound the signal for the dinner, or caused someone else, appointed for the purpose, to do so. If through any accident the meal was not quite ready, or, as one Customal says, "if the bread be still in the oven," it was the duty of the kitchener to wait for the coming of the prior and to inform him of the delay, so that the signal might not begin to sound before the cook was ready. In this case the community, upon coming out of the church, after they had performed their ablutions, sat as patiently as they could in the cloister till the signal was given. Ordinarily, however, the bell began to ring at their coming out of the choir, and continued to sound whilst they were preparing themselves for the meal, and, indeed, until all were in their places.

The prior, or the senior who was going to preside at the meal if he were absent, remained at the door of the refectory, and gave the sign for the bell to cease ringing when all was ready. Whilst waiting here, the various officials who had to make any communication to the prior about the meal, or ask any permission appertaining to their office, came to make their reports or proffer their requests. For example, the infirmarian had now to notify the names and number

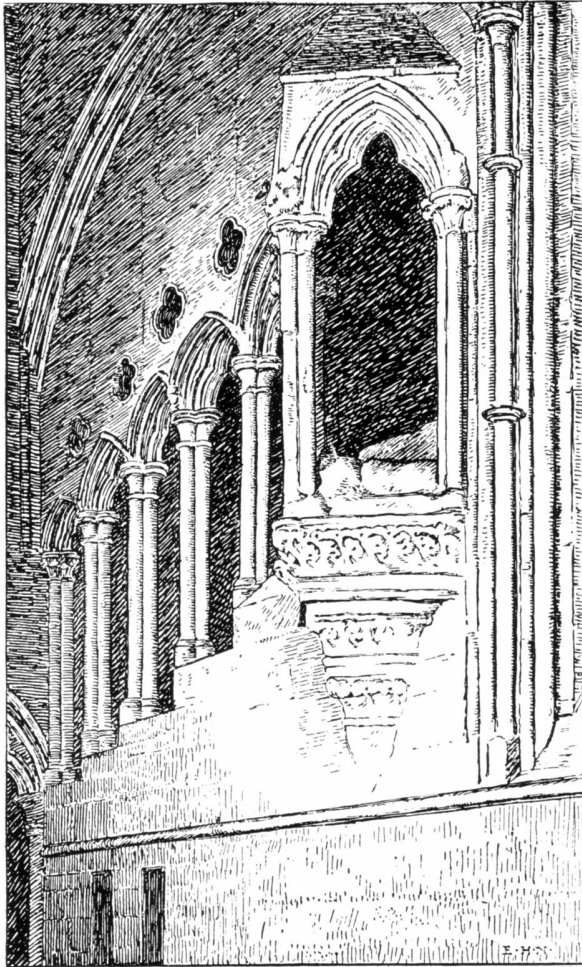
of the sick under his charge, or to ask permission for some one of the brethren to dine with them. The guest-master would do the same in regard to his guests, and on the great feasts when the abbot had pontificated, he would frequently send his chaplain to

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the prior or presiding senior, when thus standing at the entrance to the refectory, to acquaint him that he had invited the sacred ministers who had assisted him in the function, to dine at his table. In some places also, on every fish-day, the cellarer acquainted the prior at this time what provision he had made for the community meal, in order that the superior presiding might judge whether there ought to be anything further supplied to the religious, by way of a *caritas*, or extraordinary dish.

The monks on entering the refectory were directed to pause in the middle and salute the *Majestas* over the high table with a profound bow. They then passed to their places to await the coming of the superior. If this was delayed they could sit down in their places till the bell, ceasing to ring, told them that the superior had given the sign for his entry. They then stood in their ranks and returned the bow he made to each side as he came into the hall. If the abbot dined in the refectory, each monk also individually saluted him as he passed up to his seat. The usual Grace was then changed, and the prior, or whoever presided, gave the blessing to the reader, who came forward into the middle of the refectory to ask for it. Whilst the community were sitting down in their places at the table, the reader mounted the pulpit and opened the book at the place he had already prepared. When all was quiet the superior sounded the small bell at his table as a sign that the reader might begin ; and, when the first sentence had been read, he sounded it a second time for the commencement of the meal. That the interval between the two bells might not be over long, the reader is warned in some monastic directions to make choice in all refectory reading of a short sentence as the first.

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REFECTORY PULPIT, CHESTER

Illustration: Refectory Pulpit, Chester

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The monk who read one week had to serve the next, and during his week of reading he was never to be absent from his duty except with grave cause. For example, if he were to be invited during his week of offices to dine at the abbot's table, he was to excuse himself and say that he was the conventual reader. The reason assigned is obvious : the reading had to be carefully prepared, and was besides a labour ; so that to ask anyone to take the duty unexpectedly would mean not only that he would have a burden placed upon him, but that the community would not have proper respect paid to it, in having to listen to reading that had not been prepared previously. One common and useful direction given to the refectory reader is, that he was not to hurry. The quantity he got through was immaterial compared with distinct pronounciation and careful rendering. Any specially noteworthy passage should be repeated so as to impress its meaning upon the hearers.

When the second signal had been sounded by the president's bell, the brethren uncovered their loaves, which had been placed under their napkins, arranged the later, and broke their portion of bread. At the second signal, too, the servers began their ministrations. In some of the greater houses, at the beginning of the meal, two juniors, one from each side, took their goblets and spoons and came to the table of the presiding superior. Here they took up their places, standing at either end of the table, unless the superior should invite them to sit. These junior monks were to act as the special servers of the religious presiding in the refectory. They were to assist him in his wants, to anticipate them if possible, and to act as his messengers should he require them to do

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so. On first taking up their position, the senior of the two was directed to cut the superior's loaf in two for him, the other was to fill his goblet with the beer or wine served to the community. These two assistants at the president's table had to eat their meals as they stood or sat, as the case might be, at the ends of the high table, and were to be helped immediately after the president himself.

When the sign for beginning the meal had been given, two other juniors, one on each side of the refectory, rose from their places, and, receiving the jugs of beer or wine from the cellarer or his assistant, proceeded to fill the goblets set before each of the religious. When this was done they asked permission from the superior, by a sign, to fill the measure of drink intended as the convent's charity to the poor. Meanwhile the servers had gone to the kitchen-hatch to bring in the dishes. These were taken usually first to the superior, and from this dish the two juniors serving at his table were helped ; then, should there have been any one of the brethren lately dead, his portion, to be given to the poor, was served out into a special dish. Finally, in many places, two dishes were taken by the servers to tables on each side of the refectory ; one to the top and the other to the bottom and so passed along the tables, the monk who passed the dish, and he to whom it was passed, bowing to each other with ceremonial courtesy.

In some houses the method of serving was somewhat different ; the portions were served separately, having been previously divided under the directions of the kitchener or refectorian. When the first dish was pottage, the serving always began with the youngest member of the community, the superiors receiving his last ; in

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other cases the first dish was always taken to the superior's table. The servers were exhorted always to attend to their work, not to keep standing about the kitchen-hatch, and much less to stop gossiping there ; but to watch carefully and even anxiously for any sign that might be made to them by the brethren.

In some Customals there were minute directions for the serving. Those who served the brethren were not to rush about, nor stand aimlessly in one place, nor gossip with the kitchen-servers even about the dishes they received. They were to watch to supply what was wanted ; they were to serve with decorum and

with patience, as if, indeed, they were waiting upon our Lord Himself ; and, they should not attempt too much at a time, as for example, to try to carry in more dishes, etc., than they were well able to do. As a rule, they were to be contented to use both hands to carry one dish.

During the service of the first course, the reading was to proceed uninterruptedly ; but when the community had finished eating it, a pause was made until the second course had been set on the table. Meanwhile, at some religious houses at this point in the dinner, the poor man selected that day to receive the alms of the community, or as the recipient of the portion of a deceased brother during the thirty days after his death, was brought into the refectory by the almoner. His share was given to him, and one of the juniors helped him to carry his food to the door. At this point, too, that is, after the first course, if there were not many to serve, permission from the superior was to be asked by a sign for one of the two servers to sit down and begin his meal.

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The second course was served in a way similar to the first. Many and curious are the directions given as to what the monks might or might not do according to the code of medieval monastic manners. The regular food, for example, was not to be shared with anyone, as, indeed, all had received their own portion ; but if anything special or extra was given to an individual, except for sickness, then he might, and indeed would be considered wanting in courtesy if he did not, offer to share it with his two neighbours. These neighbours, however, were not to pass it on. If the superior in his discretion sent a brother some extra dish, the recipient was directed to rise and bow his thanks. If the dish came from the table of the abbot, when out of the refectory, he who received it was still to bow towards the abbot's place as if he were present. If it came from anyone else than the superior, the recipient had to send it by the server to the senior presiding in the refectory, that he might, if he so pleased, partake of it, or even dispose of it altogether according to his pleasure. If any mistake was made in serving, or if by any accident something was dropped or spilt on the tables or ground, the delinquent had to do penance in the middle, until the prior gave a sign to him to rise, by rapping on the table with the handle of his knife.

Some of these hints as to proper decorum at table seem curious in these days. No one was to clean his cup with his fingers, nor wipe his hands, or mouth, or knife upon the tablecloths. If he had first cleaned the knife with a piece of bread, however, he might then wipe it on his own napkin. The brethren were exhorted to try and keep the tablecloths clean. Stained clothes were to be washed without delay ; and to avoid stains, all soft and

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cooked fruit was to be served in a deep plate or bowl. Every care was to be taken not to drop crumbs upon the floor ; salt was to be taken with a knife, and the drinking-cup was to be held always in both hands.

When the prior, or the senior presiding at the table in his place, saw that the monks had finished their repast, he knocked upon the table with the handle of his knife, as a sign for the collection of remnants intended for the poor. The two juniors appointed for this purpose then came forward, each carrying a basket, and bowing in the middle to the superior, passed down each side of the refectory, collecting the pieces of bread and anything else that the religious had placed in front of them as their individual alms. Whatever portion of bread any monk desired to keep for the evening meal, he guarded by covering with his napkin. Any loaf or part of a loaf, left uncovered after the dinner was over, was claimed by the almoner, as belonging to "the portion of the poor" at his disposal.

When the two juniors had finished their task, the prior rapping the table a second time, gave the sign for the servers to collect the spoons and knives, and take them to the kitchen hatchway to be removed for washing in the place set aside for that purpose. Meanwhile, the monks folded their napkins and waited silently for a third signal, upon which they rose from their places and took up their position for Grace, facing each other on the inner sides of the tables. When they were ready in their ranks, the reader who was waiting in the pulpit, at a sign from the prior, sang the usual conclusion of all public reading : "*Tu autem Domine, miserere nobis,*" the community answering "*Deo gratias.*" Then followed the chanted

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Grace, which was concluded in the church, to which the community went in procession, during the signing of the *Miserere* or other psalm.

The officials and religious who had been occupied with serving, stood on one side at the end of the meal, and as the brethren went out from the refectory they bowed to them, to show their reverence for the community in its corporate capacity. The servers then went to the lavatory and washed their hands in preparation for their own meal. The refectorian remained behind when the community went out of the refectory, so as to see that all was ready for the second table. At this second meal the cellarer generally presided ; and one of the junior monks was appointed to read whilst it was being eaten by the servers and by all those who for any reason had been prevented from dining at the first table.

## 10. AFTER DINNER

The community dinner would probably have taken about half an hour ; and by the time the monks came from the church after finishing their Grace, it would have been about 11.30 in the morning. The first duty of the monks on coming into the cloister was to proceed to the lavatory to wash their hands again—a not wholly unnecessary proceeding in the days when forks were unknown, and fingers supplied their place at table. At Durham a peculiar custom was observed by the monks each day after dinner on coming from the church. They betook themselves to the cemetery garth "where all the monks were buried ; and they did stand all bareheaded, a certain long space, praying among the tombs and graves for their brethren's souls being buried there." If None had already

been said in choir, the community had now several hours to devote to reading or work, or both. If that canonical Hour had yet to be said, then the religious, after their ablutions, took their books and sat in the cloister till the monks at the second table had finished their meal, when the signal was given, and all went to the church and recited None together, returning to their occupations immediately afterwards, by which time it would have been about midday.

After washing his hands on coming out from Grace, the prior, or the senior who had presided in the refectory in his place, was directed in some houses to go and satisfy himself that all was well at the second table, and that those who had served others were themselves well served. From the refectory he had to go to the infirmary to visit the sick, and to see for himself that their needs had been properly supplied. When these two duties had been fulfilled, it was the custom in some places for the prior on occasions to invite some of the seniors to his room for a glass of wine, to warm themselves in winter, and for what is called in one Customal "the consolations of a talk." When the prior was not present, the presiding senior was allowed to invite some of the brethren to the *domus recreationis*—the recreation room. At certain times and on certain feasts the whole community joined in these innocent and harmless meetings.

At this same time the juniors and novices with their masters were permitted with leave to go out into the garden and other places to unbend in games and such-like exercises proper to their age. In this way they were assisted when young to stand the severe strain of cloister discipline. Without the rational relaxation intended by

such amusements, to use the simile constantly applied to these circumstances, "as bows always bent" they would soon lose the power of "aiming straight at perfection."

The monk, it must be remembered, was in no sense "a gloomy person." There is hardly anything that would have interfered more with the purpose of his life than any disposition to become a misanthrope. His calling was no bar to reasonable recreation. In fact, the true religious was told to try and possess *angelica hilaritas cum monastica simplicitas*. Thus at Durham we read of the greensward "at the back of the house towards the water" where the younger members of the community played their games of bowls, with the novice-master as umpire. On the stone benches, too, in the cloisters at Canterbury, Westminster, Gloucester, and elsewhere, traces of the games played centuries ago by the young religious may still be seen in the house and squares set out symmetrically, and oblongs divided by carefully-drawn cross-lines. Sometimes we read of hunting, contests of ball, and other games of chance. Archbishop Peckham was apparently somewhat shocked to find that the prior of Cokesford, in Norfolk, at times indulged in a game of chess with some of his canons. In other houses he found that dogs were kept and even strangers' pets like apes, cranes, and falcons were

retained in captivity by the religious. It is difficult to draw the exact line by passing which monastic gravity is supposed to be injured, and so there was, no doubt, constant need for regulation on all these matters. But some such amusements were necessary, and by them, the tension of long-continued conventual exercises was relieved. The monastic granges to which from time to time the religious went for a change of scene and life

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were most useful in this regard and enabled them to recreate their strength for another period of service.

In the disposition of the early part of the afternoon, some slight changes had to be made between the winter and summer observance. In summer, immediately after the dinner, the community retired to the dormitory for a sleep, or rest, or an hour's duration. This was the rule from Easter till the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in September, and all the community were bound to observe the hour for repose if not for sleep. The period of rest, thus allowed at midday, was taken in reality from the night. During the summer the times for vespers, and supper, and bed were each an hour later than they were in the winter months, when the light failed earlier. This hour, by which in summer the sleep before Matins was shortened, was made up by the rest after dinner. During the same period, except on vigils and such-like days when None was said before the dinner, that canonical Hour was recited after the midday sleep. On the signal for the termination of the hour of repose the religious came from the dormitory and, having washed, sat in the cloister till the notice was given to proceed to the church for None, which at this time of the year would have been finished some time between 12.30 and one o'clock.

## 11. DAILY WORK

The chief working hour in a medieval monastery, including a period for recreation and outdoor exercise, were between twelve o'clock and five in winter, and one o'clock and six in summer. It was during these five hours that the chief business and work of the house was

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transacted. The officials then attended to the duties of their offices ; the writers and rubricators made progress in their literary and artistic compositions in the cloister or scriptorium ; the juniors and novices studied with their masters, or practiced public reading and singing under the precentor or his assistant ; those who had work in the kitchen, or the backhouse, or the cellar, etc., addressed themselves to their allotted tasks. In a word, whilst the morning of each monastic day was devoted mainly to prayer and the church services, the afternoon was fully occupied in many and various labours and in the general administration of the monastery. Of course manual labour, that is the working in the gardens, or fields, or workshops of the establishment, always occupied at least a part of the working

hours of every monastery, and frequently a large part. This manual labour was necessary for health and exercise, and it was insisted upon in all monastic codes, not so much as a end in itself, as a means to avoid idleness, and to strengthen the constitution of individuals by regular and systematic corporal exercises. The work of a labourer in the fields and gardens was never looked upon as derogatory to the monastic profession ; and St. Benedict expressly tells his followers that they are to look upon themselves “as true monks, when they have to live by the labour of their hands.”

This manual labour was generally a conventual work, that is, undertaken in common ; and the permission of the superior was always required to stay away from it. In some Orders, such as the Cistercian and Cluniac, it was performed with a certain amount of ceremonial usage. The prior, for example, rang the bell, or struck the *tabula*

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CARMELITE IN HIS STUDY

Illustration: Carmelite in his study

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to call the brethren together, distributed the necessary tools amongst them, and then led the way to the place where they were to dig, or weed, or plant, etc. In the Cluniac houses, the abbot went with the community. When they were assembled at the door of the cloister he was to be informed, and he then came into their midst saying, "*Eamus ad opus manuum*"—"Let us go to our manual labour." Upon this, the youngest leading the way, the monks went in procession to where they had to work, saying the *Miserere* or other psalm. Arrived at the place, they stood round the abbot till the psalm was ended, then the abbot said the *Deus in adjutorium*—"O God, com to my aid," ect., with the "Our Father" and the versicle of Prime to obtain God's blessing on the labours of the day : "Look down, O Lord, upon Thy servants and upon Thy works, and guide Thus Thy sons." To which the community replied "And may the glory of the Lord our God be upon us, and may He guide us in the works of our hands and direct us in our manual labour." Then bowing to the abbot and to each other, they began the task allotted to them.

At the conclusion of their period of labour the religious returned to the cloister as they had come ; the tools were gathered up and put away ; and after a short time allowed for washing, they went to the refectory for an afternoon drink of some kind. After this they returned to their places in the cloister : the novices and juniors to their studies, the seniors to their reading or writing.

## 12. THE VESPERS

At five o'clock in winter and at six in summer the bell rang for Vespers. In some houses, however, as for in-

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stance at Durham, the Vespers were always sung at the fixed hour of three in the afternoon, which would divide the working hours of the day into two portions. This would probably have been the rule in all cathedral monastic churches, where, as being public places of worship, regularity of hours would have been aimed at. At the first signal for the Vesper hour the books were all replaced in the aumbry in the cloister, and the community then waited until the commencement of the tolling of the great bell, when they betook themselves to their places in choir. The Vespers were sung with varying pomp and ceremony, according to the rank of the feast celebrated, and the monks were vested for the service in cowls, albs, or copes, according to the solemnity of the occasion.

## 13. THE SUPPER

Immediately after the Vespers, at the beginning of the "Suffrages of the Saints," or later if Vespers of the "Office of the Dead" were to be said, the cellarer and refectorian left the choir to see that all was prepared for the evening meal, should there be one. At Durham the hour of supper was always five o'clock, after which the doors of the cloister and public rooms were locked and the keys given to the sub-prior until seven o'clock the following morning. In English monasteries the general rule as to supper apparently was that during the summer

half of the year—that is from Easter to the 14<sup>th</sup> of September—the second meal was served on all days, except on vigils and fast days. From the feast of All Saints to Advent, supper was only granted on the great feast days, when the community were vested in copes in the choir. During

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Advent, and in fact till Easter, except during the short time between Christmas and the Epiphany, there was but one meal a day in most religious houses. The infirm and those who through weakness needed more food had to receive special dispensation from the superior.

On supper days the prior, or whoever was presiding in the choir, left the church at the same time as the cellarer and refectorian, and began to ring the bell or gong for the meal. The community then came out of the church and, as at dinner, went to wash their hands at the lavatory, and thence to their places in the refectory. In many monasteries it was the custom for the seniors to serve and read during this meal, which was short, consisting of one good and full dish (*generale*), and one pittance or light additional plate, consisting of cheese, fruit, nuts, or the like. The prior was served, as at dinner, by two juniors, who took their places at the ends of his table and had their meal there. These was a special “pittance” for this table, and from it the prior, or whoever was acting for him, was supposed to reserve something for the senior who was reading. One dish with the “pittance,” and sufficient to serve those who sat thereat, was placed at the head of each table and passed down.

The conclusion of the supper was like that of the dinner. The religious went to finish their Grace in the church, and thence passed up to the dormitory to change their day habits, girdles, and boots for those better adapted for the night. When this was done they went again into the cloister to wait there till the signal should be given for the evening Collation or reading. At Durham there was no interval between the supper and the Collation ; but “Grace being said,” we are told, “ the monks all departed

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to the chapter-house to meet the prior, every night, there to remain in prayer and devotion till six of the clock, at which time upon the ringing of a bell they went to the *Salve*.”

#### 14. THE COLLATION AND COMPLINE

About half-past six in winter, and half-past seven in summer, a small bell was rung in the cloister to call all together for the evening reading, called the *Collation*, which took place in the chapter-room. Whilst the bell was ringing any of the community who desired, on days when there was no supper, could go to the refectory and obtain some kind of drink, called the *potum caritatis*, with which possibly was also given a small portion of bread, to sustain them till their dinner

the following day. When they had finished this very modest refecton, the brethren at once betook themselves to their places in the chapter-hall, where the reader was already waiting in the pulpit with the book open at the place where he left off the night before.

Meanwhile the abbot, or prior in the absence of the abbot, waited for a time in the private parlour ready to hear any petitions for exemption from the rule, and grant any leave that might be necessary. When this business had been transacted he came to the Collation, at which all were bound to be present. The reading apparently only occupied a short time, and in the brief interval between this and the Hour of Compline the community could in the summer pass into the cloister, or in winter time could go to warm themselves at the fire in the common recreation-room.

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## 15. COMPLINE AND BED

At seven o'clock in the winter, and eight in the summer, the tolling of the bell called the community to Compline—the last conventual act of the monastic day. This Hour was not necessarily said in the choir of the church. At St. Mary's, York, for example, the brethren recited their Compline standing in the Galilee, the juniors nearest the door. The Office began with the *Confiteor*, as the Collation had already taken the place of the *Capitulum*, with which otherwise the Hour of Compline commenced. When the anthem to the Virgin Mother of God, with which Compline always concluded, was being said or sung, all turned to the *Crucifix* or *Majestas*.

Immediately the triple-prayer of the Pater, Ave, and Creed, said at the end, was finished, the superior gave a signal, and the community rose and passed to the door of the church. here either the superior or the junior priest who had said the prayers at Compline was ready to sprinkle each with holy water as he passed in solemn silence to the dormitory. Before haft-past seven, then in winter, and an hour later than this is summer, all would have been in bed, and the busy round of duties, which so completely filled the working day of every medieval monastery, would have come to an end.

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End Chapter.