

The Monstry of Mar Saba.

The most awesome, most repellent dwelling place in the world is the grim fortress monastery of Mar Saba, on the Dead Sea, where thousands of monks live in grim and melancholy austerity.

These monks are the most rigorous of any in the Greek church. Their lives are passed in penance, which no hope of pleasure this side of the grave and not one cheerful incident to brighten their existence. Day after day, amid gloomy surroundings that would drive most men-melancholy mad, they go through the same unvarying routine, and yet surrounding them are the remains of such true romances as early mediæval times could produce.

Mar Saba is at the end of the barren Wady en Nor, or Kedron valley, near the Dead Sea, and its very location is enough to send a chill down one's spine. It is the only oasis in the wilderness of this region, a destroyed stronghold of the Crusaders and the tomb of a nomad chieftain, that of Sheik Messaf. The wearied traveler is glad to behold the fortress-like pile of the ancient monastery way down in the dark valley, even though he experiences a presentiment of some hidden danger lurking in that forbidden place.

It is the most romantically situated monastery, the oldest and undoubtedly the most gruesome in the world. It is built on the abrupt terrace of a dizzy gorge, at the bottom of which, 600 feet below the torrent Cedron seethes in winter. The rocks fall away so perpendicularly that huge flying buttresses had to be constructed in order to afford the very moderate space occupied by the monastery.

In the early part of the fifth century it was inhabited by the Sabaites, an order of monks of whom San Sabas was the superior, and who also built the greater portion of the monastery. San Sabas was born about 420 in Cappadocia, and at 8 years of age he entered this monastery, which was originally founded by Euthymius. As the reputation of San Sabas for sanctity increased he was joined by a great number of anchorites, all of whom could not find shelter in his monastery, and it is said 18,000 of the holy men were living in rock caves in the mountain opposite.

Thousands of caves once inhabited by these hermits look from the side of the mountain, many having mosaic floors and decorations upon the walls, and the story has every semblance of truth. About 4,000 monks inhabited the monastery proper, and in the seventh century the Persian hordes of Chosroes routed them all and plundered the monastery, and for centuries its wealth attracted marauders of all kinds. The last time it was pillaged was in 1832 and 1834 by Bedouins. After the very first attack it was fortified, just as it is seen today.

The two castle-like towers which serve as battlements are the first evidence the traveler has of the existence of this living tomb.

The fair Empress Eudoxia built it in order to be close to her ideal of man-

hood—Euthymius. Euthymius was noted for his sanctity throughout Palestine, and his learning and great moral endowments attracted the emperors. She loved him with great devotion, but Euthymius, true to his trust, refused to see her. When her devotion to him did not cease he fled to the Moabit desert beyond the Jordan. The empress watched daily from the tower for his return. After much persuasion he was dragged back to the monastery by his companion, Theocletus, and the empress wept with joy. She remained there a few years longer, during which time she caught only a casual and infrequent glance of the object of her love. Finally she left the place with her court attendants, never to return. Now the tower is used as a lookout, and a watchman is stationed there day and night, who scans the mountains and valleys far and wide to see whether any danger threatens the monastery.

After repeated knocking at the great iron doorway that leads to the monastery a gray bearded monk shouts through a small opening from Eudoxia's tower and demands the letter of introduction from the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem, without which no admission to the monastery is obtained. The necessary document being produced it is put into a basket which the monk lets down. After a few minutes' delay he again appears at the opening, and the visitors are invited to ascend a broad stairway. Below a great door swings open, just wide enough to let them pass through.

This door is of immense proportions, and looks more like the wall of a safe deposit vault. It requires all the strength of the monk to move it and throw the great lock. The dark-robed monk then shows two large iron bars into place and the hardy visitors find themselves in a prison from which there is no escape unless they would scale the terraces and throw themselves into the gaping abyss at the verge of which the monastery is built. Descending further is found a paved courtyard in the center of which is a small Roman chapel, which looks like a shrine transplanted here from one of the pagan temples.

An outer veranda in the same courtyard leads to the ancient church of St. Nicholas, which is hewn out of the natural rock, and is one of the oldest churches in Palestine. The left wall of the sanctuary contains a niche filled with human skulls. The church of this Greek brotherhood, which is used every day, is on the east side of the enclosure, and is shaped like a basilica.

Walking higher up into this dismal cavern and climbing a ladder to a small opening the visitor reaches a cave in which San Sabas lived, and a legend says that one day the holy man found a lion there. The king of the desert shared the room of the saint thereafter.

Immediately in the back of this cave are the cells of the monks. A century old atmosphere abounds, and is almost stifling.

The older members say it must be called off, as the bounds of propriety have already been overstepped. The recent hugging match was widely advertised, and the girls say that if one arranged for February is given they will pay off the entire debt. The social was more largely patronized by middle-aged and old men than by the young men.

Among the mourners who followed the remains of aged Mrs. Mary Farmer from St. Bernard's church, in Rariton, N. J., to the little Catholic cemetery on the hill back of that town on the 24th ult., was her son, John Farmer, whose presence in the town after an absence of many years has brought to light a strange story of the return of a long lost son.

Over fifteen years ago he left his home in Rariton and was never heard from by his family. When Mrs. Farmer became critically ill some weeks ago she frequently expressed a wish to see her missing boy before she died.

Another son of the widow remembered that his brother John had talked much about railroads when he was a boy, and vowed that he would be a railroad manager when he became a man.

With faint hope the brother advertised in a railroad trainmen's journal for John Farmer. John is a trainmaster on a western railroad at Portland, Ore. He read the advertisement, and made haste to communicate with his family.

He was informed of his mother's critical illness and made flying trip east. He arrived at his mother's side as she was dying. She was able to recognize him, and gave him her blessing.

New York has a new joke—quite up to the usual standard of New York humor. Your friend tells you you can call up 1644 Broad on the telephone because a Mr. Fish wants to speak with you. You do it, and tell the girl who answers you: "I want to talk with Mr. Fish." She says, "Which one?" You say, "Is there more than one?" and she says, "Yes, (ha! ha!) this is (ha! ha!) the aquarium (ha! ha! ha!)" Now, all please smile, appreciatively—just to please New York.

The New Zealand government has decided that swimming and life saving shall be taught in all the schools. The Life Saving society's method has been adopted, and 2,000 handbooks and charts have been sent by order of the government for the use of schoolmasters.

The Story of the Murder Mystry of Mabel Scofield.

The mysterious death of Miss Mabel Scofield two years ago in Des Moines has resulted in an astonishing illustration of the old saying that "murder will out."

Charles Thomas, a 20-year-old youth, has been arrested for the murder after more than two years of fancied security, during which it seems he has been leading a life of reckless dissipation.

The crime is a most extraordinary one. The deceased was a young woman of excellent family, the daughter of a physician, and of the highest character. The accused man is also of excellent family, but even before the murder he had fallen among evil associates. She was a visitor in his mother's house at the time and they were distant relations.

Miss Scofield was last seen alive on the morning of October 21, 1898. On the following afternoon her body was found in the Des Moines river. The cause of her death was then uncertain. There was so little clue to point to the manner of the poor girl's death that the authorities were inclined to abandon the case in despair.

But a committee of prominent citizens was formed for the purpose of clearing up the mystery. They felt that if a crime had been committed it was of so cruel a nature that it would be a blot on the fair name of the city to let it go unpunished. As a result of their untiring efforts, Charles Thomas was arrested after two years. The citizens have put together link by link a mighty chain of evidence against him.

When Thomas was arrested they found concealed in his sock a bottle of the same poison—chloral—that had killed Mabel Scofield. In spite of his position Thomas was offensively cheerful and even danced a jig.

Mabel Scofield was very pretty, only 20 years old, and the daughter of Dr. A. J. Scofield of Macksburg, Ia. She was engaged to Dr. Childs, a dentist of that city.

Before the murder she had been visiting her aunt, Mrs. Jasper N. Thomas, of Des Moines. Her mother had also been staying in the house just before the tragedy.

Mabel Scofield went with her mother to a train at 8 o'clock Saturday morning, October 21, 1898. Kissing her mother farewell she said she would return to the Thomas house and finish some needlework which she was doing. The mother's train swung out of the union station, leaving the girl there alone. At 4 o'clock on Sunday afternoon her lifeless body was found near the bank of the Des Moines river in the heart of the city. It was lying at a spot where the bank is edged with willows and thick with rushes. At first it was taken to the morgue. Her brother, Clyde Scofield, a student in Highland Park college, north of the city, was coming down town in a street car to go out to one of the parks, when he saw a crowd about the morgue. He jumped off the car with a friend, walked in out of idle curiosity and was horrified to see his sister lying on the marble slab.

An autopsy was performed. Though the body was found in the water, no water was found in either lungs or stomach. The stomach was removed and given to the state chemist, S. R. Macey of Highland Park college. A controversy arose between him and the coroner, General R. V. Ankeny, as to whether the coroner or the county should pay for an analysis of the contents. It was not then analyzed, but was preserved. The coroner's jury did nothing for several months and was discharged without rendering a verdict. The city police professed to do the best it could to discover a clue to the method of the girl's death, but every trail was fruitlessly followed and finally the official interest in the affair died away and only occasionally was the case revived.

But Aldeman Joseph E. Fagen took an intense interest in it. He was a bachelor and at his boarding house he organized a committee to investigate the crime. The Rev. I. N. McCash, pastor of the University Place Church of Christ, was interested in the organization; then C. A. Crawford, cashier of the American Savings bank, and many others. By diligent work a reward of \$2,000 for the conviction of the girl's murderers was raised and Governor Shaw was induced to offer an additional \$500.

Police officers J. S. Hockersmith and J. S. B. Meskimen discovered that two reputable residents of Des Moines, Mrs. R. A. Canine and Mrs. Robert Dean, had seen two men holding between them a woman apparently dead or unconscious drive hurriedly past their residences toward the point of the river where the girl's body was found. At the river bank they found the tracks of a buggy. Near by they found a man's hat in which were the initials "C. T." They discovered that Charles Thomas had bought chloral in large quantity at Hansen's drug store on the Friday before the day that the girl disappeared. They learned that the excuse given by him when he bought it was false.

They discovered a hack driver named Cross, to whom Thomas said, on Sunday, before the body was found, "Well, Mabel Scofield left this man's town today for good." They have found two girls, daughters of excellent families and whose names they decline to say, and a married woman also, who say that Thomas tried to poison them.

The prosecution now has the testimony of State Chemist Macey that the stomach of the girl contained enough chloral to kill eight or ten people. This fact has not been known to the peo-

ple before. At the time of the murder some people insisted that she had fallen from a bridge and died of heart disease before she struck the water, which accounted for the absence of water from her lungs and stomach. Some believed she had been drugged and thus killed. Others believed she had committed suicide for the reason that she could not attend college, while her brother was sent there. It is now settled that her death was foul murder, because she could not have taken chloral and then jumped into the water.

If Thomas is guilty the crime was particularly atrocious, because the girl was staying in his family. The Thomas house, at 1066 Woodland avenue, is in the heart of one of the fashionable residence districts of the city. Mrs. Thomas had known the girl's mother at Macksburg. Another young woman staying at the house, and a great friend of Miss Scofield's, was Miss Maggie Hammond.

Young Thomas paid Miss Scofield very assiduous attentions. He was undoubtedly anxious to make her his wife, but she did not care for him at all.

She was, in fact, engaged to Dr. E. O. Childs of Macksburg, a dentist, who removed to Cainsville, Mo., broken-hearted by the tragedy, soon after the girl's death. He spent several weeks in Des Moines encouraging the officers in their efforts to go to the bottom of the mystery, and has returned several times since. Neither he nor any of the family believed she committed suicide or met with an accident. "Mabel was a Christian," said her mother, "and she did not kill herself."

That young Thomas' attentions to the girl were distasteful, Miss Hammond, who has returned to her home in Macksburg, testifies. She did not desire the attentions of any men. She occasionally visited her brother at his college, but never permitted him to take college friends to call on her. She would naturally have attracted them, for she was a pretty girl, with dark brown hair and eyes, of slight build, graceful and charming of manner.

On the Saturday of her disappearance the Thomas home was, by a curious coincidence, deserted. Mrs. Thomas was visiting a sick friend, Mr. Thomas spent the day downtown. Young Thomas told his employers that he had to go to a funeral and did not work. The girl had told her mother at the depot that she was going back home. It is now the theory of the state that Thomas knew of these plans, that he either went to the depot and took the girl home or went to his home after she arrived there to wait for her.

What happened then will perhaps never be known. It is known that when Miss Scofield returned to the house she drank one or more cups of coffee, the morning being cold. It is conjectured that Thomas made a last desperate appeal to her to accept his suit. When she repulsed his attentions he became enraged and found some way of putting the chloral—commonly called knockout drops—into the coffee.

According to the same theory, when the girl died from the effects of the poison he concealed the body around the premises. He then left the house and returned, as his mother testifies, in the evening, complaining of a headache and saying that he had been to a funeral at Valley Junction. After his people had gone to bed it is believed that he carried the body to a convenient spot, that he secured the assistance of a friend with a carriage (whose identity the police do not know), that the two waited until early in the morning, and then taking the girl between them in the buggy carried her body to the river by a route which the officers have traced from the Thomas residence to the point where the body was found under the willows near the bank. To prove his disinterested character they will produce ample evidence.

Thomas was once prominent in an excellent social set. He was handsome and popular. But as a boy he began to go wrong. He early became attracted to disreputable society. At one time he even worked as a hack driver in order to see low life and nocturnal life thoroughly.

This mysterious case has created more interest and absorbed more attention than any other case of the kind in the history of the state. The girl was so young, so good and so innocent that the whole city has watched the development of the case with the most intense interest.

When it became definitely known this week that she was poisoned and had not committed suicide the people began to clamor for the punishment of the criminal. Suspicion attached itself to Charles Thomas once before, and he and two or three other boys were arrested, but they all proved no connection with the crime and were discharged. It seemed then inconceivable that the 20-year-old boy of the family in which the girl lived as in her own home had committed the crime. No suspicion now attaches to the other boys then suspected, but a stout net has been woven about Thomas, and the prosecution believes that he will be convicted.

Thomas says that he can prove an alibi and that he has the statements of several reputable business men that he was not at his home during the day. He will evidently make a strong defense.

In cards, the tailor may not know so much about suits.

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The Chicago Limited
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A laundryman of Paris has discovered a method of cleansing fine linen and other fragile textures without using soap or other chemicals. Instead of these he uses boiled potatoes, which he rubs into the goods and then rinses out. It is said that this method will make soiled linen, silk or cotton much whiter and purer than washing in the ordinary way.
Philadelphia Bulletin: "Were there any pretty dresses in the play?" "Oh, yes. The poor deserted wife, who had to take in sewing for a living, suffered agonies in a lovely white silk gown, with chiffon ruffles and a dream of a pearl-colored plush opera cloak, lined with white fur."
From Tomsk to Irkutsk, on the Siberian railway, a distance of 833 miles, there is only one town deserving the name—Krasnoyarsk—with a population of 28,000.
Champagne has 12.3 per cent. of alcohol and gooseberry wine 11.8 per cent.