

Helpers of Holy Souls.

To Release Tormented Spirits from Purgatory, They Pray incessantly.

A Band of Women Whose Lives Are Spent in Asking Mercy for the Damned Dead.

Their Home on Eighty-sixth Street Unique Among New York's Religious Institutions.

A SACRIFICE TO EASE ETERNAL PAIN.

A Midnight Service at Which Nuns and Society Women Joined in Dramatic Devotion—No Peace for the Flesh.

New York has a band of women whose life is devoted to praying for the dead. There are a dozen of them, and they are the only branch in America of a new religious order of France. The mother house is at No. 16 Rue de la Barouilliere, Paris, and it is not yet two years since the ladies who form the New York colony left for America. They first secured very humble quarters on Twelfth street, but as time passed and wealthy and influential women of the Catholic Church of New York became interested and lent their assistance, they removed from Twelfth street to Eighty-sixth street.

The order is known as the Helpers of the Holy Soul and is devoted to perpetual prayer for those in purgatory. Night and day the good sisters offer up their supplications for pardon. These prayers are not always for members of the Catholic Church, either, for many a Protestant, impressed with the beautiful lives led by the Holy women, has contributed generously to them, and whether believing in the doctrine of purgatory or not, certain that "the prayers of the righteous do much avail," has begged a petition for the soul of some loved one passed from sight. This being an intermediate state is only a modified form of the Theosophists' reincarnation theory, and among the many who have joined there are many who find comfort in the idea that a prayer or two may bring access of joy to the souls of beloved dead.

The house on Eighty-sixth street where the Helpers of the Holy Souls are located differs outwardly in no way from the dozen of brownstone residences beside it. A silver plate on the door bears the inscription "Helpers of the Holy Souls," and the heart of a Gallic forest. He uses few tools, and these of a primitive sort.

The block of wood which is to be transformed into a comfortable and neatly fitting sabot is first selected with great care. To obtain satisfactory results it must be free from knots or cross grain. After being selected it is secured in a vise, the corners chipped off, and the form of the shoe quickly developed. Next the rough model of a shoe is securely fastened in the vise, and the inside carefully scooped out. The tool generally used is provided with a long handle. At the end is fastened a sharp semi-circular knife.

The long handle gives the carver considerable leverage while digging out the interior of the shoe. This part of the work requires much more skill than one would imagine. A single slip of the sharp knife might ruin the shoe, making it necessary for the work to be done over again.

As the shoe nears completion, the carver works more slowly. The interior of the sabot is carried to conform closely to the shape of the foot. Expert workmen on the sabot claim they can make a wooden shoe which will fit the foot much more easily and feel more comfortable and yielding than the commonest sort of leather shoes.

The sabot manufacturer on South Fifth avenue also makes shoes with heavy wooden soles and rough leather uppers, which are worn by French laborers in the manufacture of the shoes maker also has a monopoly. The soles consist of heel, instep and sole are carved. These shoes are designed for rough use, and are worn by the poorest French people on the streets.

There are different grades of shoes in even this little shop. The cheaper sabots are made of white pine, the fashionable and latest style of dark walnut. People who cannot afford to pay as high a price as 25 cents for their shoes content themselves with little white sabots. The shoes of dark, aristocratic walnut are never made. They wear out slowly. The sabots are usually worn until they become so thin that they split and break up in pieces.

Of late years the demand for wooden shoes has fallen off more or less in the French quarter of New York City. The sabot is very seldom seen nowadays on the street, although still worn to some extent by the poorest French people in their homes in the high tenement houses. It is probable that the sabot maker of South Fifth avenue would have been obliged long ago to give up his quaint trade had it not been for the demand for the shoes created by the theatres. The stage manager who stages a comic opera, for instance, is often obliged to provide shoes of appropriate pattern for his chorus of French peasants. A single order of this kind is enough to keep the little shoemaker very busy for weeks. Stage managers throughout the city find the sabot manufacturer a very convenient ally. It is much cheaper and very much more convenient to purchase the genuine French article than one of the stations in New York than to send all the way to some French provincial town for his shoes.

The night watchwoman of the Young Women's Christian Association is a trusty, elderly woman, who patrols the building after it is closed on the lookout for possible fire and burglars, and admitting late comers. She knows every boarder by sight, and transient boarders who have been detained most carefully her as to their identity. She sees that no loud laughing or talking is carried on after closing hours, and answers calls for assistance from any of the boarders who may be taken ill. If the case warrants it she sends for a physician or notifies the matron.

Mrs. Maria Foster, of Monterey, Aged 104, Who Has Used Whiskey and Tobacco for Decades.

Senora Isabella Villa, of Merced, Aged 100, Who Has Smoked Cigarettes for Ninety Years.

Mrs. Sarah Davis, of Colusa, Aged 105 Years, Who Has a Sound Set of Natural Teeth.

"Auntie" Arthur, of Stockton, 108 Years Old.

Mrs. Priscilla Nelson, of Marysville, Aged 126 Years, the Oldest Woman in the West.

California's Climatic Pride—Five Women, All Over a Century.

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Elevator Girl Has Arrived.

She is a Great Success and Bids Fair to Cut Out the Type-writer Girl.

Philadelphia, of All Places, Is the One to Introduce Her to Contemporary Notice.

A NIGHT WATCHWOMAN AS WELL.

The Local Branch of the Young Women's Christian Association Has Made the Innovation, and is Proud of It.

Philadelphia, Jan. 4.—The new woman has invaded another field of labor. She is going to be an elevator girl. Strange that some bright women did not think of it before. It is slow, conservative Philadelphia that introduces the elevator woman to an approving public.

In the Young Women's Christian Association Building, at Arch and Eighteenth streets are two young women pioneers at this line of work. They like it, too, and say it is not nearly so hard or so unpleasant as standing all day in a store. The Association building is eight stories high, and there is a large amount of travel up and down the elevators. The restaurant on the eighth floor is patronized not only by the permanent and transient boarders

basement with the machinery, the engine and a furnace, he is seldom seen above stairs, and might just as well be a watchman.

How did the young women learn to manage the elevators? They were coached by the engineer. After a few days' practice he decided that they might be safely trusted. His confidence has proved to have been quite justified, for there has not been a single accident under their administration. No, not even a pinched finger.

Both young women are extremely bright. One of the original elevator girls has just been promoted to the position of assistant postmistress of the Association. She coached her successor, a pretty little brown-eyed girl.

The other elevator woman is a demure blonde, who wears glasses and spends a great deal of her leisure time in reading. She is business-like and reserved. The hours of work are long, but during the middle of the day there is comparative little to do. It is then that reading and fancy work are allowed, each car being provided with a small chair for the use of the operator in idle hours. Even then the matron in chief wears a more impressive expression of responsibility. They have been charged with the fact that into their hands, for the time being, are given the lives of the passengers. This settled gravity has its use, for not even the giggles of the most frivolous little passenger is proof against the quenching qualities of one of their frigid glances.

No uniform is worn. The young women are usually attired in simple gowns of black cashmere, over which is tied a white muslin apron. They have no opportunity to exchange words with each other, as no elevator is up when the other is down. Heads of the Association

Each woman takes charge of her elevator about 6 o'clock in the morning. She leaves at about 10 o'clock at night. Both of them board in the building. On alternate days they are allowed several hours for shopping or visiting.

One of the most marked characteristics of these queens of the elevator is their extreme dignity. Not even the face of the matron in chief wears a more impressive expression of responsibility. They have been charged with the fact that into their hands, for the time being, are given the lives of the passengers. This settled gravity has its use, for not even the giggles of the most frivolous little passenger is proof against the quenching qualities of one of their frigid glances.

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Yankee-Born Princesses.

There Are Eighteen of Them, All Married into Proud and Ancient Families.

Only One Bears the Title in Her Own Right, the Princess of Noer.

SOME LIVE IN BEAUTIFUL PALACES.

The Princess Hatzfeld, Huntington's Daughter, Occupies an Illustrious Position, and the Princess Colonna Is the Most Unhappy of All.

Accustomed though the Americans are to see the fairest daughters of Uncle Sam become the matrimonial prey of foreign noblemen, it will doubtless be news to many of them that there are no less than eighteen women born on this side of the Atlantic bearing the title of princess.

Of these only one is what is known in Court phraseology as a princess in her own right. She is the Princess of Noer, now the wife of the Prussian Field Marshal, Count Waldsee. She owes her title, not, as do the other American princesses, solely to their marriage, but to the creation of the Emperor of Austria, who conferred upon her the dignity of a Princess of Noer at the time when, as a seventeen-year-old girl, born and bred in New York as the

daughter of David Lee, she became the wife of Prince Frederic of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, the uncle of the present Empress of Germany. The union was not of long duration, for eighteen months after the wedding the Prince died at Beyruth, in Syria, during the course of a tour which he was undertaking in the Holy Land with his bride.

It was not until after the war of 1870 that she became the wife of Count Waldsee, the chief of the staff to Von Moltke, and chosen by him and the Emperor to assume the place of Germany's greatest strategist when the next war broke out.

The Princess may be said to have exercised a greater influence on the political affairs of Europe than any of her countrywomen, for, as aunt of the lady who is now German Empress, she soon acquired

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Death Is Defied.

Six California Women More Than a Century Old.

Three Always Smoked, and One Is Now an Almshouse Terror.

Marvelous Physical Condition of These Monuments to Their State's Healthfulness.

NONE SHOW SIGNS OF DISSOLUTION.

One of the Sextet a Great-Great-Grandmother—Facts That Read Like Fiction.

San Francisco, Jan. 7.—Hale and hearty after being a cigarette smoker for nearly sixty years, is the boast a Californian centenarian can make.

Nor is this the only claim Senora Isabella Villa, of Merced, can make, for neither a life of cigarette indulgence nor her great age has prevented her being today physically attractive and mentally keen. Once a Spanish beauty of the legendary type, she possesses attractions of which many women scores of years younger can boast.

This extraordinary woman was wedded to Senor Villa at Tapulpa, Mexico, in 1818, thirteen years after her birth in the same place. From this union nine children were born, two of whom still live—a son and a daughter. The daughter has one child, who is the mother of two girls, both of whom are over twenty years of age.

Senora Villa has been a cigarette smoker since she was ten years old, but has been almost a total abstainer from spirituous liquors. She rarely eats a meat, preferring farinaceous food, and this has been her life custom. Always active and industrious, she still cultivates her garden, and almost unaided successfully raises what are considered, even in California, a notable crop of vegetables. Of flowers, also, she is a great admirer, and has a garden of them which is a marvel of beauty and is personally cared for by her. Her slight remains excellent, preferring a needle with ease. She is the marvel and admiration of the surrounding country, and promises to continue her existence for many years.

There is a model in Stockton, however, a woman who in point of age has a greater claim. She is "Auntie" Maria Givens, a colored woman, who has lived so long that her one known boy child is, except that she has seen at least 115 years. This fact is fixed by the events she is still able to recount of the surrounding country, and promises to continue her existence for many years.

There is also a woman on the plantation of James Wolf, near Shelby, Va., secured her freedom long before the emancipation proclamation, and came to California. That was forty years ago, at least. For many years she lived in San Francisco, making considerable money as a washerwoman, and she is now in the city of Stockton, where she has a house in which she now lives. To an old woman she is a very young one, and all about her mind has fallen, though at times it seems as clear as ever. She finds it impossible to remain absolutely quiet, however, and is constantly talking to herself and moving about. Her physical condition is excellent, and she is as active as a young girl. Her eyesight is good, and she is as sprightly as a young woman.

She was born January 4, 1787, on Ambrose Arthur's plantation in Knox County, Ky. For sixty years she has lived in California, where she was born. She is the mother of seventeen children, most of whom were born slaves, and some of her great-grandchildren live in California. The present family consists of two sons, eight grandchildren, one great-grandchild and one great-great-grandchild.

But the oldest person in California, according to all records, is Mrs. Priscilla Nelson, who lives at Marysville, and is 126 years old. She lives with her youngest child, a son, forty-three years old, and has three generations of descendants, which makes her a great-great-great-grandmother. Born on a farm near Colusa, born in 1769, she has lived in California since 1854, and has remained here ever since. Most of her descendants live near her. Late in life she has been confined to a bed, but she is now able to walk freely all her life. Her eyesight and hearing are unimpaired, her appetite is good, and she is as sprightly as a young woman.

Another aged resident of California is Mrs. Sarah Davis, whose home is now the County Hospital at Colusa. Born in East Tennessee in 1790, she is, consequently, 106 years old. She is the mother of sixteen children, and her youngest child is about one year old, who is seventy years old and an inmate of the County Hospital at Colusa.

Mrs. Davis is one of those who crossed the plains in ox teams, when, she does not remember. Her hearing and sight are still perfect, and her voice strong, but her memory is failing.

A remarkable instance of longevity is Mrs. Maria Foster, who has lived 104 years and has two sons and a daughter. She was born in England, and her father was a soldier in the British army. She came to California in 1854 in search of a better life, and was finally removed to the hospital because of the carousals which took place at her home. Her health and appetite are excellent, and her hearing is perfect. She is now in the County Hospital at Colusa.

Mrs. Foster is a native of London, and has two sons and a daughter. She was born in England, and her father was a soldier in the British army. She came to California in 1854 in search of a better life, and was finally removed to the hospital because of the carousals which took place at her home. Her health and appetite are excellent, and her hearing is perfect. She is now in the County Hospital at Colusa.

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Helpers of the Holy Souls Kneel.

(Sketched from life by a Journal staff artist.)

of the Association, but also by crowds of noontday shoppers.

The Association has a number of rules in regard to the etiquette of elevator travel that are not strictly enforced on the average elevator. These are that there shall be no loud talking, no laughing, no distracting of the attention of the operator from the arduous work of taking the car skyward or earthward.

The elevators are two in number and their motive power is steam. A single turn of an iron-lever sends the car up or down as may be desired. The cars make a trip on an average every three minutes, and carry on an average a thousand people a day.

Two years ago, when the building was opened, it was decided that so far as possible women should be given an opportunity to do the work. The result is that the only man about the place is the engineer. As his especial domain is the

speak in the most flattering terms of the success of the experiment.

The elevator woman seems to have come to stay, and it will probably be only a question of time before they are introduced in business houses, office and public buildings, and perhaps hotels. The pretty elevator girl bids fair to put the type-writer girl's nose out of joint.

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