

A DAY AT LOURDES.

At the present time, when the secular papers are furnishing Zola's ideas on Lourdes to their readers, the following story of a day at the holy shrine will be found particularly interesting. It is written by a Maryland Catholic lady, and appeared in the *Catholic Mirror* of Baltimore. Catholic readers will enjoy the letter because it lacks the tone of mockery used by the French novelist in his stupid and sacrilegious tale.

MY DEAR FRIEND— I will terminate my very poor description by relating the events of the most impressive day I have ever spent at Lourdes, in point of cures. The cures relate to the pilgrimage of Dijon, which every year receives some signal favor from the hands of our dear mother. I can count six cures this year, which may be considered in the light of real resurrection.

Dijon is famous for its courage in bringing to Lourdes those poor creatures whose very hours seem to be numbered. This pilgrimage arrived here Saturday, Sept. 11, at 9 P. M. The hour being late, the Ladies of the Hospitality had all left from one cause or another. I alone had no excuse for absence and was on the spot to receive the poor invalids who, after the long voyage of two days and nights, were actually exhausted. In St. Camille's ward were placed twenty-five infirm, not one being able to walk. All of them were carried in by our noble Brancardiers, and placed on beds.

"We have here two young girls in their agony," said a priest who accompanied them. "Quick! let them be placed—one is dying fast; be quick!" They were soon laid on the bedsteads while remaining on their own mattresses, too ill to be moved.

When all the sick had been carried to their respective beds and quiet succeeded, the prayers for the agonizing were begun. One Margaret Savoie had been annointed before leaving her home, as the doctors said she could not possibly reach Lourdes alive. She was accompanied by her mother and uncle, a priest.

Addressing myself to the latter, I asked:

"What disease could have reduced the poor child to such a pitiable condition?"

"Ask me rather what ill she has not. The poor child for the past six months seems to have thrown up all the blood in her body, and the physicians declare she has no more to eject. For six years she has been extended on a mattress; she has cancer of the stomach, which not only prevents her from tasting food, but which has caused a continual vomiting of blood. She has been kept alive for years only by injections of milk. Moreover, she is paralyzed on the left side, and her foot is turned."

Kissing the poor little sufferer, I told her I would put something to her feet. She smiled and nodded assent. Then I passed to the bedside of the other, whose life seemed fast ebbing away. Two priests knelt beside her, one holding a crucifix before her eyes, and from time to time pressing it to her speechless lips, whilst the chaplain was called to bring the holy oils, as the dying girl had absolutely refused to be annointed before leaving home.

"No," she said, "do not annoint me; I will not die; I know I shall be cured."

As soon as the chaplain came extreme unction was administered and holy viaticum received. This poor child brought from her physician the diagnosis of three diseases, consumption in the last stage, heart disease of long standing, and cancer of the stomach. Three years of intense suffering had made a miserable object of her; she was terribly swollen, resembling a person with dropsy. Not able to lie

down, she had to be propped up with pillars.

In the corner was another interesting young woman whose cries of anguish wrung our hearts. Her spinal bone was dislocated, they said, the very pressure of one's hands on her person caused her intense agony. In these horrible sufferings her only words were:

"Oh, Jesus, take pity on those who suffer."

I was so touched at the beautiful charity; the little darling did not think of her own sufferings, she only supplicated heaven for those who suffer. "You will be cured," I said, "your charity will touch the heart of our Mother, and she will cure you."

At a late hour of the night I left, leaving my poor dying to the care of the sisters, who watch all night in the wards, and a priest, who had to remain and give the last absolutions and indulgence in the moment of final dissolution. I spent an agitated night, seeing nothing but agonies and death before me, and was glad when the hour of morning permitted me to the bedside of the poor sufferers. On entering the hall that conducts to the ward I met a sister coming out. I asked if both were dead.

"No," she replied, "neither is dead, but they are as much as dead."

"How long is their agony?" I entered the ward and softly approached the bed of Marguerite Savoie. Her poor mother was kneeling beside her, holding her and sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Look at her eyes," she said to me, as I offered some words of comfort. "She is dead! dead!"

Turning to Marie Marsot, the second described, I found the faithful priest still by her side, with crucifix in hand. "What a fearful agony!" he exclaimed. "All night has been passed in this manner; but it will soon be over. What do you think of transporting them both to the grotto?" he added after a moment's reflection.

"Certainly," I replied, "as soon as the Brancardiers come."

The hour was early. In the meantime the doctor of the hospital arrived, and we told him of our determination. He replied:

"Of course to the grotto; but I forbid the bath. There is not enough life left in either; death will come very soon unless the Blessed Virgin means to cure them, and this she can do without the bath. All that can be done will be to bathe the forehead and hands."

Under these deplorable circumstances we sent both to the grotto, either to be cured or to die there at the feet of our holy mother. The hour was 8.30 a.m., and the last Mass of that day at the grotto was about to take place. The holy sacrifice terminated, the sacred host was taken to the church. Marguerite lay in a perfect state of unconsciousness, like the daughter of Jarius, when the Divine Master took her by the hand and told her to "arise." He had passed that morning at Lourdes, hidden under the eucharistic veils. Nevertheless, He was there as truly and really in person as He had been in the Master of the synagogue. Did the dying girl actually hear his voice? No one knows; but we do know that he spoke that never to be forgotten morning at Lourdes, and the dying child obeyed His order. As the sacred host, carried in the hands of the priest, passed the couch on which the girl was lying, she raised her hitherto motionless hands towards the King of Kings, made another move of her hitherto paralyzed body and was on her feet—a stagger, then another, and now with firm tread, followed her Divine Deliverer. The pallor of death still remained on that bloodless face, but she was cured! Cancer healed, paralysis disappeared, and foot in right position.

The crowd, wild with enthusiasm, pushed in perfect delirium on the path

of the privileged child, who still followed the Blessed Sacrament, and was kept from being crushed by the brancardiers who guarded her, and also the priest who carried the host. Now the procession reached the Pisceno where Marie Marsot had just been taken in order to apply the miraculous water to her chest and stomach. A cloth just immersed in the water touched her chest when she heard the little bell that announced the approach of the Blessed Sacrament. A moment's agony seemed to tell of the final dissolution to the ladies who were in the Pisceno. She is dead! No, it was only the tearing of her lungs to pieces, a something inexpressible in heart, as though she were the prey of a thousand wolves that devoured her intestines. One moment more and the girl stood erect, knelt to adore the God who passed, and, without a totter, bounded forward to follow the true Lamb of God.

There were not three minutes between these cures. The enthusiasm was beyond description; it can be more easily imagined than described. At 11 o'clock the scene at the hospital to which both returned was very grotesque. We were obliged to station guards at the gate and door of the hall. Many, however, forced their way to witness the miracles, who were devouring the contents of a dish of roast beef. I would not like to pass many such days; the fatigue and excitement would soon use me up. A certain calm began to be re-established when a girl with radiant face threw her arms around my neck, giving me a kiss on the cheek. Not recognizing my enthusiastic friend, I said:

"I do not remember you. Were you here last year?"

"You do not know me, mademoiselle? I was in the bed in the corner last night. You told me I would be cured because I prayed for others."

No wonder I did not recognize my little sufferer, for she was transfigured, a complete transition from intense suffering to perfect health. This is a glimpse of a single day at Lourdes.

Shorthand Experts.

A great gathering of Indians under the directions of the Roman Catholic missionaries will be held at St. Mary's mission in June, and will be the largest assemblage of the kind ever held in the Province of British Columbia. The Indians will come from all the Fraser River reserves, Squamish, Sechelt, Cowichan, Victoria, Nanaimo, North Bend, Kamloops and other places. Particular honors are to be paid Bishop Darien by the Indians; a battery of ten cannon will be massed to herald his arrival. The Indians of British Columbia have made great progress in learning under the priests; there are several excellent brass bands among them and two or three newspapers set up entirely in shorthand characters. Shorthand is taught exclusively in the Indian mission schools, so that the majority of Catholic Indians in the Province are good stenographers.

A bag containing £1,000 worth of diamonds was stolen from an Englishman who arrived at Paris on the express from Calais. The Englishman was asleep when the bag was opened, and the diamonds stolen.

THE MEDICINE FOR LIVER AND KIDNEY COMPLAINT.—Mr. Victor Auger, Ottawa, writes: "I take great pleasure in recommending to the general public Parmolee's Pills, as a cure for Liver and Kidney Complaint. I have doctored for the last three years with leading physicians, and have taken many medicines which were recommended to me without relief, but after taking eight of Parmolee's Pills I was quite relieved, and now I feel as free from the disease as before I was troubled."

Belle: "What an absurd man Mr. Snooks is! He told me he hoped I never giggled." Bossie: "And what did you say?" Belle: "I giggled."

Emile Zola Hissed.

When Emile Zola went to Lourdes a few years ago to take notes most people thought his intentions were at least honest. Some went farther and thought him on the road to conversion. Now the scales have fallen from the eyes of the most credulous. As if it was not enough that his wretched *Leconte* on Lourdes now running in the *Gil Blas* was becoming more sensual and grossly realistic every day, the author has been at the pains to give a conference in Paris on the Lourdes miracles. As may be supposed it was not good Catholics who went to hear him. Probably for the most part his hearers were not Catholics at all. Zola managed to offend some of them, however, by the irreligion and immorality of his remarks, and he was accordingly hissed. Young girls, it is said, had to stop their ears. The Abbe Garnier in a newspaper article tells these young ladies that it was not for them to trust themselves in the company of such an orator as M. Zola. This good priest had been one of those who had vaguely hoped that Zola might by his own conversion be a witness to Lourdes miracles. "But no," he says upon reflection, "those who obtain miracles at Lourdes ask for them on their knees and with forehead in the dust." When Zola went to Lourdes with the national pilgrimage in 1892 his honesty of intention was not suspected. Patients, doctors, and the Lourdes missionaries laid open to him the treasures of their secrets, thinking that the Lourdes miracles would find in him at least a witness of good faith and unimpeachable integrity. The truth is, the author of "Pot Bouille" and "Nana" stands revealed a subtle would be destroyer of belief in the supernatural manifestations at Lourdes. But in trying to rend the beautiful immaterial robe of the Lourdes Madonna, woven by thousands of authentic miracles, M. Zola has overhot his mark. That he was publicly hissed the other evening is a proof.—*Catholic Review* N. Y.

The Apartment Houses of Paris.

These houses are generally six stories high; sometimes, however, there is a seventh story with attic rooms for servants and storage. The house is divided in this manner: *rez-dechaussee* (the ground floor), *entresol* (first flight up), the first floor (up two flights), the second floor, and so on to the attic. When engaging rooms by letter the fact should be kept in mind that the first floor in France is what would be called the third floor in America. In houses where the apartments are large, and people generally keep servants, the top floor is reserved for servants, each tenant having two or more servants' rooms. The main staircase goes only to the fourth floor, there being a back stairs from the ground floor to the top of the house. This is called a service stairs, and is used by tradespeople and servants. In the poorer houses, where the apartments are small, the service stairs are often dispensed with. In these houses the very poor tenant the attics. The small apartments may consist of from two to four or five rooms. The rooms, as a rule, are very small, and so arranged that there can be no privacy nor escape from the odors of cooking. The large apartments generally consist of entrance-hall, parlor, dining-room, kitchen, and four or more sleeping-rooms. The arrangement of the large apartments is such that one can have privacy and freedom from the odors of the kitchen. The French apartment does not often contain a bathroom.—*Maria Parloa in the Ladies' Home Journal for June*.

An occasional bottle of Ayer's Sarsaparilla does more to correct the tendency of the blood to accumulate humors, and keep the organs sound and healthy, than other treatment we know of. "Prevention is better than cure." Try it this month.