

to the distance in which they have traveled to lay their woes at good saint Anne's feet.

As one approaches the church he notices first the number of people about the sacred fountain. It is here that the pilgrims fill bottles and cans with the blessed water or pour the healing liquid over a diseased or useless member. Some bring large baskets filled with empty bottles, evidently intending to carry away enough holy water to last a lifetime; others a small vial to be filled and placed carefully in the pocket, a treasure of a value past all reckoning.

On entering the church one is impressed by its extremely ornate style of decoration; its long rows of Corinthian columns, the groined roof with its elaborate ornament, the stations and the great altar around which are massed pots of Canterbury bells in full bloom, and the altar rail of Carrara, skillfully carved and costing a fabulous sum.

At the end of the central aisle, placed so as to be seen on entering the church, is the holy shrine. Upon an onyx pedestal stands saint Anne, with bent head and raised hand, holding the infant Mary on one arm; at her feet is one of the holy relics; a stone from the wall of the room in which the mother of Christ was born. The beveled glass over the relic has been kissed by hundreds of thousands of people, and it is so scratched and dulled that it is almost impossible for one to read the inscription through it. There are always some suppliants kneeling here, and usually they are crowded about in the endeavor to kiss or touch the relic. One who spends a day or two about the church sees the same people constantly passing and re-passing, paying homage to this or that patron saint and repeatedly kissing the glass over the stone from the house of the Virgin Mary.

A poor young paralytic crept about, knelt and repeated his prayer, reverently kissed the relic, then slowly drew his withered hand back and forth across the glass. This he repeated innumerable times during the day, and at an early hour the next morning he was again at his devotions. One man has been there nine months, and is still to all but himself a hopeless cripple, firmly believing that recovery is in store for him.