

ST. ANNE DE BEAUPRE.

The Wonders Wrought
at this
Famed Shrine during 1899.

Written for the 'True Witness'
by Thomas Whelan,
Montreal.

Whilst the frost and snow of a Canadian winter envelop the village of St. Anne de Beupre, holding in an icy grasp the great waterway of the majestic St. Lawrence, and suspending for the winter months the vast throngs of devout pilgrims that each year flock to this renowned Thaumaturge of Canada, it will no doubt be interesting to review some of the more important miraculous cures that occurred here during the year that has just ended.

In the penultimate year of this nineteenth century, St. Anne was pleased as much as ever to manifest on our behalf the wonder-working power that Almighty God has given to her for the material and spiritual benefit of her numerous faithful clients throughout Canada, and the United States. We are, however, only enabled to enumerate some of the physical favors that have been wrought through the powerful intercession of this good mother; for no one knows the numberless cures of the soul and mind that annually occur here. They that yearly obtain relief from physical infirmities are in a small minority when compared to those that are cured of mental and moral sufferings, which, although the effects are invisible, are none the less cures. Thus, we must confine ourselves to the healing of bodily ailments, although it is estimated that in comparison to the one person who receives a physical or material favor at the shrine of St. Anne, there are five hundred who return home benefited morally or mentally. What a vast number of thanksgivings must ascend annually to the throne of God for relief in sorrows and afflictions of the mind; for the reconciliation of enemies, for the conversion of erring friends and relatives to the true faith, for the return of a loved one to his religious duties and the abandonment of his bad habits, for success in the choice of one's vocation, and perseverance in the path of grace.

Notwithstanding all this, many, including a number of Catholics, require actual and visible proofs of the wonders continually being wrought by good St. Anne at Beupre; and like the doubting Apostle Thomas of old, they decline to believe unless they see and can obtain substantial evidence of the miracles. They require to gaze upon the favored shrine with its massive pillars laden with crutches, ruses, spectacles, canes, iron supports for deformed limbs, braces, medicines and various other human aids to physical infirmities; or they must be shown names, addresses, certificates and other data respecting the cures before they will acknowledge the power of Almighty God. To these especially, the facts here given will be of more than passing interest and may, perhaps, help to rekindle their smouldering faith.

Now, although they that are healed of their infirmities have a firm belief in St. Anne's all-powerful intercession, their cure is not a faith cure, nor does it coincide in any way with the Christian scientist idea; but, rather it is a direct answer to earnest and persevering prayer, and is the result of a fervent and repeated appeal to the God who has said, "Ask and you shall receive." It is obtained after human medical skill has failed, and relief is to be had and sought for from God alone. If then, the miracles are the result of prayer, many will naturally ask, what particular prayers are to be recommended as the most beneficial? During the writer's sojourn at St. Anne de Beupre last July, this same question was put to Sister Mary of Mercy from Newfoundland, who had been completely and instantly restored to perfect health on the previous morning. She replied: "I simply placed my whole trust in the 'Hall Mary,' and said my beads very often invoking St. Anne's aid frequently and reciting whatever other prayers suggested themselves. The sisters in our

convent at home, also joined in making a novena for my intention." Again, no one should labor under the impression that all, or nearly all, who visit the shrine, for the cure of their bodily ailments, come away healed. Certainly all are benefited spiritually if not physically, by a pilgrimage to this favored and hallowed sanctuary of St. Anne, but what a small percentage of people go there with the proper dispositions that humble and devout pilgrims should have! How few precede the journey by a novena of prayer! This is especially true of large pilgrimages where many look upon the trip as a pleasant outing; and prepare themselves for it as they would for a picnic. Even now are recalled the words of Rev. Father Holland, C.S.S.R., in a sermon delivered last summer, which illustrates this matter in a clear and concise manner. He said:—

"These are not excursions on which you come to St. Anne's. They are not trips of mere sight-seeing and pleasure. Go somewhere else for such. These that come here should realize that they come as pilgrims, humble and devout, to one of the holy places of the earth. You should remember also that it is not to everyone who asks in prayer that it is given. You may be afflicted, but there may be some reason why your affliction may seem to be good in the sight of God. If there is a reason for it, it will not be removed; and you should be thankful that it is so. For otherwise you might fall into some worse affliction. If you were going away on the train, and you should fall at the station and break your leg, that would be an affliction. But suppose you should hear afterward that all the persons on the train that you were to take, had been killed later in a collision. You would then be thankful for the affliction that had kept you from going on that train. So it may happen that you may come here to St. Anne, and may ask and may not receive. But you certainly will receive if that seems best to God. The child asks for sweets, but the parent must sometimes refuse for the good of the child. Do not be ungrateful enough to repine. You cannot get fruits and food without tilling the soil and working for them. The good things seldom grow wild for the plucking. You may come here to be healed of disease and go away uncured. But if you maintain the right spirit toward God, you will be helped in soul if not in body. Always remember that; and, for the mercies that are given, for the limbs that are healed because that seems good in the sight of God, give thanks to Him and to the good St. Anne who here listens to the sorrows of man."

Even the Redeemptorist Fathers who are the guardians of the shrine, are unable to keep a complete register of all the wonderful cures that have been wrought here, as many who are cured, are like "the ships that pass by the night." They come from far and near, leave their crutches or other "ex-votos" at the shrine and return home in a few hours without informing the priests in charge. Many obtain relief after they reach home or while they are on the way.

Some are healed after having made several pilgrimages, others are cured perfectly and instantly, and others again but partially. The Fathers are very particular in accepting evidence of a miraculous manifestation in all cures, as many people have a vivid imagination and might otherwise, for the time being unintentionally impose upon them. It is for this reason that the most striking cures only are taken into consideration and are recorded in the annals of St. Anne de Beupre. Nevertheless, the numerous and unquestionable proofs that are present in the Basilica of St. Anne, more than suffice to show that it is a spot signally favored by Heaven. The repeated instances where the crippled have been healed and straightened, the paralytic made to

walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the weak and delicate made strong and the diseased cured—one and all prove that this spot is holy. That the spirit of St. Anne dwells therein, and inclines itself in a special manner to listen to the prayers of her faithful suppliants.

The statistics of the past year, show the result to be very gratifying. According to the official list of the Quebec, Montmorency and Charlevoix Railway to St. Anne's, there were seventy-eight thousand five hundred people came by rail, and Mr. Simard, proprietor of the wharf, announces that thirty-five thousand arrived by boat. Over seven thousand persons from the surrounding parishes came on foot or in vehicles, which brings the total number of those who visited St. Anne de Beupre during 1899 up to one hundred and twenty thousand five hundred. Of these over forty thousand arrived during the month of July alone. According to the register at the Basilica, there were one hundred and twenty-two organized pilgrimages from various points in the United States, the Lake St. John region and the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. One hundred and twelve thousand Holy Communion were administered and five thousand Masses were celebrated in the Basilica during the year.

Amongst the many miraculous cures worked at the shrine during the year, we will mention those only who were cured instantly and remarkably of diseases or infirmities, which medical science had declared incurable. These facts have been obtained by personal observation at St. Anne's, and also through the kindness of Rev. Father Wittebolle, C.S.S.R., the editor of the "Annals," and of Rev. Father Holland, C.S.S.R., the director of English-speaking pilgrims at St. Anne de Beupre.

The season of pilgrimages generally opens with the month of May; and one of the first of the remarkable cures that 1899 witnessed was that of a little boy named Emile Thibault who resides in our own city of Montreal. For several months previous to June last, he had been suffering from bone disease, also called "caries of the bone" and "consumption or decay of the bone." Ulcers appeared on both legs, and he daily grew thinner. He could not walk but a few steps, and was unable at all to kneel. The attending physician, Dr. H. Dufresne, after constant treatment, finally told the parents that as the membrane surrounding the bones was affected and caries of the bone had set in, the case was incurable. As another member of the family had died of the same dread disease after three years of suffering, the parents resolved to place their hope in a visit to St. Anne de Beupre, and with the doctor's consent, the child and his elder sister accompanied the pilgrimage of lady Tertiaries of St. Francis, which took place from Montreal on June 17th, under the direction of Rev. Father Columban, O. S. F. What followed is best narrated in the sister's own words.

"I started with a firm confidence that Emile would be cured. On arriving at St. Anne, he walked from the boat to the Basilica without complaining too much. Oh, what a happiness we felt on entering the shrine! A Mass was said at once, and I received Holy Communion. My little brother remained sitting during that time, and at the moment of the Elevation I asked him to try to kneel down. He began very slowly, and finally succeeded, remaining upon his knees, for I know not how long. After Holy Mass, we went to breakfast. I often asked him whether he suffered, and he answered that he did not. I then began to believe that he was cured. After breakfast I took him to the Scala Santa, and asked him to ascend the twenty-eight steps with me, and he succeeded in ascending some of them. He then went up to the top without difficulty. I

asked him once more if he felt any pain, and he said he did not. My heart overflowed with joy, and I said to myself: "He is truly cured."

Until then I had not ventured to remove my little brother's stockings to look at his legs; for it seemed to me that this would be incredulity on my part. I needed not to see in order to believe. I knew and believed he was cured. In the evening, three Rev. Fathers who were on board the steamer, came to see him, and I decided to remove his stockings and the clothes covering his sores. He was entirely cured. Rev. Father Marie d'Alcantara struck his legs lightly. Emile smiled, and said it did not hurt him. Upon our return to Montreal, the doctor visited his little patient, and was greatly surprised on finding his legs completely cured. All traces of the disease had disappeared." Here is a copy of the certificate given by Dr. Dufresne to Miss Thibault in connection with the sudden cure of little Emile:—

Montreal, June 20th, 1899.
"I attended Emile, child of Mr. Charles Thibault, before his departure for St. Anne de Beupre. Osteomyelitis of adolescents was beginning to form in the upper portion of the thigh bones; the periosteum was affected. This illness is very serious, and frequently a long one. On the very day of his return from St. Anne de Beupre, I found that the disease had disappeared completely without leaving any traces. Moreover, the child can walk easily, and even run about, although he had great difficulty in walking previous to his departure. Under the circumstances, I firmly believe that this sudden cure is quite supernatural and miraculous.

Signed,
C. A. HENRI DUFRESNE, M.D.

A few days later, on June 21st, other signal favors were granted. The first was that of a little girl, thirteen years old, the daughter of a widow, Mrs. Auger, who had come to St. Anne's with the Joliette pilgrimage, under the direction of Rev. Father Beaudry, Superior of the Clerics of St. Viateur. Through the effects of a disease, the child's leg had become twisted by the contraction of the sinews at the knee, and she was unable to walk. She was led before St. Anne's statue by those who accompanied her, and after a few moments, she came back unaided, radiant with joy and supporting her body with ease upon the limb that was powerless a moment before.

The second cure was that of a man who had come upon the same pilgrimage, and who resides in St. Gabriel de Brandon. He was a cripple from the effects of a wound inflicted some years ago, and since then was compelled to walk with crutches. He left his crutches after him at the shrine as an evidence of his cure.

On June 28th, Jean Baptiste Valcourt, who had been deaf for ten years, recovered his hearing. He accompanied the pilgrims from Madawaska; and his pastor, Father Thibault, said that the man was so deaf that when he went to confession, everybody had to go out of the church. Mr. Valcourt is married and forty years of age. His sister, who resides in the United States, made the pilgrimage with him to obtain his cure. He felt better during the night, and after receiving Holy Communion, his deafness disappeared. Their prayers were granted, and he afterwards heard every word perfectly. Both he and his sister reported his cure. Here is the certificate of Father Thibault, pastor of St. Rose du Degele:—

July 3rd, 1899.

"I certify that Jean Baptiste Valcourt was the deafest man of the parish of St. Benoit, Packington, and that since his pilgrimage to St. Anne de Beupre on June 25th, he hears like any ordinary person. Rev. Father Proulx, S.J., who is here at present, and who has conversed with the said J. B. Valcourt, finds that he hears well. Mr. Valcourt is never weary of saying that St. Anne has cured him of his deafness."

Signed,
A. THIBAUT,
priest.

On July 12th, Mr. Victor Poulin, of Pittsfield, Mass., who had been paralyzed for two years and a half, recovered the use of his limbs at the moment when he received Holy Communion. He had come to St. Anne's with Father Marcoux's pilgrimage, from Springfield, Mass., and his cousin, Mr. J. Poulin, had been obliged

to carry him up on his shoulders into the church. Here is the certificate of two physicians who were present at St. Anne at the moment of the cure:—

St. Anne de Beupre, July 12, '99.
We certify that we saw Mr. Victor Poulin, of Pittsfield, Mass., U. S., unable to use his legs, and suffering from an affection of the spinal marrow, the natural consequence whereof was paralysis of the lower limbs. We further certify that we saw and examined the said Victor Poulin after Mass, and found him cured. In testimony whereof we have signed—William A. Baribeault, physician, Spencer, Mass., and (Louis Ovide Morasse, M.D., Putnam, Conn.) The happy man who had been cured, walked on the following day over a mile, and ascended the twenty-eight steps of the Scala Santa upon his knees.

Mr. Louis Beaulac, a farmer of Nicolet, was suddenly cured on July 18th, while returning from St. Anne de Beupre on the steamer "L'Estuaire." He suffered from an aggravated form of sciatica, and for four months and a half previous he was unable to walk without the aid of two crutches. He accompanied the Nicolet pilgrimage, under the direction of Rev. Father De Carheil, pastor of St. Angele, and Father L. H. Lavalles, pastor of Nicolet Cathedral. He was carried before the miraculous statue at St. Anne; received Holy Communion at the pilgrims' Mass, and prayed with all the fervor of his soul. He returned to the steamboat without feeling any change in his condition, and departed from St. Anne's, believing that God did not wish him to be cured. Although resigned, he was discouraged. About four o'clock in the afternoon, his brother-in-law asked him: "Do you believe that St. Anne is able to cure you?" "I do believe it," answered Mr. Beaulac. Upon making this avowal of faith, the sick man felt, as it were, an electric shock through all his limbs, and all the pain he had so far endured, ceased completely to give place to new strength. He arose, and without the aid of his crutches walked with a firm step, and went all over the boat easily. He even climbed without difficulty, the stairs that led to the saloon of the boat. He was completely cured! His wife wept with joy, and the other pilgrims congratulated him, who on the eve of the pilgrimage had been so miserable and who could now follow them freely. His crutches now useless, were forwarded to St. Anne de Beupre, and were placed at the foot of the miraculous statue of St. Anne.

Mrs. Thomas Hartley, of New Bedford, Mass., was cured while attending Benediction in the Basilica of St. Anne de Beupre, on July 21st. She had been under the doctor's treatment during nine years for an internal ulcer; and a painful and dangerous surgical operation had failed to do her any good. Speaking of her miraculous cure, Mrs. Hartley said: "I prayed fervently to St. Anne, that if it were the will of God, she would cure me of the disease which had kept me in suffering for nine years. Suddenly, during Benediction, a beautiful light seemed to shine out from the statue. All around and far, far behind, I could see nothing but this dazzling light. St. Anne turned her eyes upon me in the midst of this vision, and said to me slowly, 'You are cured, you are cured.' I was fascinated by the gaze from her sweet face, and could do nothing but sob. I did not see any of the people in the church, although I knew they were there. It was a terrible effort to keep from standing up where I was, and screaming that I had been cured. I was beside myself with joy, happy that St. Anne had heard me and granted my prayers. I am now in perfect health, and can walk as well as ever."

July 22nd, an Indian, named Peter Jacques, belonging to the Micmac tribe, was completely cured of paralysis, which had deprived him of the use of his right arm and leg. For two months he had been confined to his bed; and when he tried to rise he could only move by leaning on a chair and pushing it before him. The doctor that had attended him, said that he was incurable. It was then that he and his wife resolved upon making a pilgrimage to St. Anne de Beupre. They arrived on Thursday evening, July 21st, he leaning upon a stick, a mere branch of a tree. The following morning, he received Holy Communion with great fervor. After

having breakfasted, he returned to the church, where he remained until noon before St. Anne's statue, reciting whatever prayers were suggested to him by his faith and confidence. Upon rising, he said to his wife that he felt perfectly cured, and immediately placed his stick with the other ex-votos at the foot of the statue. He walked afterwards without any support; and continued his devotions all Friday afternoon and Saturday. He visited the different chapels, and twice ascended the Scala Santa. Every symptom of paralysis had disappeared, and his strength had returned. The stick could easily be recognized among a number of crutches, and other contrivances left during the year at the foot of the miraculous statue of St. Anne.

The cure of Sister Mary Gertrude, a Sister of Mercy from Newfoundland, which occurred on July 27th, was very striking; and was witnessed by the thousands who flocked to St. Anne de Beupre for the feast of St. Anne. The story of her illness and cure is told by the Mother Superior of the convent, who accompanied her to the shrine. Sister Mary Gertrude Kennedy had an attack of St. Vitus' dance in September, 1895, accompanied by epileptic fits. In the following spring and autumn, the attack returned with fresh violence, and produced curvature of the spine and contraction of the muscles. In the spring of 1897, the former disease re-appeared with partial paralysis which deprived the Sister of the use of her right leg for several months. The same thing occurred in the beginning of November, but with the most alarming symptoms. Then came a hemorrhage of the brain, which made her a complete invalid, and took away her appetite. His Lordship, Bishop McDonald, suggested a pilgrimage to St. Anne de Beupre; as the case was very desperate, we placed all our hopes in Good St. Anne. We reached St. Anne de Beupre about the middle of July; and began a novena, which was to end on the feast. The novena passed without any improvement manifesting itself; and our patient remained with her neck twisted and bent forward. But on the following day when she approached the Holy Table, she suddenly felt a peculiar sensation in her back. She instantly straightened her neck, received Communion with head erect for the first time in three years, and returned to her pew without help. The last traces of her disease had disappeared, and she was completely cured. Upon their return to the convent at Conception Harbor, Newfoundland, a solemn Te Deum was chanted in thanksgiving; and Mrs. Kennedy, mother of Sister Mary Gertrude, presented the parish church, of which Rev. Father Veitch is pastor, with a magnificent statue of St. Anne. A pilgrimage from Newfoundland to St. Anne de Beupre, is at present being organized for the coming summer.

A little boy, fourteen years of age, Adjour Leclere, of St. Christine, Portneuf, was miraculously cured on October 27th. He was afflicted with some internal disease in the foot, which defied all earthly remedies. For two months he had walked only with the aid of two crutches. He was taken by his parents to St. Anne's shrine and was instantly and radically cured at the very moment that he was venerating the holy Relic. He left his crutches at the foot of the statue of his benefactress.

We could fill more columns in giving the details of other miraculous cures that happened during 1899; but as we consider that the foregoing ones will suffice to make known the wonders that are being wrought at St. Anne de Beupre, we merely mention the facts of some of the others. On July 12th, Mrs. Romelus Pilon, of Worcester, Mass., who suffered for several years from dyspepsia and catarrh of the stomach, had been treated by five doctors, and had undergone three operations, was cured after receiving Holy Communion.

On July 18th, Antonio Bourgeois, son of Mr. Louis Bourgeois, of Nicolet, was cured of sore eyes. On the feast of St. Anne, Mr. James McKenna, of Kingston, Ont., was relieved of pain after washing his foot in St. Anne's miraculous spring. On August 8th, Miss Helen Mahoney, of Ottawa district, whose leg had been crippled for six years, left her walking cane at the shrine, and was able

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