

A FAMOUS CANADIAN SHRINE.

BY J. J. BELL.

ON the north shore of the River St. Lawrence, 22 miles below Quebec, opposite the eastern end of the island of Orleans, and nestling at the base of the hills which skirt the river, lies the little village of Ste. Anne de Beaupré. At first sight there is nothing to distinguish it from the hundreds of villages which form the centres of the parishes in the Province of Quebec, except that the sign "Hotel," or "Maison de Pension," hangs in front of a larger proportion of the houses. There is the same long, straggling street, the clean, white-washed houses, the long wharf projecting far enough into the stream to allow the steamers to land at low tide, the convent, the priest's house, and the substantial parish church, with its glittering tin roof and spires the main feature of the landscape in all Lower Canadian villages. But Ste. Anne has a more than local reputation, and is a favorite resort for pilgrims, drawn thither by the miraculous cures which are said to be performed by the patron saint from which it derives its name.

Leaving Quebec, with all its historical associations, one beautiful summer morning, our steamer proceeded down the south channel of the St. Lawrence towards Ste. Anne. On the left we caught a glimpse of the Falls of Montmorenci, gleaming and dancing in the sunshine, which were soon hidden by the island of Orleans, formerly called the island of Bacchus by Champlain, from the thick network of wild grape vines which formed an almost impenetrable hedge along its shores. The island is now a famous resort for Quebeckers, and summer cottages may be seen interspersed with the neat white-washed houses of the inhabitants. Rounding the eastern end of

the island, the steamer was soon moored at the long wooden wharf, which towered above us, for the tide was out.

A brisk walk brought us to the only street the village boasts, running parallel to the shore. We soon reached the church, and met with unmistakable evidences that thither the blind, the halt and the lame resort. Here was an aged man leaning on the arm of his son, there a mother carrying her sick babe, yonder a girl leading her blind sister, all in quest of the healing which La Bonne Ste. Anne is believed to be both able and willing to impart.

The church is a massive stone building, more pretentious than those of neighboring parishes, and well it may be, for few enjoy the revenue which it possesses, the willing offering of the crowds who visit it. Over the front gable is a statue of Ste. Anne, and there are three niches containing statues of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Joseph.

Crossing the little grass plot in front, we entered the church, and there, to testify to the reality of the miraculous healing, were two pyramids of crutches, bandages, spectacles and canes, left behind by grateful sufferers who had no further need for them. The interior of the church is profusely decorated, the walls and ceiling being covered with frescoes, chiefly of shipwreck scenes, for La Bonne Ste. Anne has a special regard for sailors. The grand altar is very showy. Both it and the pulpit were removed hither from the old church. Here we see the beautiful altar-piece by Le Brun, and many of the tablets are very old and by good masters. Behind the altar, and over the door of the Sacristy, is a picture of ancient date, presented to the church by some sailors who had been saved