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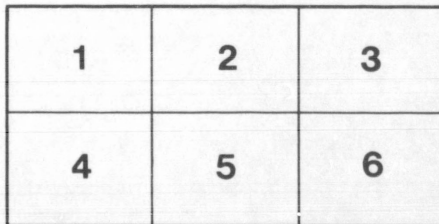
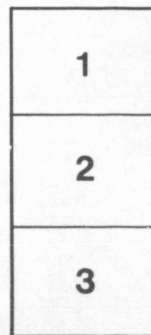
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# THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXIV.

MAY, 1882.

No. 1.

## THE CANADIAN MECCA.

HAD you been a pagan Iroquois on the war-path from Onondaga\* in the summer of 1661, standing on the Isle of Orleans, below Quebec, with the scalps of your Huron and French foes at your belt, you would have seen the remnant of the hated Christian Indians paddling in their bark canoes across the St. Lawrence to the northern shore. From the bluff of land where the picturesque church of St. François has stood for over a century and a half, you would have seen your enemies who had sold their ancient birthright for a mess of French rum and trinkets, steering for havens of refuge amid a rich panorama of forest and mountain—some of them up stream, where they found shelter under the guns of Quebec; most of them toward a great peak of the Laurentian chain of hills, where, close to the shore, a small stone chapel and a few houses marked the site of Petit Cap,—one of the oldest settlements on one of the oldest roads in Canada. Had you stolen before day-break at low tide across the water, and paddled through the marsh, you might have listened until you heard the bell for morning vespers, and then gliding ashore, you might have crept behind the brush and watched a procession of French and their Huron allies, headed by the priests, slowly marching to the chapel, and repeating the invocation: "*Jésus, Marie, Joseph, Joachim, et Anne, secourez-nous,*" while your blood boiled with hate, and your fingers tingled to get at their hair. About a century later, had you been a loyal English colonist of New York, you might have followed the Highlanders in their attack on the French and Hurons along this same road, and in this same little village, then named Sainte Anne. And if tradition be true,—and a possible fable

is as good for a *gobemouche* as a positive fact,—you might have seen the same little chapel delivered by the mysterious interposition of the saint herself, when the troops tried three times in succession to set it on fire, after the rest of the village had been burned. And now, one hundred and twenty-two years later, you may quietly run down on a holiday trip from Donnacona's ancient throne, the peaceful citadel of Quebec, to this same little village, now called "Ste. Anne de Beaupré," or more affectionately, "La Bonne Ste. Anne," and known as the most venerated shrine of the Roman Catholic Church in Canada—the soul and center of reputed miracles as wonderful as any that stirred the heart of mediæval Europe. Though not accepted without reserve by the more educated classes, they are as sacred to the superstitious habitant along the St. Lawrence as is the mother-shrine of Ste. Anne d'Auray, in Brittany, to the credulous sailors in the Morbihan.

The heathen red-skin of Onondaga has long since been Christianized, and is passing away. The English colonies, which had a sworn foe in the New France at the north, have become a great and independent nation. The old French colony, with its brilliant story, has disappeared in the Dominion of Canada, and Richelieu's grand scheme of a French transatlantic empire has its mockery in the small fishing-islands of Miquelon and St. Pierre, off the south coast of Newfoundland. Little did Richelieu imagine, when he excluded the Huguenots from France and her colonies, that he was doing as much as possible to add to the wealth of the Protestants of Europe and to the prosperity of the Puritans of New England, and that one of the results of his policy was to be the perpetuation of the very heresy he hated. Persecution often makes a

\*As New York was then called.





VILLAGE OF LA BONNE STE. ANNE.

Ste. Anne is as advantageous to faith as Michael Angelo believed the climate of Arezzo was favorable to genius. There was no obstacle at any time in Canada to the full development of the Gallican church of France; and it is no wonder that pilgrimages should become an institution of the old French

province, and that it should be claimed that more miracles have been wrought through the relics of a dead saint than are known to have been per-

formed by Christ. Though Quebec city, with its sixty dioceses, is mentioned in a bull of Pius IX. as the metropolis of the church in America, you will need to rub your eyes to make sure that you are not in Belgium. Under the French régime it was the heart of the colony, and was a spiritual as well as a material fortress. Ste. Anne de Beaupré was one of its outposts.

But who was this saint so revered long ago by the Canadian *voyageur* and habitant, and whose intercession, all the world over, now seems to be supplanting that of all other saints? It might be enough to know that, in 1876, the Pope declared Ste. Anne to be patroness of the Province of Quebec, though it is not stated how this affects the claim of St. Joseph, who has long been the patron of all Canada. But who is Ste. Anne? Tradition says she was the mother of the Virgin Mary, born of one of the family of David, and that her mother had predicted the birth through her of the Saviour. Having died at Jerusalem, she was buried in the family vault. When you are at our Canadian shrine you may see, in a little glass case, a confused mass of dried, broken bones, which you are told are those of the saint. You will naturally be curious to know how they got out of the family vault in Jerusalem into a little hamlet in Canada. In the time of Marcus Aurelius, the infidels destroyed all the monuments in the Holy Land, but, "according to tradition," one coffin could be

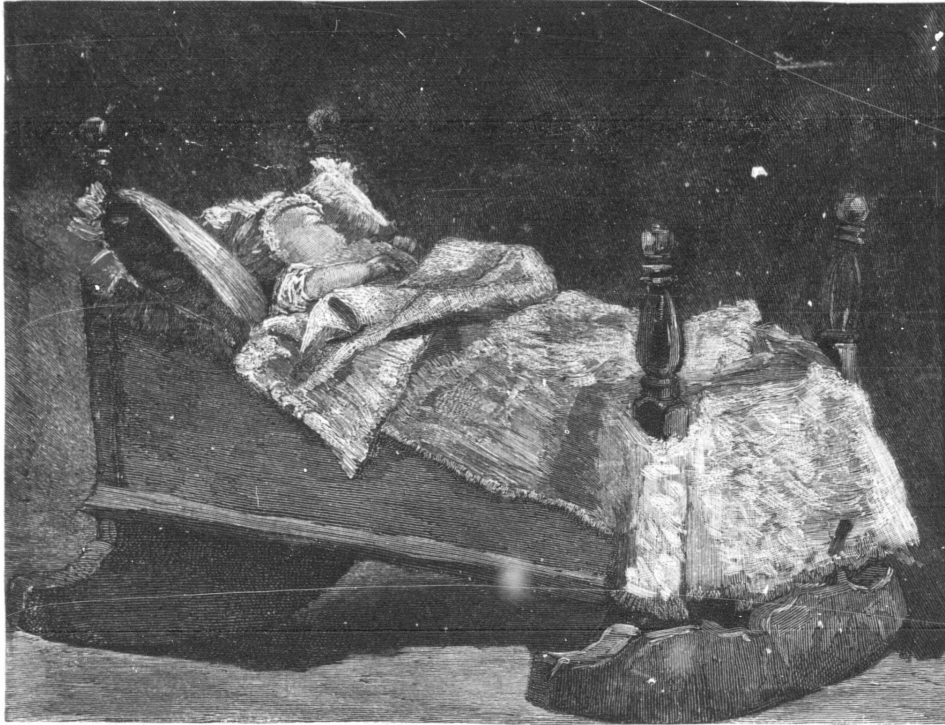


PILGRIMS ON THE CÔTE DE BEAUPRÉ.

neither burned nor opened, and being thrown into the sea, floated off to the town of Apt, in Provence, where it lay for a long time buried in the sand. One day some fishermen caught in their net an enormous fish, which clearly by its actions showed that fishes have instinct and reason, and that St. Anthony knew more than we give him credit for, when he preached to them. This fish struggled so hard that it made a deep hole in the sand on the shore, and when the fishermen dragged it out, the coffin of Ste. Anne appeared in the hole. No one in Apt could open the coffin. The bishop Aurelius placed it in a crypt, put

its associations with our Canadian shrine made the visit one of much interest. I must say, however, that the Canadian pilgrimages are never the scene of such debauchery as those in Brittany, for the devil seemed to have made it his holiday at the two Old-World pilgrimages witnessed by me. Religious ceremonies clashed with vulgar open-air dancing, and peasants who had just kissed the saintly relics, came out of church and boastingly swallowed brandy, glass after glass, in a deliberate effort to make themselves drunk.

Our Canadian Mecca has an authentic date



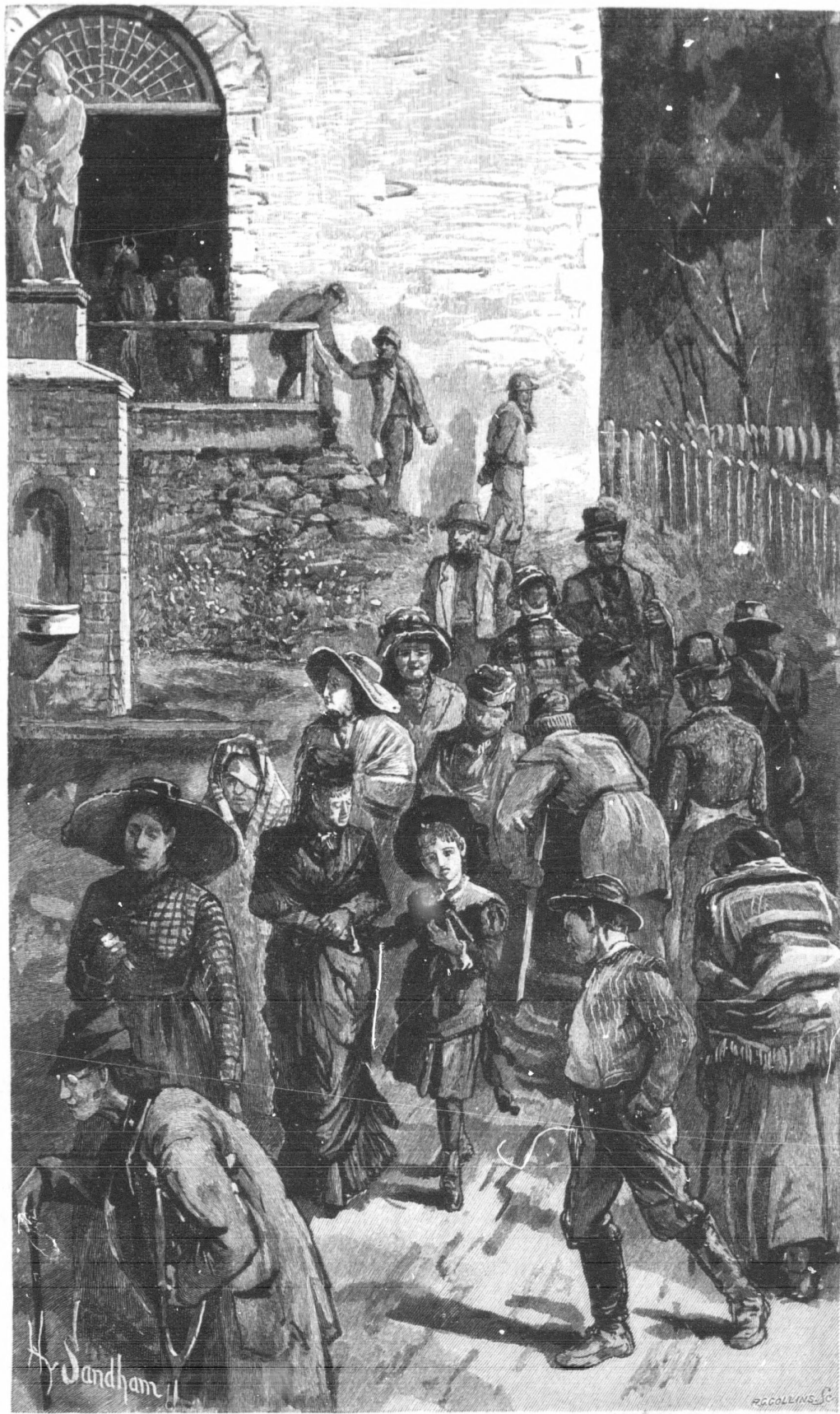
A YOUNG PILGRIM IN AN OLD CRADLE.

a burning lamp before it, and had it hermetically walled up. Seven hundred years later, Charlemagne, moved by the appeal of a deaf and dumb boy, caused a certain wall to be destroyed, in which the coffin was found.

I remember visiting a beautiful cathedral in Apt, on the bank of the Calavon, said to have been erected on the exact spot where the fish leaped and the coffin was found. A short journey from the Celtic monuments of Carnac, in Brittany, is the little hamlet of Ste. Anne d'Auray, the most famous shrine of the saint in the world. On a fête-day, a few years ago, I saw the special pilgrimage, and

back to 1658. A habitant of Petit Cap gave the parish priest of Quebec a portion of land, upon condition that in that year a church should be begun on the spot. The site was accepted, duly consecrated, and dedicated to Ste. Anne, the patroness of sailors. The foundation-stone was laid by the French governor. It is said that a peasant of Beaupré, who had "pains in his loins," went, out of devotion, to lay three stones of the foundation, and was suddenly cured; and that a woman who had been bent double for eight months by some affliction began to invoke the saint as soon as she heard of the miracle, and was "instantly



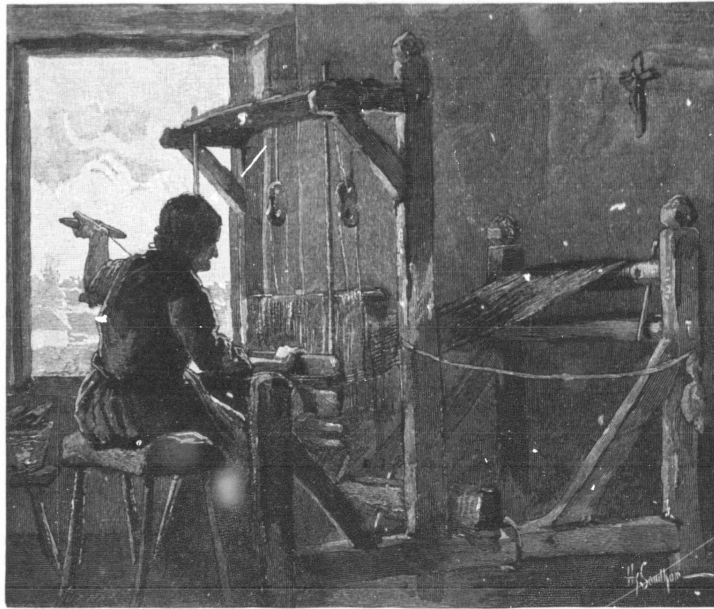


PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS.

able to stand on her feet, and as well able to move all her limbs as she had ever been." Miracle after miracle followed, until the sleepy little hollow was the talk of all New France. Soldiers, as they paced their beat on the fort, looked down the river as if they expected to see a vision. The peasantry grouped together in large family circles, just as they love to do to-day, and as the big logs crackled in the great fire-place, some one who had been to the shrine recounted his experience and gave reins to his imagination, and all piously crossed themselves when he had concluded. Pilgrims flocked to the New-World wonder on the St. Lawrence, and during the seventeenth century there were never less than a thousand on

imagine the thrill of wonder which would run through the minds of the simple peasantry, and the superstitious *voyageurs*, when the miracles were told.

It was not with the touching and simple spirit which led many to flock to the holy place in Jerusalem, in the time of the old Jewish law, that I went to La Bonne Ste. Anne. Nor was it with the unquestioning devotion of the Canadian peasant. I was simply a holiday loungee in search of the picturesque, with no more faith in La Bonne Ste. Anne than in the dozens of other shrines I had seen in Europe, and with a strong belief in the statements that, after the Crusades, innumerable relics were sold to the Latins by the



A CANADIAN INTERIOR.

the feast-day of Ste. Anne. At all seasons of the year, individual pilgrims were seen going afoot along the Côte de Beupré, and in winter in their sleighs on the frozen river. The Micmac Indians came regularly from New Brunswick for trade, and before feast-days their canoes were seen coming up stream to the shrine, where they built birch-bark huts to shelter the pilgrims. In fact, the whole country was excited by the mystery, and many churches were built in honor of the saint. It was a regular custom of vessels ascending the St. Lawrence to fire a broadside salute when passing the place. We who live in this age of electricity, and who affect to be beyond astonishment, but gape at every new sensation as if the world was yet in its teens, may

cunning Greeks and Syrians, and that several skulls of the same saint were found within a hundred miles of each other. What I had seen of the pilgrimages in Brittany and Belgium did not raise them in my estimation. The picturesque in Brittany could not conceal the dirt and mental degradation. I remembered, too, an incident upon the arrival of our train, when little Breton boys and girls met us with offers, for a sou, to say prayers for us. One who is familiar with the many genial and admirable traits of the French-Canadian peasantry, the superior moral and spiritual tone, and the respectability, cleanliness, and sobriety which put them above the same class of Continental people, would have no thought of seeing here the vice and licentiousness

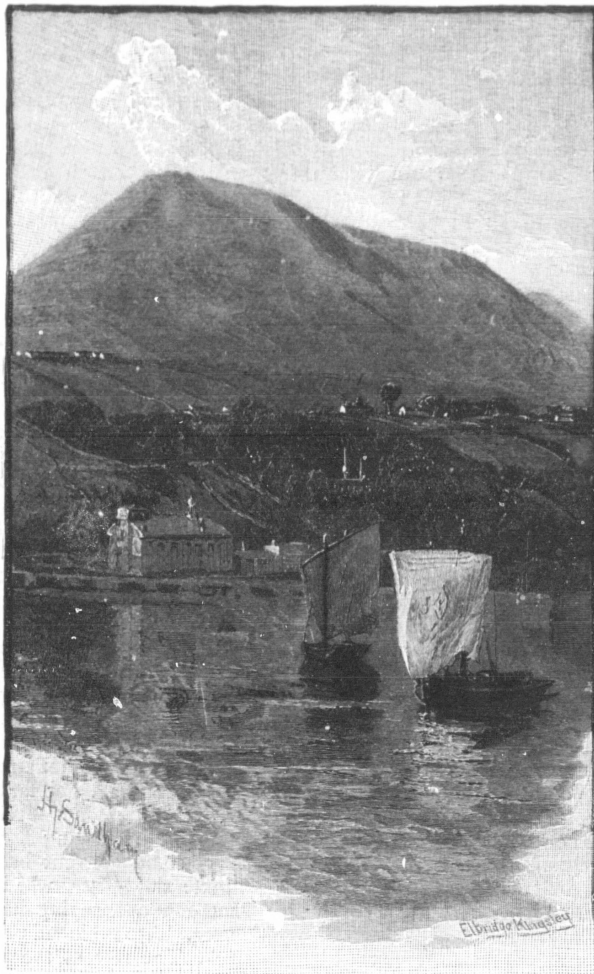
common to the Breton gatherings. The French-Canadian peasant may not know how to read; he may fear the spiritual threats of his priest more than the punishment of the civil law; but as a rule he is a peaceful Christian according to his light. Ste. Anne, to many of them, is as sacred as was Jerusalem to the Jews, and no doubt our good countryman pities and prays for me and my heresy; and, had he been born a Mohammedan, would no doubt have believed that he who died without making a pilgrimage to Mecca might as well die a Jew or a Christian.

Almost any morning in summer you may get the early boat just below Dufferin Terrace, and see dozens of quiet people muttering their devotions to themselves, each carrying his or her burden of trouble to Ste. Anne. The crowded pilgrimages which are undertaken by whole parishes *en masse* have much the appearance of an ordinary picnic, and most of the pilgrims suggest the idea that they come "more for the green way than for devotion." But you cannot mistake the sincerity and superstition of those individual pilgrims who go down to the shrine without ostentation. They are mostly women, many widows, and nearly all dressed in the conventional black dress, with black bonnet and long crape veil. You may go down by steamer or by road. If you go by water you can study these people better; but when you see the rich landscape you will wish you had taken the road; from the Côte de Beaupré you see the lovely water-scape, and then you will wish you had gone by steamer; so I will indulge you in both. We need no scrip, staff, or scallop-shell; no unshod feet—though once I saw a barefooted pilgrim below Cacouna; no gray gabardine girt with cincture; no asceticism, but a comfortable steamer or a double carriage, with every modern comfort cheek-by-jowl with much mediæval usage.

The river was alive with boats, steamers, barges. Half a dozen steam-yachts, used as tugs, were puffing consequentially, and scudding between Quebec and Pointe Levi. One little David had steamed up to a Goliath of a ship which had just crossed the Atlantic, and had taken the conceit out of the monster by lashing itself in some way to its side and puffing up the river with it, like a dwarf arresting a giant. After the usual jargon we were off, and had time to look about among our passengers. They were mostly pilgrims, and all French of the poorer class. But, no matter how poor, the French-Canadian is a model of tidiness. Like a sunflower amid ivy, there was the traditional young man from the country, arrayed, on a hot day, in black kid gloves, a flower in his coat, and a feather in

his cap. Beside him—very much beside him—his "own sweet Genevieve," blushing in colors enough to make the rainbow pale, and every part of her jacket and the white veil over her face covered with little bits of red glass balls; a poor mother, holding a sick child in her arms, walking up and down the deck in a sort of penitential agony, and refusing any help, though many of the kind-hearted women proffered their aid; several very desolate-looking widows. I had been told that few, if any, ever went to Ste. Anne's to return thanks for blessings received, but the uncharitable statement was here refuted, for several poor women were *en route* especially to express gratitude for the recovery of personal health. One dear old lady, rheumatic and almost blind, was led about tenderly by her son. As I saw her thin gray hair and bended frame, and watched the affection of her boy, my heretical spirit found a feeling that made us kin, and, while refusing to believe in Ste. Anne, I prayed inwardly for her recovery. I would have sung my pæans of praise had the dear old soul found the fountain of youth in the waters of Ste. Anne, and had she been able to leave her crutch among those on the pyramid in the church. Alas! I saw her returning in the afternoon more feeble than when she came. One pale, thin girl had fasted for five days, having read that, like Moses and Elias, Ste. Anne and her husband fasted entirely for forty days, "and wept perpetually." A girl with inflamed and bandaged eyes was going with her father to perform a *novena*, or nine days' religious exercise. Two nuns were chatting together; a solemn servant of some convent held in one hand a five-minute sand-glass, which she turned as the sand ran out, saying her prayers at the same time. Two rubicund priests promenaded the deck. The rest of the pilgrims were fair types of the ordinary peasant, and were either ignorant or weak-minded.

Look at the splendid scenery before, behind, on either side. The Isle of Orleans, with its broad brow, is in front. The ships for England sail off to the southern channel. One fancies he can smell the sea here, and it may not be mere fancy, for the tide rises ninety miles above Quebec, and the water is brackish. It is out this morning, and there along the shore and up among the shiny rocks, the *bateaux* and wood-boats lie waiting for the flow. Just below us, as we keep to the left of Orleans, we meet two steamers tugging two great rafts, and the hardy Indian and French *voyageurs* wave their hats to us. There lies the Church of St. Pierre, upon the hill of Minigo, as the Indians called Orleans, built one hundred and twelve years



MOUNT STE. ANNE.

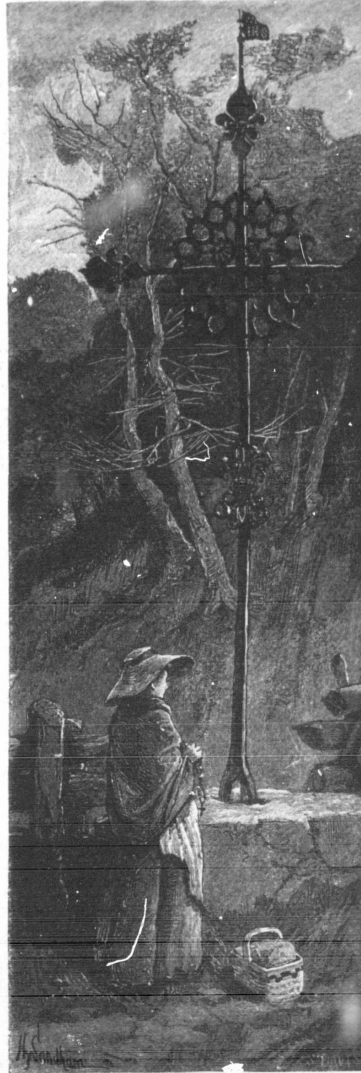
ago, on the site of a chapel erected in 1651. Looking to the left now, we see Montmorenci Falls, shining in the morning sun like a broad ribbon of molten silver, the dark shadows of the right bank casting long lines of gloom into the glen. As we pass the falls, we are wedging in between Orleans on the right, and gaps and grooves on the main-land to the left, eaten by ice and rains. Zigzag foot-paths run up to the hill-tops from the river and road-side; narrow strips of land, fenced into all sorts of geometrical figures, straggle up over the hills into the horizon; clumps of pines are seen along the shore; and above and about the trees are the picturesque white farm-houses, with their gray, and red

roofs—a perfect chain, long drawn out, of quaint hamlets set in frames of mountain and river; peeps of the blue Laurentian Mountains far behind; the white houses of Château Richer hugging the shore; and behind them the hills rolling up into waves of land, until they run to a peak of two thousand six hundred and eighty-seven feet to form Mount Ste. Anne, then droop into the valleys, and again run up against the blue sky to form the home of the bear and the blue-berry—Cape Tourmente. Here and there you see the stone churches and bright spires, both on the main-land and on the island. Look back now from the stern. I once heard a world-wide traveler say he had

never anywhere seen such a picture as this view back at the city. Quebec and Pointe Levi seem to be blended in one semicircular bay of bright water, lapping a dazzling array of glittering gems. The citadel looks clear cut, as if its masonry had been run into a mold. We see barges, with loads of hay or wood, and with only two hands on board, trusting to a rough sail and a stout oar to get to their destination; fresh-water sailors in heavy boats, pushing their oars before them as they face the bow, as one sees so often on Continental rivers and as often elsewhere on the St. Lawrence, about Quebec. The Isle of Orleans reposes like an emerald in the water at the point where the fate of a continent was decided. There on its bosom St. François sleeps, as if the dread Iroquois had never yelled their war-whoop on its hills; and if history has no echoes to stir you, come with me from that quiet little hamlet some autumn, with gun and rod, on the broad meadows of Argentenay, or among the marshes of the Château Richer, and I will promise you as fine a bag of snipe and duck as you can get anywhere within sight of civilization on this side of New Brunswick. What feasts of wild fowl, what epicurean relishes with Parisian cookery, they must have had in the way of game when peace reigned in the old château of St. Louis on the rock, the castle of the French governor, and life in this part of New France, brilliant with the wit and song of the nobility of Louis XIV., was more feasting than fasting; when Orleans was called the Isle of Bacchus, because of its great grape-vines, and of the fish, honey, and melons with which the red-skins regaled Jacques Cartier. I wonder Parisian wit did not try upon the Indian the civilizing influence of Parisian cookery; for it is related of a convert who lay at the point of death that he anxiously inquired if, in the pale-face heaven to which he was going, he would get pies to equal those which the French had given him. All about here—on mountain, in valley, on island, on river—you can trace the richest pages of Canadian and much of American history. Memories of Jacques Cartier, Sir William Phipps, Champlain, Frontenac, Wolfe, Montcalm, Carleton, Arnold, Montgomery, Murray, rise from the surroundings. And then you may come down from your imagining and see Huron and Iroquois merging into French and English, and the queer jumble of Indian, Norman, Breton, English, in name, in face, in speech, in religion, slowly but surely blending, as the centuries roll away, to form one people. Is it not a bit of early British history—the story of the Norman, Dane, and Saxon—being repeated in the New World?

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But now we see the sun playing on the convent-spire of Ste. Anne; Cape Tourmente and Orleans seem to meet, and the river has the appearance of a great bay. Long ribbons of the characteristic Canadian fence run crookedly up to the crest of pines; a fringe of houses lies along the shore. And now the main-land and the island divide; the open river shows the line of the hazy shore downstream, and we are approaching the long wharf and the toll-gatherer of our Mecca. But come back with me to Quebec, and drive through the romantic hamlets of the Côte de Beaupré, with its endless interest in life, char-



BY THE ROAD-SIDE.

acter, and scenery. This is by far the most charming way to visit Ste. Anne's, especially if you have good company, if you like walking, and can talk the *patois*. If, too, you ever have walked through Normandy and Brittany, you can find no more fascinating trip for its associations than this Côte de Beaupré. If you are fresh from the story of "Evangeline," you will enjoy it doubly, for though the people are losing a good deal of their picturesque character, and you will rarely see the *toque bleu* of the habitant, yet in the same room you may often see grandmother at her spinning-wheel and granddaughter at her sewing-machine; you may cut into by-ways, and even get peeps into the low-roofed and high-peaked houses as you pass, that will bring back the poet's words and carry you into the eighteenth century. There are old men and old women, old houses and old habits, old agricultural and domestic implements and furniture, and old china enough to gladden the heart of any antiquarian. I fear, though, that the province is being stripped of its old clocks.

This trip by land is delightful. Early one morning we left the St. Louis Hotel in Quebec. If you are going ten miles into the country here, you are sure to receive "*bon voyage!*" as often as if you were going to Hong-Kong. Passing through St. Roche's and crossing the bridge over the St. Charles River, we were soon out in the open country. We were at once struck with the fondness of the people for flowers. Little squares and bits of land are devoted to their culture. They hang from gallery and window, around wall and well, and grow in wooden boxes, old jars, and miniature birch-bark canoes. Big and beautiful dahlias of all colors nod their full heads to us; the marigold, whose seeds were brought from France by the early explorers; the hollyhock, fox-glove, China-aster, and Normandy's flaming favorite, the sunflower, and other old-fashioned flowers of old-fashioned people, beautify and brighten the surroundings. Little houses, like stables, often just big enough to shelter a cow or a horse, and little gardens, are characteristic of this truly Canadian road. Springs of crystal water run down the hill into troughs for the horses, as in Swiss villages. All along for miles from Beaupré, the hill-side is luxuriant with wild plums, which are gathered and sent to the city market.

Along this road you will see some of the choicest specimens of the early French farm-houses, built of rough stone and mortar, with high-peaked roof and big chimney, often built out beyond the level of the gable, and with projecting eaves and dormer-windows. Some of these old houses are contemporaneous with the conquest of Canada. Most of them are

close to the road, and the fences on each side are as a rule very ragged, except among the best farmers. Little picket-fences, some of them over a century old, are characteristic—many of them so tattered that they remind you of the broken hedges of Tipperary, where, when a pig goes through a hole, he finds he is still on the same side of the hedge. The tall Lombardy poplar is an old-time favorite of the Canadian farmer. Some of the stables and barns have thatched roofs and a peculiar projection, at the gable or at the sides, several feet beyond the line of the foundation. At the same time you can see here as fine modern farm-houses and barns as in any other part of the province.

Montmorenci Falls is the first rest. Then you have a charming drive over the hills until you come to the quaint hamlet of Ange Gardien, where there is a small oratory at the entrance and another at the exit, and in the middle of the village the old church. As our carriage rolls on, little boys and girls with bare head and feet chase beside us, holding out bouquets in the hope that we will buy. They do not turn hand-springs like the waifs who follow the traveler's carriage in England. Sometimes children offer you a glass of spring-water, or raspberries or strawberries in cones of birch-bark. They are an improvement upon the way-side beggars of Savoy in Switzerland; for our Canadians have not arrived at the high art of mendicancy—singing songs in groups, chanting ballads in honor of Ste. Anne, or blowing Laurentian horns in lieu of Alpine. The children one meets on this road are most interesting. The Côte de Beaupré is historically prolific in babies, and you may see many charming children, such as one diminutive artist in mud-pies, or the little vagabond who roosts on the fence and sings out his "*Bon jour, Monsieur,*" as you pass; or the three little graces whom we meet coming out of school, in their pretty Canadian hats and aprons. And here are two genuine rustic boys from the hill-tops, going to Ste. Anne's to sell bottles at the holy fountain. You will never forget the native courtesy of these little men and women, as they doff their hats or courtesy to you. The grace, the look of the eye, and the movement of the body—surely it is nature's own, and *la belle France* can show none lovelier.

One of the institutions of this road is the healthy beggar, who is usually a good pedestrian, and with no such show of feigned affliction as the fraternity of the south and west of Ireland. Generally they are masterpieces of patchwork. Invariably they are as dirty as Bretons. Every village has its tolerated staff of these creatures, who go about as if they

had some sort of succession from the beggars of scriptural times. If the apostles had lived in our day and traveled on the road to Ste. Anne, they would not have had to go out into the lanes to bring in the beggars. The beggars would have swarmed on the road to welcome the apostles.

If you have seen the dogs used in small carts in Belgium by the market-peddlers, either tandem or abreast, you will recognize their lineal descendants along the Côte de Beaupré. Even the women who drive them will remind you of Ghent and Bruges. These dogs are to the peasant here what the pig is to the peasant of Munster. They lie on the galleries or sun themselves undisturbed at the door, and are allowed the run of the house. They are large black mastiffs, patient beasts of burden, without enterprise enough to bark. They do a great deal of hard work, are more domesticated than the coolie, and a sort of aid-de-camp to the horse at whose heels, or under whose cart, they trot. Near them sits an old lady on a bench knitting socks, wearing a cap the fashion of which her great-grandmother brought from St. Malo.

In a few moments we trot into the heart of our Mecca and pull up at "The Retreat," a cozy and clean hotel, kept by an English family who are as intelligent as they are hospitable. Mine host has a telegraphic instrument in the house. It was regarded with superstition by the habitant, whereas it is one of superstition's worst foes. We had arrived several hours before an expected grand pilgrimage coming down the river in chartered steamers, like the *trains de piété* at Lourdes. The village consists of one long street, and, were it paved with stone, would bear a strong resemblance to village streets in Switzerland, with the projecting signs, gables, and galleries of the many little *auberges*. Every house is an improvised inn, and all the fishermen are amateur inn-keepers. The street lies at the foot of the hill, and, as you go through it, you will see faces and figures that constantly remind you of the coarse women seen in similar streets in Swiss villages. Most French-Canadian country-women become stout and wrinkled in middle life, owing to the excessive heat of the houses in winter, badly cooked food, and hard work; but those who have to go up and down these steep hills become especially clumsy. It is wonderful to see these heavy women going up the zigzag hill-roads, swinging their arms at right angles from their shoulders, and climbing fences like a man.

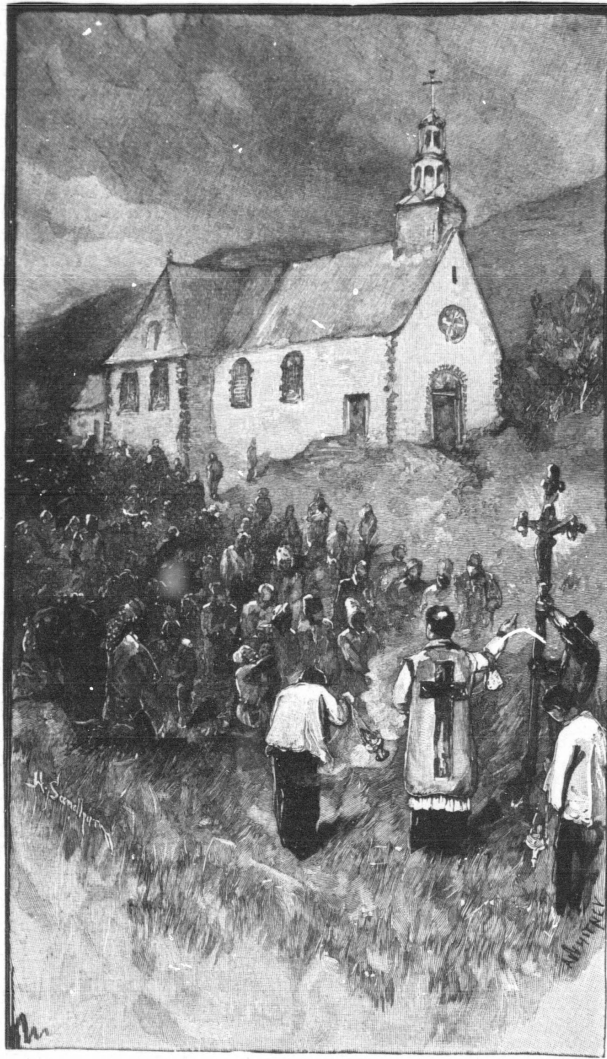
One of the characters of Ste. Anne is our jolly harness and shoe maker—a woman on the shady side of sixty. If her deportment has

been neglected, she is thoroughly honest and happy, as she smokes her clay pipe and shoves her spectacles up on her forehead to take a better look at her visitors. You may laugh at her ancient cap, but if you could find out why she laughs at you, you would learn that she laughs at your modern bonnet. Just over the way we saw, through an open window, a real live Evangeline, in her pretty Norman cap, at a spinning-wheel.

Let us walk down to the other end of the village: what has become of the ancient church built in 1660? To the right of the road stands a large structure a few years old, disagreeable in its ostentatious modernness. What right had they ruthlessly to destroy the old one? We are told that the walls were cracking. So much the better. To the left stands a small chapel, also modern, yet wearing a genial aged look. This was built out of the stones of the ancient chapel. The picturesque double bell-tower of the old building surmounts this chapel, and a part of the old interior was utilized, but one misses the plain façade, with its rose-window and its Norman doors; gone altogether is the atmosphere of antiquity which hovered about the old interior.

Look down the road toward "The Retreat." Is it not as if you were transported to a Swiss village? Painted on the gable-end of one house, you read: "ICI BONNE MAISON DE PENSION." And there, fastened to a stable, is the sign: "BUREAU DE POSTE OFFICIE," in very unclassical French. And what is this huge sign projecting out into the street? "E. LACHANCE, EPOUX DE DLLE. MERCIER. MAISON DE PENSION" (E. Lachance, husband of Miss Mercier. Boarding-house). And next door has another, surmounted by a fish: "MAISON DE PENSION. DLLE. MERCIER." Thereby hangs a tale: The house of Mercier had two daughters, one of them "fair, fat, and forty," who was the belle of the parish. Many a pilgrim from Quebec went to Ste. Anne more to see this maiden than to pray. An enterprising rival, who kept the hotel next door, cast sheep's-eyes upon the goddess; she succumbed, and became his wife, and transferred her interest in the hotel business to her liege lord. The old house still kept up the old sign of "Miss Mercier," and the ingenious benedict took down his old one and had it repainted, so as to announce to the world that he had married, and was in possession of the great attraction of the rival house.

But there the steamers come, and soon two thousand pilgrims land on the wharf. A brass band leads the way, and the people file up in long procession, dusty but devoted, many, no doubt, with mingled hopes and fears. Over

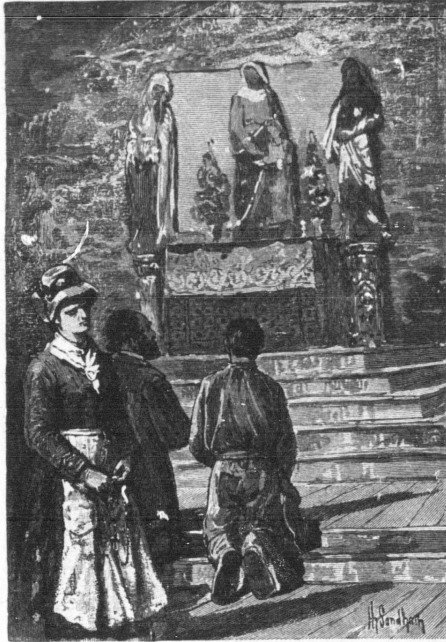


THE OLD CHURCH.

forty cripples limp along on crutches, or supported by friends, and a pitiable sight it is. The procession enters the new church, where, at the high altar and at the sides, a number of priests preside. As you enter, you see a large money-box, of ancient date and curious construction, fastened to a pillar by iron stanchions. The quaint padlock is opened by an old-fashioned bed-key. Over the side doors are rude *ex voto* paintings, representing wonderful rescues from peril by water through intercession to Ste. Anne. Over the altar is a picture of the saint by Le Brun, the eminent French artist, and the side altars contain

paintings by the Franciscan monk Lefrançois, who died in 1685. Hung upon a decorated pedestal is a handsome oval frame or reliquary like a large locket, surrounded with garnets, and having in its center a rich cross of pearls. Besides this, you see the collection of bones said to be the relics of the saint, consisting of a piece of one finger-bone, obtained in 1663, by Bishop Laval, from the chapter of Carcassonne, and which was first exposed to view on the 12th of March, 1670. In another case there is a piece of bone of the saint, obtained in 1877, but the Redemptorist Fathers, who have charge of the mission,





IN THE NEW CHURCH, ON THE SITE OF THE OLD.

do not know to what part of the body it belongs. The dry bones of the saint do not appear to differ in glory from those of a sinner. The church also claims to own a piece of the true cross upon which our Saviour died, and a piece of stone from the foundation of the house in which Ste. Anne lived, brought from France in 1879. Also there may be seen a superb chasuble, given by Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV., and some silver crucifixes.

Nothing, however, will excite more curiosity than the great pyramid of crutches, and aids to the sick and the crippled, twenty-two feet high, divided into six tiers, and crowned by a very old gilt statue of the saint. The collection is very curious and principally home-made, comprising plain walking-sticks, odd knobbed fancies of sexagenarians, queer handles, and padded arm and shoulder rests, made of pine, oak, birch, ash, hickory, rock-elm—of all common and many novel designs. A half-leg support testifies to a reputed removal of ankylosis of the knee-joint by intercession to the saint. I have no desire to sneer, but that there is some imposition and much imagination about these "miracles" no impartial mind can doubt. One may carry his charity to the verge of believing that implicit faith in intercession to a saint, with mingled hope and fear and a strong determination to force a cure, may in some cases really throw off disease; but the power of mind and will over the body with-

out any such intercession is familiar to every student, and is no doubt an undeveloped branch of medical science. A coincidence is not a miracle, neither is this power of the will over the body a miracle. Among the long list of reputed miracles, the following from a manual of devotion will be sufficiently suggestive: "In the year 1664, a woman broke her leg. As the bone was fractured in four places, it was impossible to set it. For eight months she was unable to walk, and the doctors gave up all hope of a cure. She made a *novena*, in honor of the saint, and vowed that if she was cured she would visit the shrine every year. She was carried to the church, and during the communion she put aside her crutches and was cured at once." Sworn testimony is given as to instant recovery in diseases said by physicians to be incurable by ordinary means, and among the particular favors accorded to the parish, the temporal as well as spiritual is not forgotten. The Bishop of Montreal says that it is Ste. Anne who obtains for it "rain in the time of drought." "For it is a pious tradition among you," says he, "that a little picture representing Ste. Anne, with her august



HOLY-WATER FOUNT AND POOR-BOX.

daughter, is the instrument of God's mercy towards you."

During the service in the church, the pilgrims crowd up to the altar and kneel in long rows in front of the balustrade. The officiating priests carry the relics in one hand and a handkerchief in the other, and touch the glass cover to the lips of the worshipers, wiping it after each kiss.

As you come out, you see pilgrims around the fountain, drinking its water and filling bottles to carry home. It is not the original well, which is said to have been the scene of cures as miraculous as those performed at Lourdes; but if it was justifiable to move the church, why not the well? As you turn to the left, you see a picturesque way-side oratory, built of rough stones and mortar, from which

which the pilgrims pin on their coats and dresses, like the shells worn by the pilgrims who have visited the shrine of Ste. Anne in Brittany. Heaps of little brass and plaster statues, photographs, beads, and other trinkets, attract the visitor. The air is full of babble from the crowds of tired yet talkative people sitting on the grass or the benches, eating their luncheon out of huge carpet-bags. Two girls, who had heard from me of the wonderful well in Brittany, were throwing pins into the fountain to find out their matrimonial prospects, and laughing heartily over their efforts. When the pins fell head foremost, hope grew sick; when the points first touched the water, the prospect of marriage within a year was certain. I noticed that, like the Chinese praying to his



EX VOTO PAINTING, 1754.

a stream of water comes from the hill. A walk along this road is very interesting. You may see the black cross against the wall of every house. The heraldic emblem of Berne is not more revered in that city than the statue of Ste. Anne here, and in every house you see it in plaster, brass, or picture. An old cemetery here has been used so much that the beadle told me he had himself laid three long rows of people, burying them indiscriminately side by side, and on top of each other—"first come, first served." Those who pay from twenty-five to a hundred dollars may be buried under the new church, the vaults of which are specially reserved for this purpose.

Little rustic booths do an active business in memorials of the saint, in the shape of medals,

favorite idol for "more money," they both persisted until the test turned the right way.

Coming back to our hospitable "Retreat," we saw a fascinating study of life and character. A tidy, handsome village girl had a boy seated on a stool on the sidewalk in front of her house, and was vigorously clipping his shaggy locks, catching the *débris* in her apron, which she had tucked around the lad's neck. "Surely some pilgrim to Ste. Anne will lose his heart if he risk his hair to the pretty barber," thought I. It turned out that some pilgrim had, and that she was a fisherman's wife.

Every house seems to share in the profits of the pilgrimages, for though the older inhabitants hardly ever spend a sou, youth and beauty must have its fling. You see barrels of root



THE COLLECTION OF CRUTCHES.

or spruce beer, huge slices of brown bread and butter, berries, gingerbread, boiled corn on the cob, and other Canadian luxuries, on the sills of the windows, or on rough deal tables at the doors. Inside you see long rows of solemn white cups and saucers, and piles of plates. In one little *auberge* there is a queer

character, with a monstrous hump on her back and another on her nose. She has been living at Ste. Anne's for seven years, interceding every day for the reduction of her deformity, but it increases with her age.

But what song is that stealing over the water, like a Canadian voyageur's refrain?



AT THE FOUNTAIN OF BLESSED WATER.

A boat laden with pilgrims from the Isle of Orleans is making for our shore, and the voices rise and fall with the dip of the oars in the true rhythm of the *canotier* :



Vers son sanctu - ai - re, de-puis deux cents ans, La



Vierge à sa Mè - re con duit ses en-fants. Dai-gnez, Sainte



Anne, en un si beau jour, de vos enfants a - gré-er l'a-mour !

REFRAIN.

W. George Beers.

