

INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF ST. ANNE DE BEAUPRÉ.

A CANADIAN PILGRIMAGE.

MIRACLES.—The French papers of Saturday evening relate that creditable persons who made the pilgrimage with the Association of the Sacred Heart recently were witnesses to two miracles at La Bonne St. Anne. A young girl named Marie Levesque, who had only walked with difficulty, during the last two years, with the aid of crutches, was radically cured. The second case was that of a young Irish lad. It is stated that on leaving the church this lad, with some friends, returned to the boat which was to bring him back to Quebec. He was only a few minutes on board when, suddenly throwing his crutch under a bench, he exclaimed to one of his companions, 'Oh, I forgot

to leave my crutch in the church.' 'But you want it,' replied his friends. 'No, not at all; I have no longer any use for it;' and with that he began to walk about the deck, his infirmity having entirely disappeared."

The foregoing paragraph met my eye as I glanced over one of the Quebec dailies one evening while awaiting a few purchases by my companion in a small stationery store of the Lower Town.

"Do people believe that these miracles are genuine?" I asked this of the girl behind the counter, pointing to the item.

"Why, of course," said she; "and I'm afraid you are a person of very little faith indeed." I was conscious of a very reproachful look from her dark eyes as she continued, "I see that you have never visited the Church of Our Lady the good St. Anne."

I mentally resolved that this, at any rate, should not longer be numbered among

my sins of omission, and so, after tea, bargained for a team, good for sixty miles, to start upon the following morning.

Le Moine, the contemporary local chronicler, gives his readers some account of the origin of the Church of St. Anne de Beau-pré, and the guide-books, with which every tourist down the St. Lawrence has his pockets stuffed, call attention to it as one of the standard attractions of the voyage. To the faithful it is the shrine of Lourdes, the Paray-le-Monial of the Western World, the most highly venerated spot in America, and is regarded with the same superstitious awe that Mexicans entertain toward Guadalupe and its divinely pictured blanket.

June 26, the anniversary festival of St. Anne, witnesses a great visitation into the little hamlet, overflowing its hotels and miraculous shrine, while upon every other day of the year a smaller crowd of devotees are here to be found. Advertisements of "pilgrimages" are frequently to be seen in the Canadian papers, and these, which are usually excursions promoted for the benefit of "Young Men's Institutes," or the parish church, together with the large number of visitors drawn hither through curiosity, or invalids in hope of relief, make up a current of travel highly profitable, and supporting a daily steamboat line from Quebec. The annual number of pilgrims is about 25,000.

St. Anne was the mother of the Blessed Virgin. After death her body reposed in the cathedral at Jerusalem until it was sent thence by St. James to St. Lazare, the first Bishop of Marseilles. This prelate afterward dispatched it to St. Auspice, the Bishop of Apt, who concealed his precious charge in a subterranean chapel. Goths and Vandals swept the church from existence, and for seven hundred years St. Anne rested forgotten. During brilliant ceremonials in the cathedral of the town, upon the occasion of the advent of Charlemagne, several miraculous incidents led to the recovery of the remains from the grotto, effulgent with divine radiance, and fragrant with heavenly odors. So read the chronicles of the Church.

Certain colonists in the Canadas were commanded by an apparition to erect a church in honor of St. Anne upon its present site, which was done in 1658, and ten years later this new shrine was enriched by a relic, which was nothing less than a bone of the hand of St. Anne. This is

still retained and carefully preserved, its exposition being a favor but rarely vouchsafed even the faithful.

It was long the custom of all ships returning from voyages to anchor here and honor St. Anne by a broadside. Old writers also speak of large villages of Indian proselytes which were located in the vicinity.

The name of St. Anne has always been a favorite in Canada, where, indeed, nearly every hamlet and railway station is canonized. There are said to be thirteen parishes in the Dominion bearing her name.

Our pilgrimage to St. Anne's began directly after an early breakfast. Visitors to Quebec are familiar with the first six miles of the road, as it leads to the Falls of Montmorency. Passing the walls near the Hôtel Dieu, we drove down through the Lower Town, across the St. Charles draw-bridge, and into the open fields. Here the road has the character of an English lane, environed by small latticed inns and country homes. Then the turnpike surmounts a hill, giving a superb retrospect of Quebec and the river, with the ruins of Montcalm's home in the foreground.

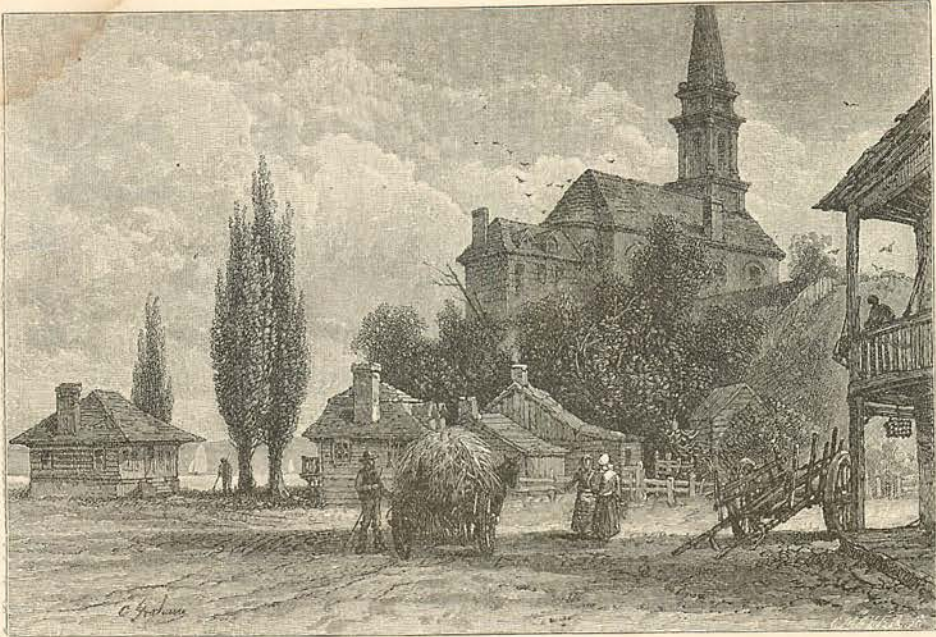
From every little hamlet twin church spires, sheathed with glistening tin, point above the foliage, and great black crosses mark the resting-places of the village dead. The farms stretch from the road to the river, half a mile away, narrow and attenuated, giving every holder a frontage upon both.

The houses are a study. Their heavy stone walls are scrupulously white, and pierced by small windows fitted with an inside sash to better guard against the winter blasts. The roofs are steep, and end in a peculiar and graceful upward curve at the eaves. These, too, are usually whitewashed, and the huge chimneys are incased in wood.

Everything and everybody is French, and the tricolor flaps in big flags and little ones where the union-jack is seldom seen. Little girls of undeniably Gallic origin ran beside our carriage, holding up bouquets of sweet-pea and marigold.

The amiable Frenchwoman who presides over the little hotel at the Falls stared after us in wonder at the unaccustomed sight of two travellers passing her famous cataract without so much as stopping for a moment's look.

The object of our trip was, however, of



A FRENCH CANADIAN VILLAGE ON THE ST. LAWRENCE.

the supernatural rather than picturesque order; still we could not forbear noticing the brown and buxom Ruths who followed the clumsy two-wheeled hay-carts through the stubble, or the dark-eyed Maud Mullers, in woollen caps and jerseys, turning the hay through the short Canadian reaping-time. Even the family mastiff is made to earn his share, the little boys driving him in harness to the fields with the mid-day lunch, and back with miniature loads of hay.

Bird-cages swing in nearly every porch. Ranks of aged Lombardy poplars mingle their dark and compact shafts in the light and shadow of road-side scenes that have changed but little in two hundred years.

At intervals along the road small chapels were seen, which are used but once annually, when the shrines inclosed are exposed to receive the votive offerings of processionists winding with stately chant along the dusty highway upon some festival day. Wooden crosses, sombre and time-stained, stand half buried in tangled verdure. I recall one, decorated with models of tools and implements, symbolizing a life of toil at the bench and in the field, closing in the full faith of the Church.

Our objective point, the Church of St.

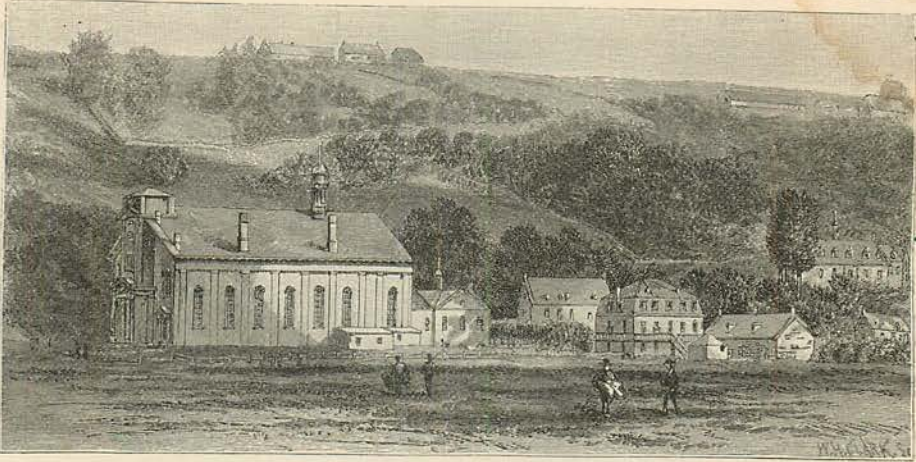
Anne de Beaupré, stands at the base of a steep hill crowned with farms, behind which the land again rises, forming Mont St. Anne, the most elevated point upon the river, being 2687 feet in altitude.

Seen from the deck of a passing steamer, the hamlet appears to straggle aimlessly along the road, at a distance of a quarter of a mile across marshy flats.

Four years ago a new church was built—a handsome and classic structure, yet lacking a spire—and the patron saint graciously deserted the old church upon the hill-side, where she had so long succored weak humanity, and took up her abode in the new quarters provided.

In front of the handsome and classic edifice is set a large circular fountain, about which stood a number of pilgrims engaged in the obviously unusual work of washing their hands and faces, which were duly wiped upon handkerchiefs or coat tails. Close at hand the proprietors of a small booth drove a good trade in the sale of beads, amulets, relics, and lithographs of the Virgin.

Passing the poverty-smitten, diseased, and tattered groups upon the steps of the edifice, we entered. The interior failed to bear out exterior promise, for the walls were rough-cast, the beams unpainted,



THE NEW CHURCH OF ST. ANNE DE BEAUPRÉ.

and seats of the most primitive fashion. Near the door a boy was held up on the shoulders of men while he chipped away with a knife at a heavy cross, tossing the slivers to an eager crowd of devotees, to be carried home as relics.

Along the walls were hung a number of very ancient paintings. One of these, a portrait of the patron saint, is said to be from the hand of Le Brun, the French artist, and was presented by the Marquis of Tracy. Others were painted by Lefrançois, a Franciscan monk who died in 1685. One is a representation of St. Anne hovering over a ship in distress.

Upon a post the following notice was conspicuously tacked:

"As the number of masses asked in honor of St. Anne exceeds those that can be celebrated in this church, the faithful are informed that as many as possible will be said here, and the balance at other churches of this parish within the space of about a month from their reception.

" ————
"Priest of the Parish of St. Anne de Beaupré."

By far the most conspicuous feature of the place was a towering trophy of crutches and canes, raised within the rail dividing the altar from the auditorium. These were of all sizes and shapes. Two fresh additions rested against the rail, where they had evidently just been deposited by the newly recovered owners.

Down the aisle toward us hobbled an old man with the help of two assistants. His crutches were discarded, but his features revealed a pain which gave the lie to his feeble praises of the saint at his res-

toration. At the rail a mother knelt, holding close a pigmy babe; and when she passed out her face was raised with new hope, but I saw in the face of the child only the seal of dissolution.

The priests in attendance moved about with a listless, mechanical air, bowing at stated places and intervals, one of them presenting a glazed medallion portrait of the saint to the lips of kneeling supplicants. The air of every-day occupation seemed impressed upon the whole drowsy scene, unrelieved by music or the usual pageantry of the picturesque Romish service.

As we walked up the single village street we passed the old man, who still dragged his weak frame bravely along,



THE OLD CHURCH OF ST. ANNE DE BEAUPRÉ.

the two attendants upholding him. The agony in his every lineament would have won the admiration and roused the artistic enthusiasm of Parrhasius himself.

In one favorable particular the village of La Bonne St. Anne will ever remain green in memory. Our horses were well groomed and fed, and we sat down to a palatable dinner of spring chicken flanked by varied adjuncts, preceded by soup and followed by a plethoric pie, all served by a laughing French maid, who utterly declined to comprehend our efforts in her language. Our bill entire amounted to sixty cents. Inquiry developed the fact that regular board was rated at about thirty cents per diem, whereupon we seriously considered the desirability of this region as a place of summer resort for parents with large families.

THE SONG OF ROLAND.*

GO to the MS. department of the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and ask for "Digby 23." You will be intrusted with a little volume, worn and old, such as the "jongleur" used to take out of his pocket after he had tuned his viol at the gate of some walled town or lofty turreted castle at the end of his day's journey. This MS. is the oldest copy of an older version of a still older poem; for you hold in your hand the work of an Anglo-Norman scribe of the twelfth century, the most authentic copy of the earliest and most beautiful of the French "chansons de gestes," the first of Christian epics, the "Song of Roland."

The last line of the poem reads thus: "Here Théroutle finishes his work"; and it has been said that a tutor of William the Conqueror bore this name, that a descendant of his was Abbot of Peterborough, that the tutor was the poet, and that the abbot had this copy of the poem made for the library of his monastery. All this is surmise, however. "Théroutle décliné" may mean only the copyist; but it is tolerably certain that this version of the epic, dating from the eleventh century, was made up in part of shorter poems on the same subject, much older, and probably lyrical, such as Charlemagne collected, and the French women used to sing to the music of the clapping of their hands.

* EDITOR'S NOTE.—The illustrations for this article are reproduced from the etchings by Chiffart and Foulquier in *La Chanson de Roland* (Tours, 1872), by permission of the publishers, Alfred Mame et Fils.

The jongleur's violin was often made of iron or copper, and sometimes he used his sword for a bow. So may have done Taillefer, the minstrel, when, as Wace relates, he led the van of the Norman army at the battle of Hastings, singing this very song "of Charlemagne, and of Roland, and of Oliver, and the nobles, who fell at Roncesvaux." Thus "to the sound of the 'Song of Roland' England was conquered by the Normans." We read how the Saxons spent the night before the battle in was-sail and revelry, while the Normans went to confession and prayed as they kept watch and ward. And this song, which inspired them on the morrow, is imbued with the glow of the dawn of feudal Christianity. These rude soldiers who, says Motley, "about this time seated themselves with gentlemanlike effrontery on every throne in Europe," were comparatively recent converts, and felt like real children of the Church. Children they certainly were in their undoubting faith and imperfect comprehension of what the new religion meant; but we must not forget that they were still thrilled by the narrow escape of Christianity from destruction at the battle of Tours, "where the horsemen of the East met the footmen of the West, and three hundred thousand Arab corpses marked the point at which the flood-tide turned." So to them every foe was a Saracen, and every infidel a deadly foe. Can we wonder?

When Charlemagne, leaning against the window of his palace by the sea, watched the white sails of the Norse rovers, and wept to think of their ravages after his death, he did not dream that descendants of these very Vikings would embalm his memory in legendary lore, and hand down his name in imperishable song through ten centuries. But so it is. Thus opens the "Song of Roland":

Charles the King, our great Emperor,
Seven long years has tarried in Spain.
Down to the sea the haughty land is his.
Castles and towns with their embattled walls
Lay low before him. All save one subdued,
And that one Saragossa, on the height.
Marsile holds sway there, and he loves not God,
Adores Apollo, and invokes Mahmoud:
He can not prosper.

This confusion of pagan and Mohammedan beliefs is not uncommon in the literature of the Middle Ages. Farther on, thus Charles receives the Saracen embassy: