

country is sexual immorality. The statistics from Banffshire and Wigtownshire are still too alarming to admit of any improvement being recorded. In Banffshire from 15 to 16 per cent. of the births are illegitimate, and it is reported that "sexual immorality has so permeated family life, and is so prevalent in the community that it is difficult to arouse a healthy and vigorous public opinion against it." In Wigtownshire it is stated that the evil is widely spread and is increasing. In 1891 the percentage of illegitimacy was 16.9. We refer to these various returns, not for the purpose of drawing broad conclusions from them as between country and country, but to point out the extreme ease with which Catholic, as well as non-Catholic, controversialists could play this game of tricky and 'odorous comparisons.'

In discussion upon this matter, no account seems to us to have yet been taken of one important index to the moral condition of a country: namely, pre-nuptial irregularities, which are said to be frightfully prevalent in some countries—as, for instance, in Great Britain (Lecky, 'European Morals,' 12th ed., vol. I., p. 144). For the rest we have elsewhere sufficiently pointed out that the hopeless incompleteness of the statistics of illegitimacy also enhances their uselessness for purposes of absolute comparison between country and country.

Lourdes

It was, we think, the 'Danbury News' man who showed the world the high possibilities of unconscious humor which a clerical reporter may develop when an office emergency imposes upon him the unaccustomed duty of describing a prize-fight. The opportunities for blundering, if not for fun, are equally present to a clergyman when he turns himself loose upon a medical subject in the columns of a daily paper. A case in point is furnished by one Rev. Frederick Stubbs, who contributed to a recent issue of the 'Otago Daily Times' an article on 'The Influence of the Mind on Health.' Our special interest in the article arises out of the fact that the writer classes the cures of Lourdes with the alleged ones of the Eddies, Dowies, and such-like 'faith healers.' He furthermore conveys to the reader the impression that only 'purely mental' ailments, or 'diseases caused by or dependent on some mental state' have been cured at the great Pyrenean shrine of Our Lady.

It is a good thing, even for a clergyman, to acquire the useful habit of looking at both sides of a subject. But the Rev. Frederick Stubbs seems to have made up his mind on the question of the marvels of Lourdes without having taken the saving precaution of acquiring some preliminary knowledge of the subject. His article, so far as this point is concerned, is a painful instance of the prejudice of the theorist. 'A close scrutiny of ideas in which we disbelieve entirely will often,' says Knowlson, 'reveal a logical power hitherto unsuspected.' A considerable mass of literature has been written round about the phenomena that take place at Lourdes. We need not here refer to the works of M. Henri Lasserre, nor to the volumes of the annals of Lourdes, published by the Fathers of the community there, and containing medically certificated cases of cures wrought at the famous shrine. The latest and most authoritative work on Lourdes is from the pen of Dr. Boissarie ('Les Grandes Guerisons de Lourdes,' published in Paris in 1900, and enriched with 165 engravings of remarkable cures, etc.) This is the third work on Lourdes that has issued from the pen of Dr. Boissarie. His previous books were entitled 'Lourdes: Histoire Medicale,' and 'Lourdes depuis 1858 jusqu'à nos Jours.' Both are scientific investigations of the medical history of Lourdes. They are intended chiefly for physicians, and bristle with details of great numbers of cures. Dr. Boissarie is described as 'a cautious, hard-headed practitioner, with an excellent

knowledge of his profession.' He is chief of the Medical Bureau of Investigation that was founded at Lourdes in 1884 through the disinterested action of Dr. de Saint Maclou, of the University of Louvain. The Bureau consists of a corps of resident physicians who make it their duty to subject the different cases to a scrupulous examination on the spot. The idea originated from two infidel physicians, Drs. Dozous and Diday, of Lyons, who, after a prolonged examination, had become convinced that there were at Lourdes not alone fervent piety and great sincerity, but likewise some agency for producing effects that lay beyond the natural control of man.

Since the Bureau of Medical Investigation was founded, numbers of eminent physicians from all parts of Europe have from time to time testified, after scrupulous examination of the facts, to the marvellous nature of the cures wrought by God through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes. In the six years preceding 1900, seventy-four professors of medical schools and hospital physicians of Paris were among the registered visitors to the wondrous grotto. In the one year 1897, as many as two hundred and fifty medical experts testified to the genuineness of the cures wrought at the great French shrine. Among them was Dr. Dor, of Lyons. He gave a certificate of complete cure to one of his patients, Vion-Dury, whom he had declared hopelessly blind, and who had, in consequence, obtained a Government pension for total disability. And it is not merely 'mental ailments' that are cured at the grotto of the Immaculate Conception. Dr. Boissarie gives names, dates, and medical details of the cure of cases of paralysis, deaf-muteness, plague, blindness, open wounds, cancer, advanced consumption, caries of the bone, etc. It should be borne in mind that no cure is credited as miraculous unless it proves to be complete and enduring at the expiration of a year or more. On page 159 of his latest book is the attested case of the sudden closing and complete healing of a large open wound as soon as it came in contact with the water. A historic case is that of Francis Macary, the cabinet maker of Lavaur. Macary had enormous varicose veins in his legs, attended with ulceration. He was an infidel and went into the miraculous waters without the expectation of a cure. But his recovery was startling and complete. It filled his physicians (Drs. Segur and Rossignol of Lavaur, and Bernet of Paris) with amazement. All three testified to his cure. Two of them declared, moreover, that it was inexplicable by science. And it turned the cabinet-maker of Lavaur from an infidel into a Christian. It would be easy to multiply cases. But Lourdes and its marvels are not to be ignored or to be explained away by cheap and unfounded comparisons with spurious cures and falsely reputed miracles and the transparent charlatanism of Dowies and the so-called 'Christian science' that is neither Christian nor scientific. 'Let the full blaze of scientific light,' says the 'Ave Maria,' 'be focussed on the spot. The very existence of Lourdes is supernatural, and the cures there of diseases pronounced incurable by medical science testify to an Almighty Power, and bear witness to the divinity of the Catholic religion.'

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