

MIRACLES OF LOURDES

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the centuries, Our Lady has truly shown herself Mother of the Church.

So at the dawn of the scientific and technological era, Mary came "in haste" to give proof that her Son is "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, the Light of the world, the Son of God."

The miracles of Lourdes are "the first of his signs" in the age of science . . . Lourdes is a witness to the divine. The miracles worked there are scientifically incontestable.

This work is really a compilation of facts and quotations from reliable sources and larger standard works. One of particular merit must be mentioned and recommended—the well authenticated "The Mystery of Lourdes" by non-Catholic writer, Ruth Cranston. (Great Pan). However, research from both additional and original sources probably gives this pamphlet some added interest.

Any doctor in the whole world regardless of creed or colour is free to investigate the evidence of the Medical Bureau. If the Bureau is satisfied that the cure appears to be genuine at the end of a second investigation (at least twelve months after the first) the case is then referred to the Medical Commission in Paris. This Commission, composed of eminent physicians and surgeons, studies the case on the evidence of the medical documents from a purely technical stand-point. The Commission makes a thorough study of the documents, certificates, results of examinations, x-rays, bacteriological analyses and everything to do with the case. The Commission calls in whatever specialists may be needed. After this examination the Commission may reject the cure or accept it. The Commission never uses the word "miracle". It merely says, "We find no natural or scientific explanation of the cure."

If this is the finding of the Medical Commission, the cure is then sent on to the bishop of the cured person's diocese with the recommendation that a Canonical Commission be appointed to investigate it. It is the Church that must decide whether the cure is a miracle. The Church authorities are even stricter than the doctors.

The Lourdes Medical Bureau has files of thousands of cures for which they can find "no natural or scientific explanation." but the Church is so strict that of these thousands of alleged cures, only sixty-six have been declared miraculous.

LIST OF THE 67 CURES GIVING DATE, PLACE OF ORIGIN OF PATIENT AND PATHOLOGY

(The last date in brackets indicates official recognition of miracle).

First cures, taking place between 1860 and 1862 were recorded by Msgr. Laurence's commission. From 1913 until 1946 there were no Canonical judgements.

1. Catherine LATAPIE-CHOUAT, of Loubajac, aged 58 on 1-3-1858 (1862). Paralysis of the right arm from stretching of the brachial plexus for eighteen months.
2. Louis BOURIETTE, of Lourdes, aged 54 on 27-2-1858 (1862) Blindness due to trauma, right eye.
3. Blaisette SOUPENE (married Cazenave), of Lourdes, aged 50 on 27-2-1858 (1862) Chemosis or chronic conjunctivitis with ectropion for three years.
4. Henri BUSQUET, of Nay, aged 15 on 28-4-1858 (1862). Tubercular fistular adenitis of the base of the neck for 15 months.
5. Justin BOUHORTS, of Lourdes, aged 2 on 6-7-1858 (1862). Chronic post-infective malnutrition with retarded motor development diagnosed then as tuberculosis.
6. Madeleine RIZAN, of Nay, aged 58 on 17-10-1858 (1862). Left hemiplegia for 24 years.
7. Marie MOREAU, of Tartas, aged 17 on 9-11-1858 (1862). Major diminution of vision with inflammatory lesions, especially of the right eye, progressing over 10 months.
8. Pierre de RUDDER, of Jabbeke, Belgium, aged 52 on 7-4-1875 (Bruges 25-7-1908). Open fracture of the leg.
9. Joachime DEHANT, of Gesves, Belgium, aged 29 on 13-9-1878 (Namur 27-4-1903). Ulcer of the right leg with extensive gangrene.
10. Elisa SEISSON, of Rognonas, aged 27 on 29-8-1892 (Aix-en-Provence 2-7-1912). Cardiac hypertrophy with oedema of the lower limbs.
11. Marie MABILLE (Sister Eugenia), of Bernay, aged 28 on 21-8-1883 (Evreux 30-8-1908). Abscess in the right iliac fossa with vesical and colic fistulae with septic bilateral phlebitis.
12. Aline BRUYERE (Sister Julienne), of La Roque, aged 25 on 1-9-1889 (Tulle 24-3-1912). Cavitating pulmonary tuberculosis.

13. Anne JOURDAIN (Sister Josephine-Marie), of Goincourt, aged 36 on 21-8-1890 (Beauvais 10-10-1908). Spinal deformity: pulmonary tuberculosis.
14. Amelie CHAGNON, of Poitiers, aged 17 on 21-8-1891 (Tournai 8-9-1910) Tubercular osteo-arthritis of the knee and second metatarsal of the foot involving both bone and cartilage.
15. Clementine TROUVE (Sister Agnes-Marie), of Rouille, aged 14 on 21-8-1891 (Paris 6-6-1908). Osteo-periostitis of the right foot with fistulae.
16. Marie LEBRANCHU, of Paris, aged 35 on 20-8-1892 (Paris 6-6-1908). Pulmonary tuberculosis (Kock's bacilli present in sputum).
17. Marie LEMARCHAND, of Caen, aged 18 on 21-8-1892 (Paris 6-6-1908). Pulmonary tuberculosis with ulcers of face and leg.
18. Elise LESAGE, of Bucquoy, aged 18 on 21-3-1892 (Arras 4-2-1908). Tubercular osteo-arthritis of the knee.
19. Sylvanie DELPORTE (Sister Marie de la Presentation), of Lille, aged 46 on 29-8-1892 (Cambrai 15-8-1908) Chronic Tubercular gastro-enteritis
20. Fr. CIRETTE, of Beaumontel, aged 46 on 31-8-1893 (Evreux 11-2-1907) Amyotrophic lateral spinal sclerosis.
21. Aurelie HUPRELLE, of St Martin Le Noeud, aged 26 on 21-8-1895 (Beauvais 1-8-1908). Acute pulmonary tuberculosis.
22. Esther BRACHMANN, of Paris, aged 15 on 21-8-1896 (Paris 6-6-1908). Tubercular peritonitis.
23. Jeanne TULSANE, of Tours, aged 20 on 8-9-1897 (Tours 27-10-1907). Lumbar Pott's disease with neuropathic club feet.
24. Clermentine MALOT, of Gaudechart, aged 25 on 21-8-1893 (Beauvais 10-10-1908). Pulmonary tuberculosis with haemoptisis.
25. Rose FRANCOIS, nee Labreuvoies, of Paris, aged 36 on 20-8-1899 (Paris 6-6-1908). Abscess of the right arm with gross fistula formation.
26. Father SALVATOR, of Rouelle, aged 38 on 25-6-1900 (Rennes 1-7-1908). Tubercular peritonitis.
27. Sister MAXIMILIEN, of Marseilles, aged 43 on 20-5-1901 (Marseilles 5-2-1908). Hydatid cyst of the liver. Phlebitis of the left leg.
28. Marie SAVOYE, of Cateau-Cambresis, aged 24 on 20-9-1901 (Cambrai 15-8-1908) Rheumatic mitral valvular heart disease with failure.
29. Johanna BEZENAC (nee Dubos), of St Laurent des Batons, aged 28 on 8-8-1904 (Perigueux 2-7-1908). Cachexia and lupus of the face of unknown aetiology: probably tubercular.

30. Lucie JUPIN (Sister Saint Hilaire), of Peyreleau, aged 39 on 20-8-1904 (Rodez 10-5-1908). Intestinal carcinoma.
31. Rosalie VILDIER (Sister Sainte Beatrix) of Evreux, aged 42 on 31-8-1904 (Evreux 25-3-1903). Chronic Laryngo-bronchitis, probably of tubercular origin.
32. Miss Marie-Therese NOBLET, of Avenay, aged 15 on 31-8-1905 (Reims 11-2-1908). Dorso-lumbar Pott's disease.
33. Cecile DOUVILLE DE FRANSSU (Sister Marie de Saint-Jean de la Croix), of Tournai, Belgium, aged 19 on 21-9-1905 (Versailles 8-12-1909). Tubercular peritonitis.
34. Antonia MOULIN, of Vienne, aged 30 on 10-8-1907 (Grenoble 6-11-1910) Fistulous osteomyelitis of right femur with arthritis of knee.
35. Marie BOREL, of Mende, aged 27 on 21, 22-8-1907 (Mende 4-6-1911). Six faecal fistulae of the lumbar and abdominal region.
36. Virginie HAUDEBOURG, of Lons-le-Saulnier, aged 22 on 17-5-1908 (Saint-Claude 25-11-1912).Tubercular nephritis and cystitis.
37. Marie BIRE, nee Lucas, of Ste-Gemme-la-Plaine, aged 41 on 5-8-1908 (Lucon 30-7-1910). Incurable blindness with optic atrophy.
38. Aimee ALLOPE, of Vern, aged 37 on 28-5-1909 (Angers 5-10-1910). Multiple tubercular abscesses with four fistulae on to the anterior abdominal wall. Tubercular peritonitis.
39. Juliette ORION, of St Hilaire de Voust, aged 34 on 22-7-1910 (Lucon 8-10-1913). Pulrnonarv and laryngeal tuberculosis, supurating left mastoiditis.
40. Marie FABRE, of Montredon, aged 32 on 24-9-1911(Cahors 8-9-1912). Chronic inflammatory bowel disease, uterine prolapse.
41. Henriette BRESSOLLES, of Nice, aged 28 on 3-7-1924 (Nice 4-6-1957). Pott's disease with paraplegia.
42. Lydia BROSSE, of Saint-Raphael, aged 41 on 11-10-1930) (Coutances 5-8-1958). Multiple tubercular fistulae with wide undermining in the left buttock.
43. Francoise CAPITAINE (Sister Marie-Marguerite), of Rennes, aged 64 on 22-1-1937 (Rennes 20-5-1946). Acute nephritis with generalised oedema and cardiac crises.
44. Louise JAIMAIN, of Paris, aged 22 on 30-3-1937 (Paris 8-12-1951). Pulmonary, intestinal, and peritoneal tuberculosis.
45. Francis PASCAL, of Beaucaire, aged 3 years 10 months on 31-8-1938 (Aix-en-Pronence 31-5-194 Blindness and paralysis of lower limbs.
46. Gabrielle CLAUZEL, of Oran, Algeria, aged 49 on 15-8-1943 (Oran 18-3-1948). Rheumatic spondylitis.

47. Yvonne FOURNIER, of Limoges, aged 22 on 19-8-1945 (Paris 14-11-59). Sympathetic causalgia of the arm: Leriche's syndrome.
48. Rose MARTIN, nee Perona, of Nice, aged 46 on 3-7-1947 (Nice 5-5-1949). Uterine carcinoma; epithelioma of the cylindrical glands.
49. Jeanne GESTAS, nee Pelin, of Begles, aged 50 on 21-8-1947 (Bordeaux 13-7-1952). Intestinal disorders with episodes of obstruction.
50. Marie-Therese CANIN, of Marseilles, aged 37 on 9-10-1947 (Marseilles 6-6-1952). Pott's disease with right sacrocoxalgia.
51. Maddalena CARINI, of San Remo, Italy, aged 31 on 15-8-1948 (Milan 2-6-1960) Dorsal Pott's disease with pulmonary and peritoneal tuberculosis with coronary disease.
52. Jeanne FRETTEL, of Rennes, aged 34 on 8-10-1948 (Rennes 20-11-1950) Tubercular peritonitis.
53. Thea ANGELE (Sister Marie-Mercedes), of Tettngang, Germany, aged 29 on 20-5-1950 (Tarbes-Lourdes 28-6-1961). Multiple sclerosis for six years.
54. Evasio GANORA, of Casale, Italy, aged 37 on 2-6-1950 (Casale 31-5-1955). Hodgkin's disease.
55. Edeltraud FULDA, of Vienna, Austria, aged 34 on 12-8-1950 (Vienna 18-5-1955). Addison's disease.
56. Paul PELLEGRIN, of Toulon, aged 52 on 3-10-1950 (Frejus-Toulon 8-12-1953). Right sided post-operative fistula.
57. Leo SCHWAGER, Benedictine of Fribourg, Switzerland, aged 28 on 30-4-1952 (Genea-Lausanne-Fribourg 18-12-1960). Multiple sclerosis for 5 years.
58. Alice COUTEAULT, nee Gourdon, of Bouille-Loretz, aged 34 on 16-5-1952 (Poitiers 16-7-1956). Multiple sclerosis for three years.
59. Marie-Louise BIGOT, of La Richardais, aged 31 on 8-10-1953 and 32 on 10-10-1954 (Rennes 15-8-1956). Arachnoiditis of posterier fossa: hemiplegia, deafness and total blindness
60. Ginette NOUVEL, nee Fabre, of Carmaux, aged 26 on 21-9-1954 (Albi 31-3-1963). Budd-Chiari syndrome. (Supra-hepatic venous thrombosis)
61. Elise ALOI of Patti, Italy, aged 27 on 5-6-1958) (Messine 25-6- 1965). Osteo-articular tuberculosis with multiple infected fistulae on the right leg.
62. Juliette TAMBURINI, of Marseilles, aged 22 on 17-7-1959 (Marseilles 11-5-1965). Osteo-periostitic fistulae of the femur, epestaxis for 10 years.
63. Vittorio MICHELI, of Scurelle, Italy, aged 23 on 1-6-1963 (Trento 26-5-1976) Sarcoma of pelvis.

64. Serge PERRIN, of Lion d'Angers, aged 42 on 1-5-1970 (Angers 17-6-1978) Recurrent right hemiplegia, with ocular lesions, due to bilateral carotid artery disorders.

65. Delizia CIROLLI, of Paterno, Italy, aged 12 on 24-12-1976 (Catania 28-6-1989) Ewing's sarcoma of right knee.

66. Jean-Pierre BELY, of France, aged 51 on 9-10-1987 (Angouleme 9-2-1999) Progressive multiple sclerosis over 15 years.

67. Anna SANTANIELLA, Salerno, Italy, aged 41, in 1952. Rheumatic heart disease.

Lourdes healing recognised as miraculous

The Catholic Church has officially recognised the miraculous healing of an Italian woman who visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France more than 50 years ago when she was suffering from a fatal form of rheumatic heart disease.

Anna Santaniello, now 94, said her illness disappeared during a pilgrimage to the Marian shrine in 1952. The international Catholic committee that runs the shrine has acknowledged Santaniello as the 67th person to be officially healed at Lourdes. In 1964, the Church had declared her case an "extraordinary healing."

Archbishop Gerardo Pierro of Salerno, in southern Italy where Santaniello lives, announced the Church's decision in November. Anna Santaniello told the daily *Il Giornale* that she was diagnosed with the disease as a child and the same illness had killed one of her brothers and a sister. "My condition got worse as I got older and after a while I was confined to bed, barely able to breathe. The doctors had lost all hope for me".

Catholic News Agency

SELECTION OF THE CURES EFFECTED BY THE PROCESSION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Brother Leo SCHWAGER, miracle in 1952; multiple sclerosis.

Jeanne FRETTEL, miracle in 1948: at the altar of St. Bernadette on being given a small particle of the Host as she was unconscious.

MIRACLE ATTESTED BY NOBEL SCIENTIST

Over thirty lines of biographical material in the Encyclopaedia Britannica is sufficient recognition of the calibre and world renown of Dr. Alexis Carrel (1873-1944). French surgeon biologist and sociologist. He had received his medical degree 1900 at the University of Lyons, where he began experimental research; he later continued it at the University of Chicago. In 1912 he became a member of the world-famous Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York. In the same year, his

work on blood vessels won him the Nobel Prize. Dr. Carrel was also the winner of the Sofie A. Nordhoff-Juny Cancer Prize of 1931. In addition to his ordinary medical degrees, he had honorary degrees conferred on him in Medicine by the Queen's University, Belfast; in science by the Universities of Columbia, Brown, Princeton, and the State of New York, and an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of California.

An Eye Witness

This world-famous scientist actually witnessed at Lourdes the miraculous cure of a girl, Marie Bailly, who was dying of tubercular peritonitis. The event changed his life. Because he maintained at the University of Lyons that Marie Bailly had been miraculously cured of T.B. at Lourdes, he was told by one of the Professors, "It's useless to insist, sir, that with views such as these you can ever be received as a member of our faculty. We have no place for you here." "In that case, I must go elsewhere," replied Carrel, so he went to America where he became world-famous.

Dr. Carrel wrote the story of Marie Bailly's miraculous recovery in his book, "Journey to Lourdes."

Scientific Observation

Speaking of Carrel, Dr. A. Marchand wrote, "At Lourdes, at the Hospital, Grotto and Bureau, he was a witness of the cure of this patient and he noted hour by hour, minute by minute, the changes that occurred under his eyes. It is, as it were, a resurrection he describes scientifically. His observations are made in the most scrupulously scientific fashion; he makes no remarks; deduces no conclusion, but it is very easy to see by the report that the event which he witnessed made a very deep impression."

Conviction Sought

In his book, Alexis Carrel wrote, "If God exists, miracles are possible. But does God exist objectively? Does the Virgin exist outside our own minds? How am I to know? To convince me that miracles exist, I would have to see an organic disease cured, a leg growing back after amputation, a cancer disappearing, a congenital dislocation suddenly vanishing. If such things could be scientifically proved then it would be permissible to admit the intervention of a supernatural power."

Before the Cure

Regarding Marie Bailly's condition before her miraculous cure Carrel wrote: "There is one patient who is closer to death at this moment than any of the others. I have already been called to her bedside several times. This unfortunate girl is in the last stages of tubercular peritonitis. I know her history. Her whole family died of tuberculosis. She has had tubercular sores, lesions of the lungs, and now for the last few months a peritonitis, diagnosed both by a general practitioner and by the well-known Bordeaux surgeon, Bromilloux. Her condition is very grave; I had to give her morphine on the journey. She may die any moment right under my nose. If such a

case as hers were cured it would be indeed a miracle. I would never doubt again . . . Her condition is steadily deteriorating. If she gets home again alive, that in itself will be a miracle . . . She is doomed. Death is very near." He put his fingertips on her wrist. Her pulse was exceedingly rapid, a hundred and fifty beats a minute and irregular. Her heart was giving out . . . "We'll give her an injection of caffeine." Pulling back the covers the nurse removed the cradle and Marie's emaciated body lay exposed again. The abdomen was distended as before, but somehow more pronounced on the left side . . . She lay on her back, all shrunken beneath the dark brown blanket which made a mound over her distended abdomen."

Condition Grave

Marie Baillv was so ill they did not dare to immerse her in the Lourdes water but instead poured some of the water over her abdomen, while prayers were said. They then carried Marie to the Grotto . . . "She was motionless" wrote the doctor, "her breathing still rapid and shallow: she seemed to be at the point of death."

Change of Condition

Suddenly the doctor stared. It seemed to him that there had been a change, that the harsh shadows of her face had disappeared, that her skin was somewhat less ashen. Surely he thought, this was an hallucination. But the hallucination itself was interesting psycho-logically, and might be worth recording. Hastily he jotted down the time in his notebook. It was twenty minutes before three o'clock . . . Suddenly the doctor felt himself turning pale. The blanket which covered Marie's distended abdomen was gradually flattening out. "Look at her abdomen" he exclaimed. "It seems to have gone down.

It's probably the folds of the blanket that give that impression . . . the bells of the basilica had just struck three. A few minutes later there was no longer any sign of distension in Marie's abdomen. The doctor felt that he was going mad. He watched the intake of her breath and the pulsing of her throat with fascination. The heartbeat, though still very rapid, had become regular. This time, for sure something was taking place. "How do you feel?" He asked her. "I feel very well." she answered in a low voice. "I am still very weak, but I feel I am cured." There was no longer any doubt. The patient's condition was improving, so much that she was scarcely recognizable . . . The doctor stood there in silence, his mind a blank. This event, exactly the opposite of what he had expected, must surely be nothing but a dream . . . but the dying girl was recovering. It was the resurrection of the dead. It was a miracle.

Health Restored

She was cured. In the span of a few hours, a girl with a face already turning blue, a fearfully distended abdomen, and a fatally racing heart had been restored to health, except for her weakness and emaciation . . . There could be no doubt whatever that the girl was cured. It was of course the most momentous thing he had ever seen. It was both frightening and wonderful to see, life pouring back into an

organism almost totally destroyed by years of illness. Here was an indisputable fact—a dying girl had recovered.

The miracle was confirmed by the Medical Bureau. Dr. Alexis Carrel found himself praying. "Gentle Virgin, who brings help to the un-fortunate who humbly implore you. Keep me with you. I believe in you. You did answer my prayers by a blazing miracle."

Prayer is Indispensable

Writing in his best selling book, "Man the Unknown", Alexis Carrel stated "The most important cases of medical healing have been recorded by the Medical Bureau of Lourdes. Our present conception of the influence of prayer of pathological lesions (disease process) is based on the observation of patients who have been cured almost instantaneously of various afflictions such as peritoneal tuberculosis, cold abscesses, osteitis, suppurating wounds, lupus, cancer etc. The process of healing changes little from one individual to another. Often an acute pain. Then a sudden sensation of being cured. In a few seconds, a few minutes, at the most a few hours wounds are cicatrised (a scab forms) pathological symptoms disappear, appetite returns. The only condition indispensable to the occurrence is prayer. But there is no need for the patient himself to pray, or even to have any religious faith. It is sufficient that someone around him be in a state of prayer."

Alexis Carrel's Claim

The non.-Catholic Scientist Dr. H. N. V. Temperley, Smith's prize-man, sometime Fellow of King's College, Cambridge and Smithson Research Fellow of the Royal Society, in his book, "A Scientist who Believes in God." (1961) has two sentences about Dr. Carrel. *"For example, some of the miracles of Lourdes seem to have occurred in the presence of highly qualified men like Alexis Carrel. Unfortunately many scientists are afraid or unwilling to examine such evidence."* Again, *"Are we to think of Nobel Laureate, Alexis Carrel's claim to have been present at the cure of a medically hopeless case at Lourdes as a result of defective medical observation?"*

THE MEDICAL BUREAU

The interest of medical men was naturally focused on Lourdes since the first apparitions and miracles, but the first official investigation of cures made on the spot at Lourdes, however, seems to have commenced in 1883 when Dr. de St. Maclou used for this purpose two small rooms of the offices of the builders at that time constructing the Rosary Church. Dr. de St. Maclou is regarded as the founder of the Bureau of Medical Records, as the Medical Bureau was originally known, and was its first President. Any qualified medical doctor from any part of the world and of any Creed or none is welcomed by the Bureau and may examine or criticise the accumulated data for past miracles or take his place in the examination of patients, or cures at the Bureau.

The increasing interest which Lourdes has aroused in the medical world is in itself a proof that inexplicable cures have occurred there, otherwise such medical interest would not have continued as it has to the present day.

This Medical Bureau limits itself to establishing a medical dossier, allowing certification of both the pre-existing illness and of the cure without effective treatment.

Since 1947, similarly, a second authority has existed of fixed constitution. It is composed of about thirty doctors: the Medical committee of Lourdes, National at first, International afterwards (1954).

This Committee re-examines the case: the dossier is entrusted to a specialist chosen from its members. He devotes all the time required to presenting his conclusions to the whole Committee, which meets in Paris or elsewhere at least once a year. It is he who confirms (or not) the exceptional or inexplicable nature of this cure.

WITH A HOLE IN HIS HEAD

By 1916, John Traynor, of Liverpool, Gallipoli veteran, had been granted a complete war pension by the British Government. He was partially paralysed in both legs and his right arm was completely paralysed. He was subject to epileptic fits, as many as three a day, because of head injuries from shrapnel. In a vain attempt to relieve the epilepsy, a surgeon of Springfields Hospital had opened the front of the skull on the right side; this cutting away the bone of the skull had left an opening about an inch in diameter which revealed the pulsation of the brain. The orifice was covered by a metal plate. He was a physical "write off". Upon his cure at Lourdes in 1923, he informed the British Government that he was no longer an invalid and that he was not entitled to the pension. The Pensions Department consulted his old medical report and found that his claim to be cured was not possible. So John Traynor was paid his complete war pension until his death on 7th December, 1943.

John's own words

Here is John Traynor's own account of the miracle: July 25th, 1923. "I was wheeled to the baths to wait my turn. There were many to be bathed and all wanted to be finished before the afternoon procession of the Blessed Sacrament which began at four o'clock. My turn came, and when I was in the bath, my paralysed legs became violently agitated. The brancardiers became alarmed once more thinking that I was in another fit. I struggled to get to my feet, feeling that I could easily do so, and wondered why everybody seemed to be against me. The brancardiers threw my clothes on hurriedly, put me back on the stretcher and rushed me down to the square in front of the Rosary Church to await the procession. The Archbishop of Rheims, carrying the Blessed Sacrament, came to me, made the sign of the cross with the monstrance and moved on to the next. He had just passed by, when I realized that a great change had taken place in me. My right arm, which had been dead since

1915, was violently agitated. I burst the bandages and blessed myself—for the first time in years. I had no sudden pain that I can recall, and certainly had no vision. I attempted to rise from my stretcher but the brancardiers held me down and a doctor or a nurse gave me a needle. Apparently, they thought that I was hysterical and about to create a scene.

The Day After

Next morning I jumped out of bed, knelt on the floor, then I dashed for the door and ran out into the open air. Dr. Morley was outside the door. When he saw me he fell back in amazement. Out in the open now, I ran towards the Grotto, about two or three hundred yards away. This stretch of ground was graveled then, not paved, and I was barefooted, but I ran the whole way to the Grotto without getting the least mark or cut on my bare feet. The brancardiers were running after me but they could not catch up with me. When they reached the Grotto, there I was on my knees, still in my night clothes, praying to Our Lady and thanking her. All I knew was that I should thank her, and the Grotto was the place to do it.

Gave Up Smoking

My mother had always taught me that when you ask a favour of Our Lady, or wish to show her some special veneration, you should make a sacrifice. I had no money to offer . . . but kneeling there before the Blessed Mother, I made the only sacrifice I could think of. I resolved to give up cigarettes."

On July 27th, Drs. Azurdia, Finn and Morley, who had examined Traynor before his visit to Lourdes, examined him again. Their signed statement testified that he could walk perfectly; that he had recovered the use and function of his right arm, that he had regained sensation in his legs, and finally, that the opening in the skull had diminished considerably. As far as Traynor knew, the metal plate in his skull just disappeared.

Return to Liverpool

The cure of John Traynor received prominence in the secular press. "The Liverpool Post and Mercury" reported, "Extraordinary scenes were witnessed at Lime Street Station, on Saturday night, when 400 pilgrims, forming part of the great Lancashire contingent, who left for Lourdes eight days previously arrived back in Liverpool. They were met at the station by thousands of people. Tremendous enthusiasm was excited by the presence of John Traynor, a naval reservist, who went away a paralysed cripple in a bathchair, and stepped from the train to all appearances permanently cured, walking out of the station briskly, erect, and without assistance of any kind."

The most striking part of the miraculous recovery of John Traynor is probably the instantaneous cure of the right arm. The nerves had been severed for eight years. Four prominent physicians had operated in an attempt to reunite them. Sir Frederick Treves, Dr. McMurray, Major Ross and Major Montserrat all testified that

the nerves were truly severed and that they had failed to reunite them. More than mere suture (stitching) would be necessary before the arm could feel and move again; the shrunken nerves would need to go through a long process of regeneration. A feat that expert surgery had failed four times to do and a process that requires months of gradual restoration, were achieved instantaneously as the Blessed Sacrament was raised over John Traynor.

A large number of conversions to the Church resulted from the miracle. Two non-Catholic girls who had nursed Traynor entered the Church as also did their family in Liverpool and the Anglican minister of their local church.

It comes as a great shock to many people to know that such well authenticated cases as John Traynor, etc. are not amongst the select few whose cures have been officially proclaimed. To understand this, it is necessary to have a full knowledge of the very demanding and strict process required before the bishop proclaims that any cure is a direct intervention of God through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes.

In the Traynor case, his medical attendants refused to give some vital information necessary to convince such a highly critical body as The International Commission.

A COMMUNIST SCEPTIC

An electrician by trade Louis Olivari, was an active member of the Communist Party, and treasurer of a Communist cell in Nice, France. He became suddenly paralysed in April, 1956 and a local specialist Dr. Jean Duplay, diagnosed a hemiplegia (the paralysis of one side of the body) caused by the rupture of a brain artery. His family doctor, Michael Salvadori, and other doctors gave him very little hope of ever being able to work again. He mentioned this to the chaplain of the hospital, Canon Testoris, who said "Why don't you go to Lourdes? There is a pilgrimage going there on July 31st." Olivari shrugged his shoulders, "That would be the limit – I, who believe in nothing, to go and get mixed up in that comedy."

Encouraged by his wife and friends who advised that it wouldn't do him any harm, he set off for Lourdes after being examined by a doctor of Nice, a member of the Lourdes Medical Commission, Dr. Strobino, who diagnosed Olivari as being incurable.

Arrival at Lourdes

Here is his own description of the pilgrimage. "We arrived at Lourdes on July 2nd, 1956, at 6.30. I was hungry and wanted my breakfast at once, but the nuns said that all had to go first to the hospital and then to the Esplanade and Mass. Several thousand pilgrims were on the Esplanade near the Basilica, and all were praying aloud imploring the Virgin to cure them. I wasn't very much at ease with all this, so I sat with two little boys sitting on a bench. They reminded me of my own children. One of the boys was Georges Delprano, aged 10, an asthmatic from birth, while his companion was Georges Torelli, blind from birth.

Refusal

I firmly decided not to take the bath or do any praying. All that afternoon I refused to bathe in the Lourdes water or to go to Mass. On the following afternoon I was sitting on the Esplanade with Delprano when Miss Zanata, a nurse from Nice, said to me, "What are you doing here? Why don't you bathe in the Lourdes water?"

Praying for Another

In spite of my protests she took me to the baths and there I was undressed by two stretcher bearers who said a prayer I had to repeat. It was then that I heard the blind boy, Georges Torelli, praying in a loud voice in the next cabin. It completely upset me. One would have a heart of stone not to be affected by it. As the stretcher bearers helped me down the three steps into the bath I cried out, "If you exist God, please cure this boy who deserves it more than I. Let him see the sun."

Instant Cure

It was then that Louis Olivari was cured. After immersion in the water for less than a minute he walked out alone in perfect health. God had rewarded him for his unselfish spontaneous prayer when he prayed for his ten year old blind companion.

"It is not for me to say whether or not I have been miraculously healed. All I know is that I was cured at Lourdes and I firmly believe in God after having rejected Him since childhood.

THE CURE OF PIERRE DE RUDDER

This, one of the most famous of all Lourdes cures, took place, not at Lourdes itself, but at a replica of the shrine at Oostaker, near Ghent in Belgium. Pierre de Rudder, in 1867, sustained a compound fracture of both bones of the leg below the knee. During eight years he was treated by six different doctors. The bone ends became diseased. De Rudder refused amputation. Dr. Van Hoestenberghe declared on oath that the pairs of bones were separated from each other by about an inch. Dr. Verriest testified likewise. The miracle occurred in 1875. The bones were re-united. New bone closed the gaps. De Rudder was perfectly cured. He lived another 23 years and died at 75 of pneumonia. Dr. Van Hoestenerghe was converted and later wrote to the novelist Zola, after the latter's attack on Lourdes: "*Sir, I was an unbeliever as you are: De Rudder's miracle opened my eyes, hitherto closed to the light: with belief I have found happiness and an interior peace never known before.*"

The French Medical Society, with over 100 doctors present, carefully studied the evidence and declared: "*This sudden cure ought to be regarded as a fact of the supernatural order, that is to say a miracle.*"

The notorious anti-Catholic writer, Professor J. B. S. Haldane, wrote of the De Rudder case: "The only remarkable element in the cure is its speed." It is this sort of whirling irrationalism that leaves the Catholic apologist speechless! As Arnold Lunn

pointed out: "This is much as if someone were to remark, 'the only remarkable fact about the Resurrection was that Christ rose from 'the dead'."

ENCASED IN PLASTER

Miss Elise Aloï, of Messina, Italy, had a poor medical history. Both of her parents had died at an early age from tuberculosis. At the age of seventeen she developed tubercular arthritis of the right knee necessitating surgery. In 1931 she was encased in plaster for a tubercular condition of the spinal vertebrae with discharging, wounds in elbows and thighs. In 1933 the right hip was affected. Many joints became functionless and the kidneys weakened. Repeated high fever with temperature 104 degrees and weight of only 6 stone 1 lb. indicated a rapid deterioration of health. In 1957, she made a pilgrim-age to Lourdes, almost entirely encased in plaster. She was not cured.

In Plaster

Miss Aloï went to Lourdes again in June 1958 on the famous "White Train"—a specially equipped train, which annually carries hundreds of invalids from Paris to Lourdes. Several very eminent medical professors have certified that on the journey she was in plaster "from the ribs to the feet", that her temperature was 103 degrees, that she had four sinus tracts discharging most offensive pus through drainage tubes. They also certified that she was suffering from extensive tubercular osteomyelitis which had existed for ten years, and that her lower limbs were paralysed and that death must soon be expected.

Indescribable Joy

On the 5th of June, 1958, after Elise Aloï was bathed in Lourdes water for the fourth time, a crisis occurred. She felt intense pain and then that she was dying. "Then I felt a sense of indescribable joy in my heart with such certainty that I was cured that an interior voice was urging me to get up and walk."

When she requested the doctor to remove the plaster he refused, although he noted that the sinuses had ceased to discharge and were filled with healing tissue.

Complete Cure

A few weeks after her return to Messina, the professor in charge of her case removed the plaster and declared her to be completely cured and "in such an altered state of health that one could hardly believe her to be the same person who had set out in such a wretched state." He further stated that the cure was so instantaneous that it is absolutely out of the question to think that any known healing measures could have caused such a complete reversal of so serious a pathological condition in a matter of a few hours. As he says, "such a happening would be contrary to all the laws of biology and medicine."

The Lourdes Medical Bureau examined Miss Aloï several times between 1958 and 1964, when the cure was referred to the International Medical Commission and

to the Canonical Commission of Inquiry. All the eminent doctors concerned agreed that she was in perfect health and that there could be no natural or scientific explanation of the cure.

Then there only remained the final proclamation by the Archbishop of Messina, that the cure was a "miraculous fact", for Miss Aloï to join the select band, whose cures are officially recognised as Lourdes miracles.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES

O ever Immaculate Virgin, mother of mercy, health of the sick, refuge of sinners, comfort of the afflicted, you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings, deign to cast upon me a look of mercy. By appearing in the Grotto of Lourdes, you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary, whence you dispense your favors; and already many sufferers have obtained the cure of their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal. I come, therefore, with the most unbounded confidence to implore your maternal intercession. Obtain, O loving mother, the granting of my requests. Through gratitude for favours, I will endeavor to imitate your virtues that I may one day share your glory. Amen.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

THE CORPSE WALKING

On the 7th of October, 1960, as a 45 year old man walked into the Esplanade Hotel at Lourdes, a maid who saw him shouted, "There's the corpse walking." just an hour or two previously she had seen him being taken to the Blessing of the sick in a dying state. He was then blind, deaf, paralysed and unconscious. His doctor had described him as "a pin-cushion of injections" and told his wife that he was doomed.

Injuries by a Cow

Edmond Gaultier had been a farmer. Then on the 6th of January, 1959, a cow had knocked him from the tray of his truck. He got up, apparently uninjured. But he then found he was unable to work for long. He collapsed. Professor Lebeau of the Clinique Malilot diagnosed "dangerous medullary trouble between the third and fourth vertebrae." (damage to the stem of the brain).

Unsuccessful Operation

He informed Edmond's wife that there was little hope for her husband even with surgery. "Die or not" I prefer to be operated on," was the patient's request. The operation was not a success. Edmond became blind, deaf, paralysed and finally unconscious. As a last hope his wife decided on Lourdes.

Driven to Lourdes

She herself drove him there. At Poitiers, he nearly died. At Augouleme and Bordeaux fresh crises occurred, but eventually Lourdes was reached and suitable

accommodation arranged. A doctor was summoned. Dr. Richards from Geu-du-Loir stated that Edmond Gaultier's condition was extremely poor and that his pulse was very weak. He offered his services should assistance be needed during the night.

Dr. Richards had come to Lourdes to attend to a patient of his Mademoiselle Coupin, who was an acquaintance of Edmond Gaultier. Her own case was desperate, but realising that Gaultier had more to give to the world than she had, because she was over seventy, she offered her life for him, "Holy Virgin Mary", she prayed, "I offer you my life for Gaultier's." Her prayer was to be answered.

Eyes and Lips Move

On the 7th of October, the Feast of the Holy Rosary, Gaultier was present at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the underground Basilica of St. Pius X. He was unconscious at the time, A friend standing near noticed that his eyes moved. A few minutes later at the Grotto, Mademoiselle Coupin cried out, "Rejane, your husband is moving his eyes and his lips." Gaultier sat up with assistance. "I was about to do that myself," he said, "what's the matter with me? Am I in a church?"

He was cured. The Mass misser who thought that religion was suitable for women only was cured at Lourdes though he was unaware of his being there, because of the faith of his friend who offered her life for him.

On the 22nd of May, 1962, the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes told Madame Gaultier officially that the International Medical Committee of Lourdes had recognized "as medically and scientifically inexplicable," the cure of her husband Edmond Gaultier.

THE CRITERIA OF A CURE

These are essential in order that someday they may be interpreted as « miraculous ». They relate at three levels.

- **First the cure itself - It must be:**

- sudden, unexpected or even fortuitous;
- immediate and without convalescence;
- lasting about six or eight years according to the condition concerned before being accepted;

- **Next the preceding illness - It must be:**

- serious, that is to say life-threatening or incurable;
- organic rather than functional, that is to say authenticated by a lesion of some organ. Hence, for example, loss of speech not following upon some specific cerebral destruction would be discarded;
- objectively proven by analyses, X-rays, scans, biopsies, etc. which must necessarily be submitted as expert proof.

- **Finally, the means of treatment which have or could have been used.**

- Thus tuberculosis, once the subject of numerous duly accepted cures, has virtually disappeared from today's dossiers owing to the current existence of effective medication.

DYING ON A STRETCHER

In the Melbourne "Age" of 11th March, 1901, is the report of the miraculous cure of Gabriel Gargam. It reads, "He reached Lourdes in a dying state and was carried on a stretcher to the shrine. The spectators publicly (and some violently) protested against his admission because his death seemed imminent and certain; but the authorities received him. The alleged miracle almost instantly ensued. During the usual blessing of the sick before the shrine, Gargam arose from his stretcher, a whole man. The gangrene of his feet had suddenly disappeared and he had become well and comparatively strong. He was examined on the following morning by sixty doctors and medical professors, many of whom were avowed sceptics and they unanimously pronounced him cured."

Involved in a Train Smash

This remarkable event had its beginning on 17th December, 1899, when Gabriel Gargam, a travelling mail clerk of the Orleans Railway Company, was involved in a train smash. He was thrown fifty-five feet into the air and then lay unconscious in the snow all night. His spine had been injured beyond any hope of recovery. The least movement produced vomiting. He was fed through a tube and this caused great and continuous pain. Several months later it was noticed that both his feet were covered with gangrenous sores.

Pronounced a Human Wreck

Since it was believed by all medical authorities that Gargam would not live long, a very high compensating pension was awarded to him by the Bordeaux court which pronounced him "a human wreck who would henceforth need at least two persons to care for him day and night.

Lourdes "Silly Superstition"

Though brought up a Catholic, Gargam was an unbeliever. His devout mother had suggested a pilgrimage to Lourdes but he would have nothing of "that silly superstition". Eventually, however, he decided on Lourdes, not for religious motives but to avoid another operation. On his journey to Lourdes he turned the other way when his mother suggested he look at a crucifix.

He Spoke Again

On the morning of August 20th he experienced a remarkable spiritual conversion. At two o'clock on the same day he was carried to the pool to be bathed in the water. He was not cured. At four o'clock he was taken with the other patients to the Blessing of the Sick in Rosary Square. As he lay there he took a turn for the worse and became unconscious. He became cold. It was thought that he was dying.

He regained consciousness. The Blessed Sacrament was in front of him. He sat up "Help me," he said. "Hear, Blessed Virgin," sobbed his mother, "He has not spoken for twenty months." A number of people helped him to his feet. He took a few tottering steps after the Blessed Sacrament. He was cured, physically and spiritually.

August 20th 1951 was the fiftieth anniversary of his cure and Gabriel Gargan still hale and hearty returned to Lourdes to make a special visit to thank the great Mother of God for his miraculous care. He died the following year at the ripe old age of 83.

THE RATIO OF CURES

The primary purpose of Lourdes is to confirm the Faith of the Faithful in an unbelieving World. Since Lourdes became an established shrine the number of recognised miraculous cures has declined and is relatively small compared with the number of sick pilgrims visiting the Sanctuary today.

Since 1858, 67 cures have been recognised as miraculous by the Church, out of about 2,000 medically confirmed cures retained by the doctors and out of 2,500,000 sick brought by organised pilgrimages. This makes roughly one miracle in 30 medically confirmed cures.

England. Of these, I was quite aware and met some of them. Altogether I spent fifteen days there and had fifteen baths in the icy cold water that comes out of the rocks.

The Miracles

One rubs shoulders with the miraculous in Lourdes. One day I was going from the grotto to the house, where I boarded "Bethany", the nearest house to the Grotto, when a man coming, towards me said, "Hello, Brother, I am cured." I had never met him before but replied, "What was wrong with you?" He took my hand and said, "Feel there." He put my hand on his thigh, just above the knee and it was no thicker than my wrist. He had been a cripple for twenty-two years. He was from Liverpool. In the same pilgrimage was Mary Healy, who had a short leg supported by a stout sole two or three inches thick, but she had great faith and brought with her a pair of new shoes she said she would wear when she was cured. And she was cured at Lourdes.

The Atmosphere of Lourdes

"The whole atmosphere of Lourdes is charged with faith, hope and charity in action. The spirit of the place seemed to me to be like that which must have prevailed among the first Christians after Pentecost. Even those who were not cured of their particular ailments were invariably cheered and comforted and content to carry their cross in answer to the appeal made by Our Lady through Bernadette when she called out to the assembled multitudes.

"Penance, penance, penance."

A HOPELESS CASE

Charles McDonald, of Dublin, in his book, "Miracle at Lourdes" gives complete details of his illness, his journey to the Shrine and his recovery there. "The medical certificate completed by my doctor for the pilgrimage authorities," he wrote, stated that I was suffering from tuberculosis affecting the lungs, spine, kidneys and left shoulder. I had been an invalid for over four years, had suffered from tuberculosis for twelve years, and for thirteen months before going to Lourdes I had been confined to bed. More than one doctor had pronounced my case to be beyond medical aid; my death was a matter of time. In a word the description of my case was "hopeless".

Clear Spring Water

On Sunday the 6th of September, he received Holy Communion in Rosary Square but was unable to join in the Rosary later in the day, for to him "the Rosary was a sheer impossibility." "Then came the time for the baths," he wrote. "I found myself being, wheeled to the healing waters of the spring. These waters, when analysed, have never revealed any curative properties, yet in various ways they confound science. Diseases of all kinds, running wounds and suppurating sores, are all immersed, yet no case of contagion has ever been known. My own experience was that, in drinking the actual water from the baths, in which numbers of sick and diseased had already been bathed, it tasted as fresh and pure as clear spring water."

Icy Cold Water

I was lifted from my stretcher and placed on one made of webbing, specially constructed for use at the baths. I was hoisted above the baths, and after the prayers and invocations had been said, was lowered into the water. The water was icy cold and quite took my breath away; this was a terrible experience and I thought it would kill me. The shock left me ill all that day, and I was trying, to pluck up sufficient courage to refuse to go into the baths the following morning.

Five Seconds

The next day we were once again taken to the grotto, and in due course to the baths. I still lacked the courage to refuse this bath, and well for me that I lacked it. It was now an established medical fact, accepted by the Medical Bureau, that I went into the bath suffering from advanced tuberculosis of the left shoulder, spine, lungs and kidneys, and that I left it five seconds later as free from tuberculosis as if I had never been affected by it.

The First Reaction

"My first reaction was that I was pleasantly surprised to find that the shock of the cold water was not so bad as I had anticipated. When replaced on my stretcher, I felt a complete absence of pain, I could relax without discomfort. I felt buoyant. I wanted to get up. I felt I could walk and run . . . my first thoughts, naturally enough were that I was completely cured, but on second thoughts I considered this a presumptuous attitude to adopt, and that the sense of wellbeing must be due to the

cold water numbing the nervous system. I waited for the pains to return with renewed intensity.

"I felt, furthermore, that if Our Lady had done this for me. I could never face life under such a terrific obligation to her, but was then struck by the thought that if such an obligation existed she would help me to fulfil it. The most alarming thought of all was to be aware that Our Lady was actually conscious of my individual presence on earth, and that a conversation about me had taken place in heaven between the great almighty God himself and our heavenly Queen. If my body had really been cured, this must assuredly have taken place; 'terrifying' is a weak word to describe how this seemed to me. I almost wished that my pains would return and that there had been no cure.

On 10th September where McDonald left Lourdes, it was not a complete recovery, for his wounds were still draining pus. Because of this he was not taken to the Medical Bureau for examination. It was on the return trip before the train arrived in Paris, that his wounds healed.

Examined by 31 Doctors

On the 16th of September, 1937, McDonald returned to Lourdes where an American physician, Dr. Smiley Blanton, Rockefeller Institute, New York, directed the examination, assisted by thirty one other doctors. In their concluding remarks they stated "No medical explanation in the present state of science can be given."

Not Halted but Reversed

On his return to America, Dr. Blanton read a paper to a joint session of the American psychoanalytical and Psychiatric Association in which he stated, "It is my feeling that in this case and in similar cases at Lourdes there is a quickening of the healing process, due to the emotion aroused by the transference to an all-powerful, all loving Virgin Mother . . . I feel that we are justified by what we saw at Lourdes in stating our tentative belief that processes leading in the direction of death were not only halted but reversed . . . I believe that something does occur which is, as Dr. Vallet has remarked, on the margin of the laws of nature."

Dr. Hannigan who was in charge of the Irish pilgrimage of which McDonald was a member wrote of him on August 29th, 1937. "I am very pleased to be able to testify to this cure, especially as when I first saw him I regarded his case as hopeless."

Charles McDonald had been miraculously cured at Lourdes. Fifteen X-rays at Meath Hospital bear silent testimony to his condition before the cure. X-rays taken on March 4th, 1954, bear witness to the miracle.

NON-CATHOLIC TESTIMONY

We have given some examples of the type of illness whose cures have been accepted by doctors sitting in judgement in the name of modern science. Only the most ignorant could put forward psychotherapy as the cause of such cures. Only the

most bigoted could suggest that the doctors who testified to them were not reliable witnesses. The late Sir William Barrett, a non-Catholic, well known as a doctor and as President of the Society for Psychical Research, closed the discussion after the lecture on Lourdes cures, given by to a Protestant audience which included many medical men. His final words were: *"If evidence counts for anything, and I am not without experience in weighing the value of evidence, I affirm that supernatural, miraculous cures have taken place at the Roman Catholic Shrine of the Virgin at Lourdes."*

A doctor, writing in the Anglican Church Times a report of the lecture and of the discussion which followed it, included in his article the following wise reflection:

"It would seem to the writer that if the evidence for Lourdes be true, if what is said to have happened there really has happened (and it is hard to doubt the validity of much of that evidence), then we must on the face of it acknowledge the fact of its miracles, Can we do so? Is it not for each one a personal question? If the answer be 'I cannot,' may it not be well to look within, as well as without? Wherein lies the cause of my inability? Miracles rest on moral evidence, make a moral appeal and are the divine response to a moral quality in man. Have I that moral quality?"

Zola, confronted with evidence which convinced others, was goaded into the sceptical declaration, "Were I to see all the sick at Lourdes cured, I would not believe in a miracle." Professor Vergez of Montpellier, after spending twenty-five years in studying the cures of Lourdes, testified solemnly on his death-bed: "At Lourdes I have seen and touched the miraculous." Vergez was a scientist, not a foolish fanatic. He was also a good Christian. And Zola? Well, one would not wish to compare the moral perception of these two men.

BLIND SINCE THE AGE OF TWO

Gerard Baillie a boy of eight, lived at the Institute for Blind Children at Arras in the north of France. He had been blind for six years; the optic nerves in both eyes were completely dead. Gerard had been admitted to the blind institution because of the testimony of Dr. Biziaunt, an oculist of Dunkirk, who summed up his condition with "Double optic atrophy, Blindness – incurable," underlining the last word. On 26th January, 1945, Dr. Viton examined the boy and issued his certificate stating "I, the undersigned, certify that I have today examined Gerard Baillie aged seven and a half years. He is afflicted with bilateral chorioretinitis–double optic atrophy: blindness, incurable."

Completely Helpless

For five years Gerard had crept about among, the other sightless children at the Arras Institute, feeling, his way, fumbling, hesitating, often falling. His teacher, Sister Agnes, wrote of him: Gerard is absolutely incapable of going about alone. Indoors he bumps into obstacles. He is not capable of seeing an object at any distance. He can not take a paper bag of sweets offered to him because he cannot see it.

Delayed Cure

Gerard's mother prayed constantly that he might be restored to a normal life. In September, 1947, she brought him to Lourdes, as a member of their diocesan pilgrimage. Nothing happened at the first bath or at the procession. But the day after their arrival, while they were walking, down the path of the Way of the Cross, all at once the child began to pick up pieces of wood from the ground and to offer them to his mother. Looking, up at her face, he cried happily, "Oh, mother, how beautiful you are." The next day after his second bath, he remarked about the curtains which the day previously he had not seen.

Examined by Seven Doctors

Seven doctors at the Medical Bureau examined him that day and testified to his partial vision. On the following day the same doctors testified that his vision had improved and that "he recognised different colours and several objects near at hand".

Dr. Camps of Tarbes later examined Gerard and declared "This child has a bilateral chorioretinitis with double atrophy. He cannot or should not see." Yet he could see.

Dr. Smith, an oculist of Glasgow, examined Gerard on July 14th, 1948. He repeated the verdict of Dr. Camps, "This child has chorioretinitis with double optic atrophy. He ought not to see."

Physical Condition Unaltered

In spite of the physical condition remaining unaltered, Gerard could now see because of the miracle at Lourdes.

Gerard left the Arras Institute for the Blind and then attended an ordinary school where he has made good progress.

The Medical Commission in 1950 pronounced his cure "inexplicable under natural law" and voted unanimously to recommend its being referred to a Canonical Commission. The latter refused to consider it a miracle because "it was not instantaneous and because vision was still not perfect", and yet the boy who should not see, could see.

DYING FROM CANCER

In June, 1956, John Borse Day was dying in a London hospital. He had cancer of the lung, and of the digestive tract. Although he was nominally a Catholic John Day had long given up the practice of his faith. Yet the idea came to him that he should go to Lourdes. Since he had only a day or two to live the doctors opposed the idea, claiming that he would die on the way.

Finance for Trip

A woman patient in the hospital heard of Mr. Day's desire to go to Lourdes, and offered to finance his trip since he himself could not afford it. The patient now insisted more strongly than ever, so finally the doctors consented and one of them decided to accompany him on the journey to Lourdes.

On the way John was given morphine every two hours to ease his great pain. On 25th June he reached the shrine, and on the following morning two male nurses took him to the baths where he was immersed in the icy cold water. Prayers were said begging the intercession of the Mother of God, and John Day was cured. "Suddenly I felt fine. I had no more pain. I didn't even feel tired."

Pushed Chair Himself

Instead of being returned to his wheel chair, John Day dressed himself and pushed the empty chair to the Medical Bureau. There he was examined by the Doctors and advised to return in a year's time.

On his return to England, the customs official who examined his passport looked at him in amazement. "Aren't you the man who was carried through here on a stretcher, a few days ago?" He asked. "We were told you would be brought back a corpse." The doctors who had cared for John Day were unable to explain his return alive, let alone his complete recovery.

Return to Lourdes

Twelve months later he returned to Lourdes and was examined once more by the doctors of the Medical Bureau. There was no sign of the cancer. The cure was complete and permanent. The man "with a few days to live" from an incurable cancer was now strong and healthy . . . "Suddenly I felt fine." Such is the power of prayer. John Day is profoundly grateful to God and to His Immaculate Mother.

THE TESTIMONY OF AN UNBELIEVER

"I didn't even know I was at Lourdes," said Jeanne Fretel, "I was so far gone, I didn't know anything—till suddenly it happened." Jeanne Fretel had never been well in her life. In 1939, her illness became acute. Diagnosis: tubercular peritonitis with additional symptoms of meningitis. Her case history—one of the most complete of all Lourdes cures—contains eighteen pages of fever charts, eighty pages of detailed hospital reports, laboratory analyses, X-ray records, etc. She had had thirteen operations. 1946 was spent in various sanatoriums. On 3rd December she returned to the Hotel Dieu, as she said, "to die there." She had not left her bed for a year and was unable to get up. Her temperature was usually around 103-104 degrees. To calm her sufferings she was given frequent morphine injections. She was granted a pension as "incurable."

Medical Report "From August 1948 to October 1948," records Dr. Pellé of the Hotel Dieu Hospital, "the patient became more and more exhausted. She could take only small quantities of liquid. Signs of meningitis appeared. The abdomen was very

swollen and painful. Pus flowed abundantly, accompanied by black blood. All hope seemed lost . . . It was in full development of tubercular peritonitis with meningeal symptoms that she departed for Lourdes on 4th October 1948. She was completely unconscious when put aboard the train at Rennes."

Received Communion

On Friday, 8th October, she was carried dying to the Mass for the sick, at the altar of St. Bernadette. The priest hesitated to give her communion, because of her constant vomiting and extreme weakness. Her stretcher-bearer insisted, and so he gave her a small fraction of the Sacred Host.

"It was then," said Jeanne Fretel later, "that suddenly I felt well and I became aware that I was at Lourdes. They asked me how I felt. I replied that I was very well. My abdomen was still hard and swollen but I was not suffering at all. They gave me a cup of coffee which I drank gratefully and which I kept down."

Extraordinary Hunger

"Was I cured or was I coming out of a dream? I perceived that my abdomen had become normal. Then I was seized with an extraordinary hunger." Food was brought with the authority of Dr. Gurgan of St. Meen-le-grand. She ate with good appetite, veal with potatoes and three pieces of bread. "When I had eaten it all, I still was hungry and asked for more. They brought me as much again, and still I wanted more."

Walked Unaided

The next day, Saturday, October 9th she was taken on a stretcher to the Medical Bureau where she was examined by five doctors—one of them, Dr. Guyon of Nantes who said, "Well, if you are cured, as you say get up! Try to walk and we shall see."

"They wanted to help me to get tip," Jeanne's story continues, "but I refused all help and began to walk. The doctor seeing how thin I was—I hardly had any legs at all—came towards me, fearing that I might fall; but I held firm. The doctor went quickly to the scales, wanting to weigh me. Even though he went fast, I followed him just as quickly, and was weighed: 44 kg (96 pounds). I was told to return next year."

Her own physician, Dr. Pellé, who had treated her for so long, saw her on the day of her homecoming, and at regular intervals thereafter. He declared in his certificate to the Medical Bureau: "The patient is completely cured. having no longer any of the pathological symptoms which she presented."

On October 23rd, 1943, Dr. Borbot reported of an X-ray taken at the Hospital Centre at Rennes: "No organic lesions discoverable by X-ray study of the intestinal tract".

Return for Examination

On October 5th, 1943, Jeanne Fretel returned to Lourdes to be examined by the doctors of the Medical Bureau. Twenty-two doctors were on hand including among

them several who had examined her the year before. The doctors declared their conviction that it was a genuine cure, that "the disease had been abruptly arrested in its course . . . that all morbid symptoms have disappeared and that no medical explanation of this cure can be given. It is outside natural law". Then followed the signatures of all the physicians.

An Inexplicable Cure

The Medical Commission of Paris, after studying these documents reported March 12th, 1930: "The impressive history of this illness, the importance of the dossier which includes thirty temperature charts, (eighteen before the cure, twelve after) the calibre of the doctors, who examined the patient, the meticulous details of the daily records during the period April to October, 1948, the period just before the cure, compels our long and earnest attention and leads us to conclude that this is an inexplicable cure."

A Canonical Commission confirmed these findings, and on November 20th, 1970, Cardinal Rogues, Archbishop of Rennes, proclaimed the case of Jeanne Fretels a Miraculous Cure.

An interesting sidelight of this case reveals that the physician in charge, Dr. Pellé was an agnostic and unbeliever—"hostile" to religion, the Medical Bureau report says. However, it was his precise records and certificates, before and after the cure, that established it as a miraculous case in the eyes of the doctors and of the clergy.

EMILE ZOLA AT LOURDES

Nothing more startling nor sensational has happened in the history of the past century, nor indeed since the life of Christ, than the miracles of Lourdes. Thousands, it is true, have been brought to the practice of the Catholic Faith. But millions more have remained indifferent to the phenomena.

There is clear evidence that the obstacle to the conversion of the world to the Catholic Church lie not so much in the intellect of man as in the perversity of his will. "The famous but flippant novelist, Zola, said before he came to Lourdes: "I only want to see a cut finger dipped in water and come out healed." When he went to Lourdes he saw Marie Lemarchand suddenly cured of a hideous disease, a tuberculous suppurating ulcer of both cheeks, the nose and upper lip. Doctors present after the miracle testified to the presence of new skin on her face. Dr. Boissaric (President of the Medical Bureau) presented the cured girl to Zola, thinking that such evidence must overwhelm him. "Behold the case of your dreams, Monsieur Zola," he said. "I do not want to look at her," said Zola, "she is still too ugly" (alluding to the red colour of the new skin). "Were I to see all the sick at Lourdes cured, I would not believe in a miracle."

The attitude of Zola is one of mindless bigotry. It is a striking example of the degree to which perversity of the will can blind the intellect.. Zola subsequently

wrote his sensational novel, "Lourdes," in which he deliberately misrepresented the evidence of the miraculous that had been brought before him.

To infidels like Zola, who are determined NOT TO BELIEVE, come what may, Lourdes remains as merely a provocation to blasphemous mockery. "They will not be persuaded even though one rose from the dead." There remain, however, millions of other unbelievers who are men of goodwill and simply know nothing about the amazing evidence of the supernatural provided by Lourdes.

Catholics should be eager to master the facts and to spread the knowledge of them amongst non-believers.

CONCLUSION

At Lourdes, today, men find Christ, as they did in Palestine "with Mary His Mother".

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden.
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;
for He who is mighty has done great things for me,
and Holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm,
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
and exalted those of low degree;
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich He has sent empty away
He has helped His servant Israel,
in remembrance of His mercy,
as He spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to His posterity for ever."*