

other Catholic imagines that an inanimate object, such as a veil, could, in and of itself, avert a great disaster, his friends ought to inform him without delay that 'our Empire has got institutions' for cases like his.

So far from authorising or sanctioning such superstition, the Catholic Church strictly and expressly forbids it. Thus, in her catechism for children—used in Catholic schools throughout the world—she teaches the child as follows:—'Q. Are we forbidden to honor the saints? A. We are not forbidden to honor the saints, if we only honor them as God's special friends and faithful servants, and if we do not give them supreme or divine honor, which belongs to God alone. Q. Do Catholics distinguish between the honor they give to God and the honor they give to the saints when they pray to God and the saints? A. Catholics distinguish between the honor they give to God and the honor they give to the saints: for of God alone they beg grace and mercy, and of the saints they only ask the assistance of their prayers. Q. Is it lawful to recommend ourselves to the saints, and to ask their prayers? A. It is lawful to recommend ourselves to the saints, and to ask their prayers, as it is lawful, and a very pious practice, to ask the prayers of our fellow-creatures on earth and to pray for them.' So much for the saints: now as to their relics. 'Q. Why do Catholics honor the relics of the saints? A. Catholics honor the relics of the saints, because their bodies were the temples of the Holy Ghost, and will be honored at the last day and will be glorified for ever in heaven. Q. Are we then to pray to the images and relics of the saints? A. We are not to pray to the images and relics of the saints; for they have neither life nor sense, nor power to hear or help us.' That is the belief of Catholics everywhere—held by young and old alike. If, instead of advertising his ignorance in the daily papers every time he comes across a Catholic practice which he does not understand, 'Anti-Superstition' would invest in a penny catechism it would add both to his knowledge and to his humility. One of the common ways by which it is usual to honor relics is to have them carried in religious procession. In the case under discussion, assuming the cable to be correct, the veil of St. Agatha—who was born in the neighborhood of Etna, and whose prayers it has long been customary to invoke in time of such disasters—was so carried.

To the very plain and clear catechism statement—quoted above—as to what Catholics do, and do not, believe regarding relics, it is only necessary to add that Catholics believe also that it having pleased God in the past to make use of such objects as instruments for performing great works, and imparting great benefits to His people, they are to be treated with respect, and with an humble hope, that as God has been pleased often to employ them, so He may again. It is to be noted that the benefit conferred is referred wholly to God, so that the idea of superstition is absolutely excluded. Now, we do find that God has made use of such instruments before. Passing over—owing to considerations of space—the weighty, and indeed overwhelming, testimony of the Fathers, we confine ourselves for the present to the clear and unmistakable Scripture evidence on the question. And in order to leave sceptical Protestants without a loop-hole of escape, our quotations shall be from their own Authorised Version of the Bible. In the Old Law, God raised up a dead man, by his coming in contact with the bones—relics—of one of his prophets. 2 Kings, 13th chap., 21st verse, says: 'And when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood up on his feet.' What did God thereby show, but that the bones of His saints were sometimes gifted by Him with a supernatural power. We read that a woman was cured who merely touched the hem of our Saviour's garment, without His exercising any act of His will. Matt. 9th chap., 20th and 22nd verses: 'And she touched the hem of His garment . . . and the woman was made whole from that hour.' We read, again, that healing virtue was bestowed even by the shadow of St. Peter. Acts, 5th chap., 15th and 16th verses: 'Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them.' Had our Westport wiseacre been present on the occasion he would, no doubt, have brayed out 'Superstition!' Nevertheless, referring to the whole multitude of the sick who came to the apostles, verse 16 says: 'And they were healed every one.' Finally, we read, that upon handkerchiefs which had touched the body of St. Paul, being taken to the sick, the latter were instantly restored to health. Acts, 19th chap., 11th and 12th verses: 'And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.' These examples prove, beyond all possible question, that it has pleased God to make use

of the relics of His saints as instruments for His greatest wonders. Here is the foundation of Catholic faith and Catholic practice. We have the express authority of God, that He has chosen, in the past, to make use of these means; and, consequently, there can be no superstition in the belief that He may use them so again.

The authorised teaching and practice of the Church, then, with regard to relics, is simple, reasonable, and absolutely Scriptural. 'We are asked,' says the Westport writer, 'to believe that a high dignitary of the Church, a Cardinal no less, one who may yet be Pope and claim the allegiance of millions of people, has gone out with a woman's veil and hopes to stop the mighty outpouring of that Italian volcano.' Not so. We are asked to believe, as St. James (Protestant version) puts it, 'that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man'—or woman—'availeth much,' and that the means which God has used in the past to perform wonders and confer benefits, He can and may use today. After a letter full of wild and foolish writing, the Westport scribe strikes the inevitable pious vein. 'I know I voice the sentiment of all Christians when I say that, had Cardinal Nava gone out in faith and with prayer to supplicate the Divine Mercy, and to ask for a cessation of the ruin and disaster caused by the volcanic eruption, he would have been joined in that prayer by everyone.' 'Anti-Superstition' may make his mind quite easy. If Cardinal Nava went out at all, nothing is more certain than that he and his fellow-Catholics went out in precisely the spirit described, and in no other. In conclusion, the next time 'Anti-Superstition' sets out to wantonly attack the religious beliefs of any section of his fellow-citizens, we suggest that he should take his courage in both hands and sign his name. The man who conceals his features by a mask, and shoots from behind a hedge, is a fairly frequent character, but he has never yet succeeded in getting the world to respect him.

Notes

Fresh Air in Church

'With the return of winter, there is danger that people will deprive themselves of the benefits of fresh air,' remarks the *Catholic Sentinel*. 'There is grave danger to the public health in compelling a crowd of people to breathe again and again the same impure atmosphere. Special care should be taken to ventilate Catholic churches, because they are occupied for a much longer period on Sunday than are other churches. It is not unusual for a Catholic church in the city to be occupied pretty constantly from 6 o'clock in the morning until noon or later. Under such circumstances the proper ventilation of the church is a matter that requires considerable attention.'

Mr. Redmond's Generalship

Mr. Redmond is winning golden opinions on every hand for the level-headedness and tactical skill he has displayed in the various critical junctures that have arisen since the election. His latest admirer is the London *Spectator*, which pays him a notable tribute. According to the cables, the great Unionist journal declares that from the standpoint of tactics 'it is compelled to take off its hat to Mr. Redmond. It is no small achievement to have lassoed the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, bit and bridled him, jumped on his back, and ridden him quiet and tame round the parliamentary arena.'

With some of the English papers and politicians Mr. Redmond's success is rather a bitter pill. One disgusted member describes Mr. Asquith as 'an obedient slave,' and the *Pall Mall Gazette* aches to think that the Irish Party should be able to 'compel an English Government to serve it on bended knee.' But whether the tribute be given willingly or unwillingly, there is general agreement with the dictum of the *Freeman's Journal* that 'Mr. Redmond has won all along the line, and has not merely preserved unbroken, but strengthened and cemented, the league of democratic forces now preparing to fight to a finish their hereditary foes.'

The Inventor of the Mono-Rail

Mr. Louis Brennan, inventor of the Brennan torpedo and the mono-rail car, is a native of Castlebar, County

J. TAIT, Monumental Sculptor
272 Cashel Street, Christchurch

Just over Bridge and opposite Drill Shed. } Manufacturers and Importers of Every Description Headstones, Cross Monuments, etc., in Granite, Marble, and other stones.