

by a strong and burning wind blowing all the night and turned it into dry ground." The coincidence that it happened at so critical a time, and in answer to prayers, and then the hot wind's abnormal and successful action—all this makes it a miracle, but still it is a miracle co-operating with the laws of Nature, and recognizing them while it surpasses them. If the Almighty thus honors his own ordinances, we may well honor them too; and, indeed, this is commonly recognized

#### AS A DUTY BY CATHOLICS IN MEDICAL CASES,

not to look to miracles until natural means had failed. I do not say that they neglect this rule in regard to their prayers for conversions, but they have not it before their minds so consistently and practically. For instance, prayers for the conversion of given individuals however unlikely to succeed, are, in the case of their relations, friends, benefactors, and the like, obviously a sacred duty. St. Monica prayed for her son; she was bound to do so. Had he remained in Africa he might have merely exchanged one heresy for another. He was guided to Italy by natural means, and was converted by St. Ambrose. It was by hoping against hope, by perseverance in asking, that her request was gained, that her reward was wrought out. However, I conceive the general rule of duty is to take likely objects of prayer, and not unlikely objects, about which we know little or nothing. But I have known cases when good Catholics have said of a given Protestant, "We will have him," and that with a sort of impetuosity, and as if, so to say, they defied Providence, and which have always reminded me of that doctrine of Hindoo theology represented in Southy's poem—that prayers and sacrifices had a compulsory force on the Supreme Being, as if no implicit act of resignation were necessary in order to make our intercession acceptable. If, then, I am asked what our predecessors in the faith were they on earth, would understand now by praying for the conversion of England, as two or three centuries ago they understood by it the success of these political parties and the measures with which that conversion was bound up, I answer that they would contemplate an object present, immediate, concrete, and in the way of Providence, and it would be, if worded with strict correctness,

NOT THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, but the growth of the Catholic Church in England. They would expect, again, by their prayers nothing sudden, nothing inconsistent with the free will of our countrymen, nothing out