

tended Miracle of Naples," but even this is far from being a reproduction of this extraordinary liquefaction. The success of Neumann's experiment depends upon the application of heat, whereas we have seen above, the liquefaction of Naples is entirely independent of temperature, and frequently liquefies at a lower temperature than that at which it remained solid, and *vice versa*.

There is yet another aspect of the question that shows the absurdity of the charge of fraud. Several hundred clergymen have had charge of the ceremonies of the exposition of the relics. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands would therefore have been cognizant of the fraud, if fraud there were. Among these have there been none who would think it their duty to expose the fraud? Have none of them been unreliable and avaricious men? How is it then, that no one through a sense of duty, through anger, hatred, or revenge, through avarice or greed, has revealed the secret? Again the city authorities of Naples, for the last two-and-a-half centuries have been joint guardians with the clergy, of the relics. These civil authorities keep one set of keys of the recesses, and consequently the relics can never be touched except in presence of their representative, who is sworn not to lose sight of the reliquary until it is safely put back. During these 250 years, Naples has been at different periods under the sway of rulers of every stamp and every shade of belief, sometimes professed infidels and openly avowed enemies of religion, who would gladly have seized an opportunity of bringing discredit and ridicule upon the Church, yet not one of them has ever discovered nor published any fraud, any deception, in regard to the liquefaction. How ecstatic, for example, would have been the joy of the French infidels in 1799, to have cast such a stigma upon the hated religion of Christ? How eagerly would not Garibaldi, Ratazzi, and their successors, have struck such a blow at Christianity, and have secured such a triumph over "clericalism."—they who have placed no limits to their calumnies, they who have never ceased to denounce the hypocrisy of the clergy, and the ignorance and superstition of the people? Yet, neither the one party nor the other has profited by

the occasion. And still, every year, this miraculous liquefaction continues to manifest itself before the public gaze, to defy all the attempts of the enemies of the Church to find any fraud or deception, to challenge the skill of our greatest scientists, to reproduce its remarkable phenomena, or to explain its cause. For two centuries it has withstood all attacks—no one has yet substantiated any charge of fraud, no one has succeeded in explaining it by scientific reasoning. Evidently, then, it is due neither to any natural law or combination of laws, nor to any trickery or deception on the part of the clergy.

Is it, then, a miracle? Many, indeed, refuse to admit this. Some form their judgment in advance; for them miracles are impossible in principle, therefore any particular occurrence of this character must be a delusion or a fraud. Others perhaps while pretending to examine the case with impartial mind, wilfully shut their eyes to the light, for the admission of a miracle in the liquefaction would be the admission of three centuries' protestation against truth. Scientists have witnessed it, have examined its phenomena in the light of science, and all have been forced to acknowledge their inability to explain the liquefaction by natural means. Some have stifled their feelings and have remained obstinate in their doubt even against the testimony of their reason. Others, like Sir Humphrey Davy, have acknowledged the deep impression the miracle produced upon their minds, and have openly admitted their belief in the miraculous nature of the liquefaction. As to Catholics, they are free to admit or deny its supernatural origin. The Church has not pronounced authoritatively upon it. But the candid reader, whatever be his religious leanings, who examines with unprejudiced mind the overwhelming weight of evidence in favor of the miraculous nature of the liquefaction, adduced in "The Liquefaction of the Blood of St. Januarius": an historical and critical examination of the miracle, published by the Catholic Publication society of New York—of which pamphlet the present article is but a feeble and incomplete *résumé*—will be obliged to conclude with the author: "*Vere digitus Dei est hic.*"