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**The life of st.  
Stanislas  
Kostka, of the  
Society of  
Jesus**



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VOLUME III.  
ST. STANISLAS KOSTKA.

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# THE LIFE

OF

# ST. STANISLAS KOSTKA,

Of the Society of Jesus.

“Habebo propter hanc (sapientiam) claritatem ad turbas, et honorem apud seniores juvenis: et acutus inveniar in judicio, et in conspectu potentium admirabilis ero, et facies principum mirabuntur me.”—*Sap.* viii. 10, 11.

Second Edition.



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1881.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE work of the well-known Jesuit Father, P. Daniello Bartoli, entitled *Della Vita e Miracoli del B. Stanislao Kostka*, ranks foremost in date, as in merit, amongst what may be called the original Lives of the Saint. Previous short biographies, written soon after his death, which first served to publish the fame of his sanctity to the Christian world, have passed out of general circulation, and are no longer ordinarily accessible. But whatever they contained, or contain, is given, with much additional matter, in Bartoli's Life, which was first published in 1670. In his person, St. Stanislas, as subsequently St. Aloysius in P. Cepari, had a faithful, laborious, and painstaking biographer,—one who loved the subject he took in hand, and accordingly wrote as those only who love can write. True, he had not the privilege which P. Cepari enjoyed of having been a contemporary of the Saint whose history he recorded, and of having lived on terms of daily confidence with him during the last years of his life; neither did he possess the singular advantage of which P. Cepari so diligently availed himself in the case of St. Aloysius, of being able to interrogate, after his death, the different members of the Saint's family, and other persons who had been intimately acquainted with him before he joined the Company of Jesus. But he wrote while the memory of Stanislas was still fresh in the Order, and at a time when many authentic traditions must have existed concerning him in the Jesuit house at Rome. Some of

the older Fathers might still be then living who had conversed with and familiarly known those who in their youth had themselves known Stanislas and been his co-novices ; he also consulted the Processes existing in his day, and his work bears every trace of the most careful adherence to well-established facts.

P. Longaro's shorter but also very valuable Life was published near a century later, in 1766, thirty-nine years after the canonization of Stanislas. It has a peculiar charm about it, from the simplicity of its style, accompanied with an affectionate uncton, of which his sweet Italian tongue is so congenial a vehicle. Love for the Saint, redolent of all that freshness which personal knowledge alone would seem able to impart, breathes in every page, and the reader is almost surprised when he observes the date of the work, and finds the Bull of Canonization at its close.

There is also a Life of St. Stanislas written by an anonymous member of the Company, the authorship of which has never, it seems, been ascertained with certainty, but it is in every way inferior to that of Bartoli.

A few other Lives have also appeared in Italian, but, as they do not contain any fresh details of the Saint's life, and none of them possess the merit or fulness of Bartoli's biography, they hardly require particular notice.

The Abbé Gaveau's lately published Life of St. Stanislas has been consulted, chiefly with reference to the present state of devotion to the Saint in different countries, as well as to circumstances connected with his tomb, and the preservation of his relics in recent times. The book is written in a pleasing style, and makes very modest pretensions. The author, however, has evidently taken great pains to insure accuracy, and has been anxious to profit by all existing materials ; for, being unacquainted with the Polish language, he sought

nevertheless to avail himself of the biographies of Poland's patron written in his native tongue, and this he was enabled to do through the kindness of the Superior of the Congregation of the Resurrection, Father Jerome Kajsiwicz, who translated to him orally all passages of special interest in these works, and particularly in that of Father Skarga.

The present writer cannot but notice with regret the limited popularity which this most engaging Saint has hitherto enjoyed in our own country. He has, of course, been loved and honoured in our colleges and seminaries, and his well-known youthful face, with its uplifted eyes and clasped hands, the attitude in which he is so commonly represented,—or, again, as receiving the Infant Jesus into his arms,—has helped to excite devotion to him in the hearts of many persons who have known little more of him than the miraculous favour which the picture records, and the fact that he is a special patron of youth. Still, he is not so extensively known and loved as he ought to be. The want of any biography in our own tongue, with the exception of the short account contained in Alban Butler's "Lives of the Saints," combined with the absence of his festival from our calendar, is probably sufficient to account for the circumstance. Even the foreign Lives of St. Stanislas have been little known in England, and it was with surprise that the writer, on consulting Alban Butler's pages, found him referring the reader only to P. D'Orleans' Life of the Saint, a work of no very remarkable merit, and not mentioning even the French version by Pouget or P. Bartoli's biography. Moreover, there is reason to believe that P. D'Orleans' book is but an abridgment and a re-manipulation of a former translation of an Italian Life which has been attributed to P. Ceparì.

It is to supply in some measure this desideratum of a popular Life of St. Stanislas that the present volume has been written. Following closely in the steps of the best authorities, it has been the aim of the writer to present a true picture of the Saint, who, it may be said, so peculiarly moves us to devotion to himself, and to the love of the virtues he practised, by the simple impression of beauty which the charm of sanctity exhibited in his whole person produces on the mind. He lived too short a time to perform great and splendid deeds, but the mere representation of him as he was is enough to enamour us of virtue. The writer is deeply conscious how inadequately the object contemplated has been attained, and how faint an image has been given of the delicate grace and exquisite purity of the original. A hope, however, may be entertained that what words have failed satisfactorily to portray, they may, at least, have been successful in suggesting to the reader's own mind.

CHELTENHAM,  
FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION, 1870.

Since the former edition of this biography was published, a very pleasing narrative of the Saint's Life, grounded on that of Father Boero, has appeared, under the title of *The Story of St. Stanislaus Kostka*, in the "Quarterly Series," edited by the Jesuit Fathers. The object of the writer (as specified in the Preface to the volume) has been, partly, to give a simple statement of facts, as far as might be, in the very words of the witnesses who were examined in the Processes, and, partly, to vindicate the accuracy—most unjustly impeached—of the celebrated Bartoli, the author who has been principally followed in our own work. Advantage has been taken of this publication to make a few slight corrections in the present edition.

CHRISTMAS, 1880.

# CONTENTS.

---

ADVERTISEMENT . . . . . page v.

## PART I.

### The Land of Exile.

---

#### CHAPTER I.

##### STANISLAS A SAINT FROM HIS CRADLE.

Stanislas compared with Aloysius. His childlike character. Accomplished in perfection from the beginning. The three patrons of youth. Stanislas's noble extraction. His ancestors' zeal for the faith. The family abode. Supernatural sign of his future vocation. His mother's hopeful joy. His birth and baptism; his godfather lays him before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament. The graces with which his young soul is favoured. His early devotion, and gift of contemplation. John Bilinski is appointed his tutor. Stanislas's docility and rapid progress . . . . . page 3

#### CHAPTER II.

##### THE SAINT'S LOVE OF MARY AND OF PURITY.

Stanislas's tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. His exquisite modesty. He swoons away on hearing discourse offensive to purity. His immunity from temptations against that virtue. His marvellous beauty and angelic appearance. The effect produced on beholders. His maturity of judgment, wisdom, and winning gentleness, the gifts of his heavenly Mother. He is assisted by her in his studies . . . . . page 19

#### CHAPTER III.

##### STANISLAS'S LIFE AT THE JESUIT COLLEGE.

The Viennese College. The fervent piety of the students. Stanislas is sent to this school with his brother Paul, Bilinski accompanying them as their governor. He becomes the object of an extraordinary love and veneration. His aspect in prayer; delight of his fellow-students in observing him. His discretion, simplicity, and kindness; his continual retirement in

God. The Confraternity of Our Lady and St. Barbara. The saint's gift of winning souls, and charm of conversation. Trial impending . . . . . *page 26*

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE SAINT IN THE HERETIC'S HOUSE.

The school is broken up; mutual sorrow of Stanislas and his companions. Subsequent testimonies to his sanctity. Paul and Bilinski resolve to remain at Vienna. They hire apartments in the house of Kimberker, a Lutheran; grief of Stanislas. The saint's life more and more interior; his friendship wholly spiritual. His abstinence, constant visits to the church, and prolonged ecstasies. His devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Love of the Eucharist inseparable from love of Mary. The saint's tender affection for her; beauty of his compositions on her perfections. Analogy between the inspirations of genius and divinely infused knowledge . . . *page 35*

#### CHAPTER V.

##### STANISLAS PERSECUTED BY HIS BROTHER.

Mortification and self-denial peculiarly obnoxious to the world. The saint's rigid austerities; his long nightly prayers, and use of the discipline; expostulations of his governor, and unreasonable complaints. Character of Paul; his anger against his brother. Bilinski's taunts and reproaches; compunction of both in after years. Paul's violence and cruelty. Two cousins join in ill-treating Stanislas. Description of their behaviour, and subsequent regrets. The saint miraculously preserved from fire. His submission to ill-usage a triumph of fortitude and patience. His sweetness and condescension; to please his brother, he takes lessons in dancing. His generosity and delicacy of feeling . . . . . *page 50*

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### THE VOCATION OF STANISLAS TO THE COMPANY OF JESUS.

Paul's object in persecuting his brother. The saint's reasons for non-compliance with his wishes. His instinctive dread of the world, and attraction to the Company of Jesus. He conceals his vocation for six months; motives which kept him silent; his subsequent self-reproach. He at length reveals his desire to his confessor. God's dealings with exalted souls. The Company unwilling to receive him without his father's consent; Stanislas's sorrow and desolation; he turns with renewed confidence to God. His special preparation for the feast of St. Barbara . . . . . *page 65*

#### CHAPTER VII.

##### MIRACULOUS VIATICUM; AND VISIT OF MARY WITH HER CHILD.

Stanislas falls seriously ill. His life is in danger; Satan assaults him in the shape of a large black dog. Stanislas desires to receive the Viaticum; his request is unheeded. He calls

St. Barbara to his succour. She appears to him in company of two angels; and Stanislas is miraculously communicated. Bilinski's testimony. The saint's own narrative of what occurred. He is given over by the physicians. The Virgin Mother appears to him with the Infant Jesus. She gives her Divine Son into his arms; their mutual caresses. Mary assures him of his recovery, and bids him enter the Company of Jesus . . . . . *page 74*

## CHAPTER VIII.

## STANISLAS'S FLIGHT FROM VIENNA.

The saint relates the vision to his confessor; the Jesuits still refuse to receive him. He seeks the intervention of Cardinal Commendon without success. He determines on flight. Communicates his project to P. Francesco Antonj. Is advised by this Father to go to the Provincial at Augsburg. Awaits the next outbreak of his brother's fury. Paul's violence, and the saint's unexpected behaviour. His night-long prayer. His departure . . . . . *page 85*

## CHAPTER IX.

## STANISLAS'S JOURNEY, AND ITS WONDERS.

He put's on a vagrant's garb. His flight invested with a romantic interest. A fruitless search. Kimberker consults a witch. Pursuit of the fugitive; the saint's rapid travelling. He is overtaken, but not recognised. His pursuers conceive a suspicion and drive back after him. The saint's confidence in the Divine protection; the horses refuse to move. The pursuit abandoned. Paul's fear of provoking God's chastisement. Discovery of a letter to Bilinski. Sensation produced in Vienna. The anger of the Senator Kostka; he threatens the Jesuits with his vengeance. Stanislas reaches Augsburg; absence of the Provincial. Stanislas resolves to follow him to Dillingen. He enters a Lutheran church, and is communicated by angels. Arrives at Dillingen . . . . . *page 95*

## PART II.

*The Earthly Paradise.*

## CHAPTER I.

## STANISLAS'S PROBATION AT DILLINGEN.

The Blessed Peter Canisius. His reception of Stanislas. He resolves to put him to a severe trial. Places him among the servants of the house; conduct of the saintly youth. His admirable and engaging virtues. His austerities and suffer-



ings. Necessity of removing him to a distance. The Provincial determines on sending him to Rome; parting of Canisius and Stanislas . . . . . *page 117*

## CHAPTER II.

## STANISLAS'S RECEPTION INTO THE COMPANY.

Canisius's letter to the General of the Order. Stanislas and his companions on their way; their devotional practices. Arrival at Rome; the saint's first interview with St. Francis Borgia. His delight at putting on the Jesuit habit. His fervent aspirations . . . . . *page 127*

## CHAPTER III.

## STANISLAS ENTERS ON HIS NOVICIATE.

The saint's co-novices remarkable for their numbers; and still more for their personal qualifications. Mention of the most noteworthy. Claudio Acquaviva is appointed his master in the Spiritual Exercises. Estimation in which Stanislas is held by his companions and superiors. His veneration for his brethren, and love for the rules of his Order. Angry letter from his father. Stanislas's reply. His ardent attachment to his vocation. Mission of his brother Paul to Rome . . . . . *page 133*

## CHAPTER IV.

## STANISLAS A MODEL OF NOVICES.

Peculiar variety in the saints; Stanislas always a gracious child. Like an angel in human form. His sweet humility and modesty. Contempt of all worldly respects; visit of Cardinal Commendon. The saint's dislike of commendation; the arts by which he diverted attention from himself. His self-depreciation and love of silence. Power of his conversation; his peculiar talent of narrating. His high esteem of his vocation to the Company. His love of mortification. His perfect obedience. Instance of this. Testimony rendered by Claudio Acquaviva . . . . . *page 145*

## CHAPTER V.

## STANISLAS'S FILIAL DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED MOTHER OF GOD.

The saint's faithful correspondence with grace, and consequent rapid advance in perfection. The praises of Mary ever on his lips; the beauty and depth of his language respecting her. Effect of his words on others. His confidence in Mary's maternal love. His penitential spirit and sensitive shrinking from the world, as connected with his devotion to her. His gift of freeing others from temptations. His singular fitness to be the patron of youth . . . . . *page 163*

## CHAPTER VI.

## STANISLAS'S BURNING CHARITY AND PERFECT UNION WITH GOD.

The more we empty our hearts of the love of creatures and of self the more we acquire the love of God. Stanislas never had

any other love : hence his life was like one divine contemplation. His freedom from distractions in prayer ; its peculiarity. His habitual application to God. His paroxysms of divine love. Superiors fear for his health, and order him to abridge his meditations. Irresistible attractions of God ; testimony of P. Oborski. The facility and sweetness with which he received the gifts of God. Stanislas not merely innocent, nor merely virtuous ; he possessed in an eminent degree the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The facility and sweetness with which the gifts of grace were displayed in him. Simplicity the effect of union with God. The charm of this in Stanislas. Secret of his marvellous influence on others . . . page 173

## CHAPTER VII.

## ILLNESS AND DEATH OF STANISLAS.

F. Peter Canisius visits Rome, and preaches to the novices. Subject of his discourse continual preparation for death ; Stanislas predicts his own approaching end. He expresses a hope of keeping the feast of the Assumption in Heaven. Makes a novena to St. Lawrence, his special patron for the month ; his longing desire to depart. Each soul has its appointed end and place. Stanislas addresses the Blessed Virgin in a letter ; reflections thereon. Its import ; Stanislas knows that his request is granted. He feels the first touch of his mortal sickness, and rejoices ; no fears entertained by his fathers and brethren. Reasons for believing that he had received a divine intimation as to the day of his death. He is seized with a fainting-fit ; panic in the house. He begs to be laid upon the ground. Receives the Viaticum and Extreme Unction. His resignation to the Divine Will, and joy in the thought of seeing his heavenly Mother. His prayers and colloquies ; tender addresses to the crucifix ; affectionate appeals to his patron saints. Visit of Mary to her dying child ; testimony of Mario Franchi. Joyous expression on his countenance in his last moments . . . . . page 190

## PART III.

## The Throne of Glory.

## CHAPTER I.

## STANISLAS HONOURED IN HIS DEATH.

Description of the saint's personal appearance ; his beauty unchanged by death. Veneration paid to his remains. His death attributable to divine love ; revelation of his beatitude. Stanislas the first to die in the Roman noviciate ; he is buried

in a wooden coffin. Testimonies to his sanctity; the Fathers Fazj and Warscewiski write his biography. Painters and sculptors reproduce his likeness, and illustrate the incidents of his life. Honours paid to the room in which he died

page 215

## CHAPTER II.

### STANISLAS OBTAINS GRACES FOR HIS KINDRED.

The saint's mother is moved to enter on a higher life; her devoted piety and charity. Paul's past insensibility to his brother's virtues. Immediate revulsion of feeling at the news of the saint's death; his poignant sorrow and shame. His anguish at the remembrance of his conduct; he shrinks from recalling the details of his brother's life. He is discovered disciplining himself by night; his life-long penitence. He resolves not to marry; subsequent extinction of the Kostka family. His compassion for the poor; he founds a convent and hospital. His prayers and penitential practices. His frequent meditation on the Passion, and ardent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. His zeal for the faith, and patient endurance of obloquy and insult. He desires to join the Company of Jesus, but dies before entering the noviciate. Popular conviction of his sanctity. Bilinski's compunction and self-reproach. His joy at the honours paid to Stanislas. The saint visits him on his death-bed . . . . .

page 223

## CHAPTER III.

### THE SAINT'S RELICS AND TOMB.

The novices petition to have the head of the saint in their oratory. His body is found uncorrupt and unchanged; his bones subsequently deposited in the noviciate church. The Fathers prevent any public veneration; remonstrances of the Poles. An exquisite fragrance issues from his tomb. Cardinal Bianchetti prepares to suspend a silver lamp thereat, but desists at the desire of the Jesuits. Concessions of Clement VIII; he gives Stanislas the title of Blessed. Impatience of the Poles; renewed applications to Paul V. The Pope permits public honours to be paid to Stanislas by the Company in Rome. The Polish ambassador himself suspends and lights the lamp at his tomb. Decorations thereof; the church crowded with worshippers on the Feast of the Assumption. The celebration renewed on the octave. The new church of Sant' Andrea; the saint's relics saved from profanation at the hands of the French . . . . .

page 240

## CHAPTER IV.

### HONOURS PAID TO STANISLAS BY HIS COUNTRY.

King Sigismund solicits public honours for Stanislas in the Jesuit churches of Poland; Paul V. accedes to the request; enthusiastic joy of the nation. Extraordinary honours paid to him at Jaroslav. National festivities on his anniversary; illuminations; processions; scenic representations. Altars and

chapels dedicated to him ; his images and pictures everywhere displayed. Numerous petitions for his canonization. Paul V. confirms to him the title of Blessed . . . . *page 254*

## CHAPTER V.

## STANISLAS THE PROTECTOR OF POLAND.

Several Polish cities place themselves under the saint's protection ; attestations of the magistrates of Lublin and Bug. Gratitude due to Poland for her stand against the Ottoman power. The Sultan Osman threatens the kingdom with an enormous force ; meeting of the Diet. Sigismund asks the Company for the head of the saint ; his request is granted. Battle of Choczin ; defeat of the Turks. Apparition of Stanislas in the sky. Commemorative pictures of the event. Veneration paid to the holy relic by the King and his court. Vision of the saint interceding for his country. Siege of Przemisl by the Cossacks of the Ukraine. Stanislas appears in vision to the commandant and to a matron of the city ; flight of the beleaguering host. Similar deliverance of Leopold ; Stanislas is seen on the walls by the enemy. Victory won by John Casimir ; and, again, by Sobiski, through the saint's intercession. Michael Koribut Wisniowiezki is raised to the throne ; at his suit Clement X. grants to Poland and Lithuania permission to have the Mass and Office of Stanislas said in all the churches, and to the Company throughout the world. He accords to him also the title of Patron of Poland . . . . *page 263*

## CHAPTER VI.

## STANISLAS RAISES THE DEAD.

Instances of the dead being raised to life through the saint's intercession remarkably numerous ; other noticeable circumstances. Restoration to life of a child drowned in a well at Lublin. Searching examination into the facts. Recovery and conversion of a Lutheran boy drowned at Posen. Another similar miracle. The saint raises to life a child suffocated in a ditch. Restores a poor woman's rosemary plants. This miracle a token of the saint's tender compassion, and of God's loving-kindness . . . . . *page 281*

## CHAPTER VII.

## STANISLAS HEALS THE SICK.

The saint prodigal of his miraculous aid. Instantaneous recovery of a student at the college of Sandomir, through the application of his relic. Similar effect in the case of the Professor of Poetry at Leopold. Miraculous cure of a mother and two children. Restoration of sight to two blind women. Perfect recovery of a lost eye. Another cure of blindness, combined with plague. Whole families and towns delivered from pestilence : instances of Piaski, Posen, and Grodzko. Miraculous cure of a Franciscan Father. Remarkable miracle wrought in favour of an afflicted servant . . . *page 292*

## CHAPTER VIII.

## APPARITIONS OF THE SAINT.

Stanislas appears on the walls of Leopold, and saves the city from being destroyed by fire. He is seen on occasion of a similar conflagration at Piaski. He appears in vision to a noble lady of Przemisl, and frees her from malignant fever. Appears in company with the Blessed Virgin, and heals a poor man stricken with plague. Appears before the waking eyes of an inhabitant of Cracow, and restores her to health. Rescues a drowning peasant of Krosna. Another instance of the saint's visible appearance, related in the words of the deponent. He visits a paralytic priest, and warns him to leave a Lutheran house. Spiritual benefits obtained by Stanislas still more numerous than the temporal . . . . . *page 305*

## CHAPTER IX.

## MIRACULOUS PICTURES OF STANISLAS.

The miraculous picture of Lublin, originally in the possession of a tailor at that place. It is seen to shed tears. The prodigy recurs on the following day. It is beheld by hundreds of persons; and a formal deposition is made. Precautions taken in such cases; attitude of the sceptical mind; testimony of a Premonstratensian Father. Similar phenomenon in the professed house at Cracow; the changeful aspects of the picture. Such prodigies usually warnings of approaching calamity; God dispenses His grace according to some mysterious law. The whole scheme of redemption divinely harmonious

*page 313*

## CHAPTER X.

## THE CANONIZATION OF STANISLAS—CONCLUSION.

First Apostolic processes commenced in the principal towns of Poland. Illness of the notary, Martin Kobuski; his inability to discharge his office miraculously removed. Divine judgment on Barbara Dedynska for refusing to give her attestation. Rebuke supernaturally administered to John Brechfa. Delay in canonizing Stanislas served but to increase his glory. Clement XI. directs proceedings to be taken in order thereto. Benedict XIII. canonizes Stanislas in company with St. Aloysius Gonzaga. Joy of Christendom; splendid ceremony at Vienna. Devotion to the saint maintained in Germany; he is affectionately honoured in Rome, and throughout Italy, especially at Naples; his festival pre-eminently a domestic one. The *cultus* of the saint not extensively popular in France, but on the increase; his honour promoted by Cardinal de Rohan. Unhappy state of Poland; few memorials of the saint preserved; need of prayers for that oppressed country. Motives for a revival of devotion to Stanislas at the present crisis; its inseparable connection with devotion to Mary

*page 322*

**PART I.**  
**THE LAND OF EXILE.**





## CHAPTER I.

### STANISLAS A SAINT FROM HIS CRADLE.

No two saintly countenances are more familiar to the devout Catholic than those of Aloysius Gonzaga and Stanislas Kostka ; the one with his humble, downward gaze, riveted on the crucifix ; the other with his lustrous eyes raised to heaven in loving contemplation. Aloysius's eyes we never see ; but the eyes of Stanislas are our first thought when we recall his image. Resembling each other in so many striking particulars, that what is said of the one might be applied, almost word for word, to the other, these two blessed youths differ in several respects, as things which are similar differ in God's creation, ever multiple in unity. They are sweet varieties in the Paradise of God, where, as in the garden of nature, no two flowers, although one in species, are altogether alike in their individuality. Both saints have been given as patterns to the young ; but, while Aloysius carries us on to the verge where adolescence begins to melt into manhood, Stanislas, who passed to heaven at eighteen, bore to the last the type of childhood, with all its freshness and peculiar graces, which, like the early morning air, possess an inexplicable sweetness, destined to die away with the advancing hours. These



winning charms were withal accompanied by that mingled gravity and gaiety which distinguishes the primal season of life; for if nothing is so gay as a child, nothing also is so serious: it is with youth that levity begins. All these charms were our saint's unfading ornaments, only supernaturalised by divine grace, investing them with a fascinating influence, such as it is not given to mere human attractions to exercise. Aloysius scarcely seemed to pass through childhood's season; he comes before us as a youth while yet a boy, and he is still a youth when he dies, although a man in years; but Stanislas, although he outstepped the age of boyhood, bears, in our eyes, to the last the soft down of childhood on his cheek, and its innocent, joyous smile on his lips. This childlike character was also stamped on his devotion, sublime as it was. And so He who, in a certain sense, bears Himself towards us according to our bearing towards Him, had for this elect soul condescensions which the simple alone have been permitted to experience. Hence the ineffable familiarities and mutual caresses of the Infant Jesus and the boy saint; and, again, the loving confidences between the Virgin Mother and this her favoured child. Stanislas's devotion to Mary is, indeed, the perfect counterpart, only in a superior order, of that pure and engrossing passion of the young boy's heart, whose earthly mother sums up to him all of love and loveliness which the world can offer.

When, however, we speak of the childlike character of Stanislas's saintliness, we do not mean that he was a child in the degree of his holiness as well as in its character, possessing only such a measure of perfection as might seem to comport with tender years, when, overflowing as the vessel of the soul may be with grace, that

vessel, it may be presumed, is as yet of small dimensions, and, all fragrant as may be the scent of the opening buds of virtue, the tender plant which they adorn has not as yet had time to strike deep roots into the soil. "*Piccol giovane, ma gran santo*"—such was the antithesis which Urban VIII. adopted with reference to Stanislas when speaking of him to the Bishop of Wilna: "A little youth, but a great saint." It was from the summit of the mountains that Stanislas made his start on the short race of life allotted to him. He was accomplished in perfection from the beginning. Like some cherub fresh from the hands of his Creator, who earned his beatitude in one blessed moment, by one perfect holocaust of self, by one inexpressible act of charity, the worth of which cannot be measured by time, Stanislas appeared ripe for glory from the moment that the Light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world dawned on his young reason; and if he tarried on earth for a few short years, one might almost deem him left rather that we might have the boon of beholding him, than in order to complete a spiritual stature which seemed, as it were, finished as soon as begun.

As a tender parent, in order to lure and entice his little son to the love of study, will use every ingenious art to render the pursuit attractive, so our Heavenly Father has set before the eyes of youth the most engaging models, in order to kindle in their breasts a love of holiness and a desire to imitate what is so sweet and admirable. Stanislas Kostka, Aloysius Gonzaga, and John Berchmans—these three names at once occur to all as pre-eminently the patterns and patrons of youth. Three beautiful pictures do they present. Stanislas and Aloysius are originals, so to say; like only because

formed on the same divine model. Berchmans is a faithful copy of the two, a sort of compendium and reflection of their spiritual loveliness; for they preceded him, and were before his mind in all he did, and in all at which he aimed. But these three youths have severally a special angelic charm, and endear themselves to us, not by their spiritual beauty alone, but by their attractive natural gifts, albeit we find it hard sometimes to distinguish between the two; nature in these innocent souls being so completely spiritualised, and grace seeming only like another nature.

It pleased God to deck Stanislas, in particular, with every personal charm, and to enrich him with every adventitious advantage which might serve to distinguish him even in the natural order. Amongst these advantages in the world's esteem we meet first with that of high and noble extraction. Poland, the land of his birth, has always possessed a singular interest for all generous hearts. As a nation, it may be said to have a special charter of nobility. The Count de Montalembert, that eloquent advocate of the cause of oppressed peoples, says that "its destiny was ever to be the glorious victim of Christendom." In the days of which we are speaking it stood forth as the bulwark of Christian civilisation against the infidel; its territory then comprising almost the whole of that portion of northern Europe which lies between the Baltic and the Black Sea. These were the days of grandeur and prosperity to Poland. We know how high a position the great nobility of all the European commonwealths still held at that period, although the princely power they had exercised in the middle ages had been much curtailed by the generally increased authority of the crown. But by the very constitution of Poland its aristocracy were peculiarly

circumstanced, and, as long as that constitution should prevail, their influence and importance could not be materially diminished. The crown was elective ; and not only could the nobility choose whom they would for their king, but there was not one of their number who might not be chosen, and thus raised to the supreme dignity. Amongst the great families belonging to the senatorial order\* in the state, the houses of Dabrowa and Odrowaz held a distinguished place. As you cast your eye back on Polish annals, during several centuries, you meet continually with palatines, chancellors, bishops, marshals, generals, ambassadors at the different courts of Europe, all bearing the honoured name of Dabrowa. This house was the stem of the Kostkas, themselves remarkable for the numerous high dignities and offices held by members of their family. This noble tree was destined to bear fruit yet more precious and glorious than had hitherto adorned its branches, and to attain thereby an honour immeasurably superior to that which the crown of Poland, once almost the prize of one of its members,† could have conferred. No less distinguished was the ancient house of Odrowaz, which, as well as that of Dabrowa, can boast of having added a saint to the calendar ; for St. Hyacinth, one of the glories of the Dominican Order, sprang from that race.

\* The senate of the nation was composed of the bishops ; the palatines, who each ruled a province of the kingdom, as a little monarch within his own territory ; the castellans, set over subordinate portions ; two chancellors and two marshals. These great men sat in council with the king, and shared the powers of government with him.

† John Kostka, competitor for the throne with Stephen Bathory in 1574. Bathory, Prince of Transylvania, was preferred, but a descendant of this same John Kostka, Michael Koribut Wisniowiezky, wore the crown of Poland about a century later.

The house of Kristka, from which our Stanislas was descended on the maternal side, drew its origin from that of Odrowaz, as Kostka from that of Dabrowa. Both families added to their temporal distinctions the higher glory of an unswerving attachment to the Church, and a jealous guardianship of the faith. An unhappy remissness had given free entrance into Poland to foreign sectaries, not from any sympathy that existed in the heart of this Catholic people with the heretical spirit, but rather through an exaggeration of that generous, but careless, and almost reckless hospitality which was one of the national characteristics. This conduct of the Poles has been lauded as a noble example of toleration,—a eulogium often very loosely and inaccurately bestowed, and with no very clear conception of what is meant, by some of those very historians who confess that this policy (if, rather, it may not be termed the highest impolicy) led to the most disastrous temporal results. The Kostkas, however, from loftier motives than those of mere worldly prudence, took a different line from that adopted by their countrymen in general, and excluded the teachers of error from their wide domains, if not as fomentors of insubordination and disorder, yet as the enemies of God's truth and the destroyers of men's souls. Their influence in the Duchy of Masovia, united to that of the Kristkas, who were animated by a like zeal, succeeded in establishing the same practice throughout its extent. No heretic, to whatever sect he might belong, or whatever rank he might hold, was allowed to fix himself in the Duchy of Masovia; and if any such, who were travelling on matters of business, were necessitated to enter that province, care was taken that they should not linger in it, but should proceed on their journey with all possible despatch. It pleased

God to choose the parents of St. Stanislas from these two families, rewarding, as we may well believe, by this favour the faith and love which they had displayed in His service.

John Kostka, Senator and Castellan of Zakroczym, was the father of our saint; his mother was Margaret Drobnin-Kristka, sister and grand-daughter of the Palatines of the Duchy of Masovia. The noble pair dwelt on the ancient seignorial domain of the family, situated on the borders of the duchy, and known for many centuries as that of Kostkow. This domain comprised only a small group of houses, with a few adjoining hamlets; but, being the cradle of their race, here these great lords had continued to make their abode, ruling hence their other dependencies. In those times it was little the practice, nor was there much temptation, for any one to move from his accustomed residence. Unless war called the noble from his ancestral castle, or other great emergency or stirring motive induced him to leave it, he abode therein as a matter of course. This was peculiarly the case in Poland, whose princes generally resided on their own estates, even when extensive provinces had been placed under their superintendence. When John Kostka, then, had obtained the hand of Margaret Kristka, he fixed his residence in the place where his fathers had, for long generations, lived and died. Here their days passed serenely, and here God blessed their marriage with five fair children, four sons, of whom the subject of this biography was the second, and one daughter. The names of the other sons have travelled down to us, being Paul, John, and Albert, one of whom, his elder brother, Paul, is indissolubly associated with the memory of Stanislas. History has not preserved the name of the only sister

of the saint, but we know that she married into the noble family of Radzanowski. Of the sons one alone, John, married, and Albert died young. As John left only daughters, the name of the illustrious house of Kostka would consequently have perished but for the saint who has conferred on it an undying renown.

It was God's will to give a supernatural token previous to the birth of Stanislas, designating him as His own in a peculiar sense. The sign vouchsafed mysteriously indicated his future vocation, but time only could unfold its full significance. Meanwhile it served to mark the unborn infant as a privileged child of grace ; and, in view of this its high destiny, to recommend it to the singular care and reverence of its parents, preparing them to regard it as a treasure lent to them by the Lord, which He would claim at His appointed season. One night, then, when Margaret was expecting again to become a mother, she dreamed that the Name of Jesus was signed upon her bosom in purple letters, whence rays of glory issued. Tears of the sweetest emotion flowed from her still closed eyes, and when she opened them she felt her soul inundated with inexpressible joy. It was a dream calculated to make a deep impression, had it left nothing but its memory behind. Margaret was a good and pious Christian, and was not disposed to attach any undue importance to a mere dream, but she was struck by the heavenly character of the joy she had experienced at that happy waking, and she pondered what this might mean, and what God might design to signify thereby.

While these thoughts were yet in her mind, great were her astonishment and awe when, a few days later, she discovered that the Holy Name had in very truth been imprinted upon her ! The fear which seized her on be-

holding this prodigy soon, however, gave place to those delightful and consoling reflections which the sweetest of all names, thus marvellously engraven, could not but suggest. Still she desired, for the better tranquillising of her mind, to impart her secret to the director of her conscience. He was a priest of singular holiness, belonging to the neighbouring town of Prasniz. Thither she repaired, and when he had heard her report of the extraordinary fact which had occurred, he told her that he considered it to be undoubtedly miraculous, and to be a sure presage of good in regard to the child which should be born. It had often pleased God, he said, to give supernatural indications of the future sanctity of unborn infants, sometimes thus denoting the particular ministry or work for which He had chosen them. If the present sign had any such special import, what that import might be it was impossible for him to pronounce. No man on earth could know this without a direct revelation. It would, indeed, have been impossible for this good priest even to form a conjecture of what, we may now well believe, was indicated by this miraculous occurrence. The Society of Jesus, of which Stanislas was to form so bright an ornament, had been instituted only ten years before, and none of the Fathers had yet penetrated into distant Poland, a country still more remote by its want of intercommunication with the rest of Europe than even by its local situation. Masovia was, besides, an outlying province, where the very names of Ignatius and his followers, and of the holy standard under which they had enlisted, were probably as yet altogether unknown. The Holy Name of Jesus was, however, an evident pledge of the divine blessing on the unborn babe, who might possibly hereafter be called to glorify that name in a peculiar manner. Under this



conviction, Margaret's director bade her regard the sign with unmixed joy, and look upon herself as the happiest of mothers. Who, indeed, could describe the consolation of spirit with which this pious matron returned to her castle-home to await the accomplishment of the supernatural assurance which she had received! Hers was a bliss which on earth has, perhaps, no parallel, to know that she was to be the mother of a child marked with the seal of God's predilection, to be the mother, in anticipation, of a saint; a bliss which, immeasurably inferior as the gladness of all human maternities must be, yet bears the reflected image of that ineffable joy of the Divine Mother, which made Mary's soul magnify the Lord, and her spirit rejoice in God her Saviour, whom she bore in her virginal womb. That same Lord and Saviour had signed Margaret's unborn infant with His own sacred Name, that name at which all things in heaven and earth do bow. What, then, could she do but rejoice and sing hymns of thanksgiving in her heart? what but prepare herself diligently, by increased sanctity of life, for the expected honour?

Stanislas was born towards the close of September,\* 1550, and his parents hastened to obtain for him the grace of baptism. As we learn that the ceremony was attended with much pomp and concourse of the neighbouring nobility, we may conclude that preparations had been made against the coming event, in order that it might not lose in splendour from its speedy perform-

\* So says Bartoli. Other biographers name the 28th of October, grounding their statement on some lines written by the saint's own hand on that same day in 1567, when he received the Jesuit habit, in which he speaks of having just entered on his eighteenth year. Bartoli, who had seen this entry, had, no doubt, good reasons for not giving it a literal interpretation.

ance, or suffer postponement from the mere secondary object of securing external honour. To the parish church of Prasniz, then, dedicated to the martyr bishop St. Adalbert, and distant from Kostkow something under two miles, the infant was borne, attended by a goodly company of cavaliers and noble matrons; and here he received that white robe of innocence which he was to carry unspotted to the throne of God. When the ceremony was finished, his godfather, Andrew Radzanowski, one of the nobles of the neighbourhood, took the babe into his arms, and bore him, in presence of all the assembled witnesses, to the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, where he laid him on the bare floor, with the baptismal dew still fresh upon his brow, as a consecrated offering to God. Radzanowski remained awhile in fervent prayer, then raised the infant from the ground, and restored him to his nurse's arms. It may well be believed that it was by a divine inspiration that this nobleman was moved thus to present to his Eucharistic God the child to whom hereafter He was so lovingly and miraculously to give Himself. Be this as it may, the offering was accepted, and we shall see, in years to come, how vainly Stanislas's father strove to keep back from God the child thus solemnly dedicated to Him by his sponsor's act. The church in which the infant saint was baptized, and the spot where he was laid before the altar, became afterwards the objects of public veneration,—a veneration which survived the desolation and almost utter destruction of the sacred edifice by the impious Cossack hordes.

The parents of Stanislas knew well that it was a favoured child of God whom they had the charge of rearing, and history has recorded that they were deeply impressed with a sense of the responsibility which such

a trust involved. It is much to be regretted that more particulars of the mode in which this conviction displayed itself have not been recorded ; and, still more, that we have so few memorials of the infancy of one who, as testified by an old servant of the family, years after Stanislas's death, was a saint from his very cradle. Such as have been preserved rest, however, on the best authority, and are of special interest. It is related that the first time the child heard the names of Jesus and Mary he at once repeated them without effort, as one who remembers rather than learns. Nor was this a solitary instance of the sort of prescience of the truth of the faith which his soul seemed to possess previous to oral instruction. Early as was the teaching by which the pious care of his mother directed his thoughts and affections to God, and to divine things, she always found that the Holy Spirit had been beforehand with her, as if He had reserved to Himself the education of this privileged soul. Stanislas in after years had not forgotten this early illumination of the Spirit of grace with which he had been favoured. "When he had become ours" (says P. Bartoli) "he related to us, not without tears of the purest consolation, the first lesson he received from his Heavenly Teacher,—at least, the first conscious lesson ; his earliest reminiscence of infancy being the offering he made of himself to God, and his promise to serve Him, when the dawn of reason first enlightened his soul, bringing with it, as in his case it did, the knowledge of God and of the truth of things eternal." How rare it is in children thus to discern God as the first object of their awakened intellect, and, ravished with His incomparable Beauty and Goodness, to attach themselves to Him by an ardent and irrevocable act of love, those best know who

have watchfully and anxiously, and in the face of many difficulties and discouragements, laboured to bespeak the earliest acts of reason and affection in these young hearts for their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. No pains were needed in Stanislas's case; the work was already done. Of all the many graces which adorned this blessed child, this primal grace must be regarded as the source. The inward vision which had been vouchsafed to him had transfigured his soul. Hence his maturity of judgment, hence his sweet gravity of demeanour—for Stanislas, through life so childlike, was never childish even in his baby years—hence his surpassing modesty and purity. If one of those spirits which religious imagination has conceived, and painters have portrayed, as invested with the form, the countenance, and the graces of an immortal childhood, were to leave its radiant sphere nigh to the throne of the Eternal, and, visiting this earth of ours, to dwell and converse amongst us, even such as Stanislas was might we fancy that this cherub would seem in our eyes. His happy parents, as they contemplated, day by day, the manifestation of the supernatural gifts with which their child had been enriched, used to say, "He is a little angel now, and will hereafter be a saint."

A saint! His parents as yet, especially his father, did but imperfectly realise what it was for a beloved child, the object of intense self-appropriating love, to be a saint also. For such a child is one whom God claims peculiarly as His own, and whom He will exclusively possess, in spite of all the pleadings of flesh and blood. But the time is still distant, and the thought of separation from him who was the joy and pride of his heart has not crossed the mind of the noble Pole. And yet every day that passed might

have furnished fresh proofs that Stanislas was not at home on earth, or in the world. With other children sports precede the amusements of youth, till these give place to the serious business of life, but Stanislas sought no recreation, no delight, save with and from his God. Scarcely could he stand, and totter a few steps, when he would leave his mother's knee to go and pray. As yet his tongue could but imperfectly express itself, but language was not needed. He could love; and who could doubt the ardour and tenderness of the love which glowed in his young heart, who found this gracious child kneeling with upraised face and eyes resplendent with a light not of this world? The development of his devotion kept pace with that physical and mental development which immediately follows babyhood. When he was five or six years old he began to conceal himself in dark corners of the house, that he might give free course to the tears of happiness with which his eyes seemed ever to be glistening, and the servants would often find him in a state of ecstasy. Great was their astonishment on the first occasion when they thus surprised him, an astonishment which was increased when they perceived that the noise they made failed to recall him from his heavenly contemplation, and that they passed unobserved before eyes which were open to the Eternal Beauty alone. We can scarcely imagine them becoming used to such a sight, to which the angelic loveliness of this child must have added its own additional charm; but they did become used in a manner, so frequent was the occurrence of the prodigy; and when they found him in a state of rapture they would proceed on their way in reverential silence, without attempting to interrupt his communion with God. This communion, which passed so often

into the ecstatic state, was indeed, to all appearance, never interrupted internally. It was not so much that Stanislas was given to prayer from his infancy as that prayer was his life, and his life was prayer. The presence of God was to him as the air he breathed, it was an indispensable need to him; God was ever drawing him still closer by His sensible attractions. Nothing had any charm for him save in reference to God; and this all who were about him knew so well that, when they wished to hear him talk, they would begin to converse of heavenly things. He would then join in the discourse, and words would flow from this child's lips the charm of which lingered long on the memory of those who had the fortune to hear them.

Stanislas's parents provided him early with a preceptor, to instruct him in reading and the first elements of the Latin tongue. As this teacher was to act as governor as well as instructor, and would thus have the responsible charge of the boy's education, much pains appear to have been taken to select a proper person for the office. Stanislas's father was one of the first nobles of the land, therefore he who should be entrusted with the training of his son's mind must himself be of noble extraction, in order that his feelings and ideas should not want for loftiness and generosity. He must also be highly endowed with mental qualifications, and accomplished in secular learning, for the rich promise held out by that son's infant mind called for corresponding care and solicitude to secure for him every educational advantage. John Bilinski, a young man of great talent, who later obtained the degree of doctor, and became a Canon of the Church of Plock, appeared to Stanislas's parents to unite in his person all these desirable qualifications. Of Bilinski's earlier life we

know nothing, but we may feel confident that in faith and morals he was unblemished, or he would never have been selected for the situation he was called to fill. Subsequent events, however, which we will not forestall, prove that, in some essential respects, the choice was not a happy one. Bilinski was young, and we shall find that his affections were by no means weaned from those worldly pursuits and worldly enjoyments which had never the faintest attraction for his youthful charge, and that he was not proof against the snares of human respect or the contagion of bad example. He was evidently deficient in those confirmed habits of piety, and those strong religious principles, which are needed in one to whom is committed the charge of youth; but these faults would probably not betray themselves, and had, perhaps, scarcely opportunity for development, so long as the preceptor remained under the roof and supervision of the child's parents.

Stanislas behaved towards the governor set over him with the most perfect docility and submission, striving in every respect to comply with his desires, and to repay the care bestowed upon him by the closest application to his lessons. His progress was rapid, and even admirable, a circumstance which can hardly surprise us when we consider that to a teachable disposition he added the highest order of abilities; and then he had other assistance—but of this we shall speak hereafter.

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## CHAPTER II.

## THE SAINT'S LOVE OF MARY AND OF PURITY.

IT is difficult among the saints to be remarkable for love of Mary ; or, rather, we would say that every saint is remarkable for a high degree of that love, for in all of whom we have sufficient details we recognise it as a salient feature of their devotion. Yet amongst the lovers of Mary the boy Stanislas claims a singular pre-eminence. Who shall attempt to describe the tenderness, the delicacy, the ardour of his love for the Mother of God, and his own dear mother, as with inexpressible sweetness he used to call her ; for, from the moment he was first told of her, he had all a son's fondness for her, and never called her by any other name ? If any one gave him a little picture of the Blessed Virgin, which people would frequently do, in order to witness his innocent delight, reminding him at the same time that she was the Mother of his Saviour, Stanislas would press it to his heart, exclaiming, "I know it, I know it, and she is my own dearest mother too ;" nor could he lay it down till he had bestowed upon it every mark of the tenderest love. Or he would contemplate it awhile with a smile, in which a certain gentle melancholy mingled, such as might display itself on the countenance of one who, in a land of exile, gazes on the portrait of his mother, being all he now possesses to recall the image of her who is far away in his beloved home ; then, as his heart grew hot within him, his face would become tinged with a roseate brightness, tears would flow from



his eyes, and he would console himself by kissing the picture with a fervour and an affection which were beautiful to behold. But the mere mention of Mary, or the sight of anything which suggested the thought of her, was sufficient at all times to call up this ravishing expression into the young saint's countenance.

There is a virtue especially dear to the Mother of God, her own pre-eminent virtue, a virtue which springs from piety towards her as a flower blooms on its parent stem. It is the virtue of purity. The greater the devotion to the Immaculate Virgin, the greater the splendour of this virtue in holy souls. To estimate, then, in some degree the depth of this devotion in the child Stanislas, we have but to consider his matchless purity. One single fact, almost unexampled, perhaps, even in the lives of saints who have kept the stainless innocency of their baptism, may serve as an illustration. It occurred not once but many times, as certified by his governor, Bilinski, his brother Paul, and others, who deposed to what they had often witnessed with their own eyes.\* The father of our saint kept open table at his castle of Kostkow. Not only did he maintain a large number of followers, but the nobility of the neighbourhood were freely welcome to partake of his magnificent hospitality. Besides, John Kostka, from his rank of castellan and senator, had relations with all the great people of the land; so that, what with retainers, friends, and strangers, it was a very numerous company that daily gathered round his board. At the head of the table sat the lord of Kostkow with his sons. Himself a good Catholic, we may infer that conversation offensive to morality was not encouraged by the noble host; nevertheless, it was not always

\* Their depositions may be seen in the Cracow processes.

easy to impose a check on the tongues of his guests, especially as amongst them were not seldom men accustomed to the license of camps, whose language at times would be apt to entrench on the bounds of Christian modesty. On such occasions a blush of confusion would instantly cover the face of Stanislas; he cast down his eyes, his head sank upon his bosom, and he seemed like one desiring to retreat within himself. Little suspecting the wound their tongues were inflicting on the pure soul of this child, these men would continue their unbridled talk; and then Stanislas would raise his eyes to heaven brimful of tears, with an expression most pathetic, while his countenance assumed a deadly paleness. His eyes remained thus fixed for a brief moment, when he either swooned away, or, as his father believed, became so rapt in spirit as to lose all consciousness. Whichever may have been the case, the consequence was the same, and the child would have sunk from his chair upon the floor had he not been speedily caught in the arms of the attendants.\* The first time that Stanislas was thus affected, no one thought of attributing the circumstance to its true cause; but its frequent recurrence, and that always consequent on some bad word uttered, or unbecoming topic introduced in his hearing, attracted the attention of his father, who at last became convinced that it was entirely owing to the pain inflicted on the exquisite modesty of

\* Here are Paul's words, as recorded in the earliest of the processes made in the city of Cracow:—"Cum mensæ paternæ coram assideremus, et aliquid, pro mōre seculari, liberius ab aliquo hospitem proponeretur, fraterculus meus carissimus Stanislaus, obversis in cœlum ocellis, extra se factus, quasi exaninis sub mensam delabatur, non sine periculo læsionis, nisi ab assidentibus, raptus subito, a casu prohibitus fuisset. Notum id erat omnibus domesticis, et omnibus erat admirationi."

this angelic soul. As he tenderly loved his son, it went to his heart to see the innocent child's look of anguish, and he would endeavour to divert the discourse when it was tending to some objectionable subject, or, failing this, he would say, laughing, "Come, let us talk of something else, or we shall see my little Stanislas raise his eyes to heaven, and then fall headlong to earth." Whether it was an ecstasy of spirit into which the boy was mercifully raised, to relieve him from the torture he endured, or that the torture itself was so intense that it caused him to swoon away, the marvel is equally great, and testifies equally to the inexpressible love of purity which dwelt in his young soul.

This shrinking and sensitive love of purity in very young children who give themselves early to God, which in our saint was so singular in its degree, seems to be a special protective gift, a kind of holy instinct which He imparts, leading them to dread and fly from an evil of which they can have no sensible experience or even definite knowledge; and so we find young children, who have scarce emerged from babyhood, placing their innocency and their virginity under the guardianship of their heavenly Mother, while as yet, from their tender age, the vices and perils of the world are, not only unknown, but even unintelligible to them. Not seldom has Mary obtained for these little ones, so peculiarly dear to her who is the Virgin of virgins, an immunity through life from even the slightest temptation against this fair virtue,—an immunity which nevertheless has not prevented them from exercising the most jealous custody over their senses, or from practising austerities as severe as any which the spirit of penance has ever inspired. So it was, we shall find, with Stanislas; so it was with Aloysius, born into the world the very year

that Stanislas took his flight to heaven, as though to fill his place on earth.

All who have described Stanislas in his childhood have testified to his marvellous beauty. To use the words of an historian of the Company, it would seem as if the Heavenly Builder had proposed to Himself, when fashioning his body, to make it a worthy abode of the soul which inhabited it.\* His complexion was exceeding fair, its transparent whiteness warming on his cheeks into the most delicate bloom, the hue of the blush-rose. His face was full, like that of a pictured cherub, and his hair raven black. His eyes—what shall we say of those indescribable eyes? Has any one ever noted, or is there any one who has not noted, the crystalline lustre of some children's eyes, like to that of the deep mysterious heaven? Even such, but far more angelic, were Stanislas's large and limpid orbs, which glistened as with an unbroken tear. His countenance had always a joyous and ineffable sweetness, as if he was for ever keeping festival in Heaven, and, like the angels who guard the little ones of the flock, continually beholding the face of the Eternal Father. But that which gave his beauty its crowning charm was the air of supernatural modesty which adorned it. Purity seemed to pervade every feature and inform every look; it was exhaled, as it were, from his whole person. All the virtues have more or less the property of conferring grace on the human countenance, but the angelic virtue of purity possesses this power in a special degree, and seems to have the prerogative of transfiguring and, so to say, embalming the earthly tabernacle in which it resides, inspiring the love of itself in all who approach. What

\* "Hoc veluti decorum domicilium, aptum habitatori animo, celestis faber fabricaverat."—*Sacchini*.

St. Ambrose said of the surpassing beauty of the Immaculate Mother of God—that it produced the love of chastity in those who beheld her—was observed also with regard to this favoured child of Mary. The very sight of him seemed to purify the heart; so spiritual and so heavenly was the charm of his countenance, that it inspired a kind of veneration, and people felt themselves even withheld from those endearing caresses which are usually lavished on beautiful and engaging children, as if he were something too pure and sacred to be treated with familiarity. Stanislas's love for Mary was equalled only by his love for purity, or, rather, we might say, the two loves were identified in him. He may almost, indeed, be called a martyr of purity, since to the love of this virtue we must attribute mainly the manner of life which afterwards drew upon him the ordeal of suffering through which, like all other saints, he was to pass in order to attain his crown; for to be perfected through suffering in one form or another is the Christian's lot.

But this love of purity, and the singular halo of sanctity surrounding him, was not the only grace or gift that the Mother of God bestowed on Stanislas, who may truly be said to be Mary's darling. A fond mother withholds nothing from her child that may serve to make it happy and to adorn it, and our heavenly Mother's tenderness immeasurably surpasses that of the most indulgent earthly parent; and so Mary seemed to delight in investing Stanislas with her own especial attributes. She is the "Virgin most prudent" as well as the "Virgin most pure," and marvellous indeed was the discretion of this artless child, whose every word bespoke a supernatural maturity of judgment. She is the "Mother most amiable," and what so winning as

his benignant gentleness and meekness! And she is also "the seat of wisdom," imparting divine wisdom to the babes of Christ. As the Son is the Uncreated Wisdom of the Father, so is Mary the created wisdom which images the Incarnate; and the Church accordingly has applied to her, in a secondary sense, those inspired words of Holy Writ which, in their primary signification, belong to Him who is the Eternal Wisdom of God: "I love them who love me; and they that in the morning early watch for me shall find me. . . . For my fruit is better than gold and the precious stone, and my blossoms than choice silver. . . . Now, therefore, ye children, hear me: Blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise. Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors." \* "If a man desire much knowledge," says the author of the Book of Wisdom, "she knoweth things past, and judgeth of things to come; she knoweth the subtleties of speeches and the solutions of arguments. . . . For her sake, I shall have glory among the multitude and honour among the ancients, though I be young. And I shall be found of a quick conceit in judgment, and shall be admired in the sight of the mighty, and the faces of princes shall wonder at me." † Besides obtaining for Stanislas that wisdom which alone in its fulness deserves the name, proof exists that this good Mother assisted him in his studies in an unusual and extraordinary manner, rendering that easy of acquisition to him which is often a matter of labour even to the best endowed. She has all the treasures of her Son at her command, and rejoices when she finds an occasion to dispense them liberally, because it is the joy of the

\* Prov. viii. 17, 19, 32, 34.

† Wisd. viii. 8, 10, 11.

Sacred Heart of Jesus to give, and her heart is most like to His Heart. We remain strangely unaware how much assistance even in the exercise of our natural gifts we might obtain if we only asked for it. Children in their simplicity will ask for things which grown-up people do not think of making the subject of petition, and it is rare when a child's prayer is not granted, however trifling its subject, for God loves those who turn to Him with confidence in all things, be they great or small. With Stanislas every aspiration was heavenwards, every wish a prayer; how, then, could it be otherwise but that he was enriched with every gift, and found in that life of true wisdom which grace inspired "a paradise in blessings"? \*



### CHAPTER III.

#### STANISLAS'S LIFE AT THE JESUIT COLLEGE.

It may well be imagined that the parents of such a child must have experienced more than usual pain at the prospect of separation. Yet the interests of his education seemed to demand this sacrifice from them, since it was impossible to procure for him at home the many advantages which the college or university could supply. Stanislas was now entering on his fourteenth year, his brother Paul, who was nearest to him in age, being not two years his senior; and their father, desiring that they should prosecute their collegiate studies to-

\* Ecclus. xl. 17.

gether, had retained his elder son at home longer than he would otherwise have done, in order that he might be accompanied by the younger.

The fame of the Company of Jesus had now begun to spread far and wide, and the high reputation in which it was held as the instructor of youth had made Kostka desirous of insuring for his sons advantages not easily obtainable at other hands. The Fathers had recently opened a school, or college, in the imperial city, and the Emperor Ferdinand, about four years previous to this date, had conceded to them for this purpose a house contiguous to their own, not, indeed, as a gift, but as a loan. Between these two buildings they had opened a communication, and had even given the students admittance into a portion of their own house, including the refectory; a measure extremely advantageous to the scholars, who were thus brought into closer contact with the Fathers, and enabled to enjoy the inestimable benefit of their daily personal example. The result was apparent in the conduct of the youths, who emulated the virtues which they observed in their revered teachers, and even carried their religious fervour so far as to meet together at regular times for the purpose of giving themselves the discipline, and privately to practise other penitential exercises not common among seculars. The consequence was that, in many instances, the pupils returned home much better furnished with piety than their parents had either anticipated or desired, who, in sending their sons to the Viennese school, often from great distances, had been actuated by no other motive than that of procuring them a secular education of the highest order, combined with careful training in morals and manners. These advantages, added to the well-known fact that the sons of the first nobility of Germany were sent to study



at the Viennese college, had proved sufficient to tempt even Lutheran families to entrust the Jesuit Fathers with the instruction of their children, upon whose young and candid minds, not as yet perverted by sectarian prejudice and bigotry, the examples which they daily witnessed, and the holy atmosphere which surrounded them, operated with most powerful effect. Many returned to the paternal roof good and zealous Catholics, prepared to endure the loss of all things for conscience' sake. Some, indeed, proved their steadfastness by heroic sacrifices, renouncing the comforts and luxuries of rich homes, and even their expected inheritance, rather than forego the practice of their religion ; while others, more fortunate and blessed with more generous kindred, had the happiness of winning them back to the ancient faith, not by controversy and dispute, but, as their teachers had counselled them, by the very innocency of their lives.

To the Jesuit school at Vienna, then, John Kostka decided upon sending his sons, Paul and Stanislas. Bilinski was to accompany them as governor, and two confidential servants and a valet were to form their household. The valet was the same domestic of whom we have already spoken as testifying to the saintliness of his young master from his earliest infancy. He eventually left the world, and consecrated himself to the service of God in the Order of Observantine Minors of St. Francis, where he attained to very high religious perfection. We have to regret the absence of any particulars regarding the parting of Stanislas and his parents. It is a trying moment to affectionate fathers and mothers when the time comes that their children are to pass from under their roof and to be confided to the care of strangers, although they are able to look

forward to their return at stated periods during the process of their tuition. But in the days of which we are speaking, with all the difficulties of communication then existing, such partings must have been far more painful. Here were no happy vacations, occurring twice during the year, to relieve the length of the separation; Vienna and the castle of the Kostkas were divided by many hundred miles, and these long miles would not be traversed again by the children until their education had been completed, and they had entered on a new stage of life. The *child* would never return. We can imagine, therefore, in the absence of any record, that it was an affecting leave-taking. We can picture to ourselves the hardly-repressed tears of the father and the unrestrained weeping of the mother: but what passed in the mind of the young saint? How did he demean himself when bidding farewell to the friends and scenes of his childhood? Did a divine presentiment pass over his soul, as the arms of his beloved parents enfolded him in a parting embrace, that he should never more behold them on earth? Of all this we are left in ignorance; neither have any details of the journey of the two brothers and their governor to Vienna been preserved to us. Such journeys, which in those days were usually performed on horseback, were not without their little events, casualties, and even dangers, and we should have been glad to learn how the young saint bore himself in all the varying incidents of the road. But here, again, we are left entirely to conjecture; all we know is, that the party reached Vienna some time in the course of the year 1564, and were at once installed at the College of the Jesuit Fathers.

Here, as P. Bartoli expresses it, Stanislas both found a paradise for his own soul and made one for the souls

of others. It would be difficult, indeed, to estimate or to describe the effect produced on the young students by the lesson of innocency, piety, and every attractive Christian grace which they saw before them day by day in the person of their new companion. One of these youths, D. Antonio de Mier, afterwards head chaplain to the widowed Empress Maria, and a prelate at her court, in his testimony recorded in the processes, avers that scarcely had Stanislas entered the college when he began to be regarded as a saint. There was in him a mingled gentleness and majesty, accompanied by the most amiable simplicity, which inspired those who beheld him with sentiments of love and veneration combined. They delighted especially in gazing at him in the act of prayer. The divine offices were celebrated by the Jesuits at Vienna on festival days with much pomp and splendour, in order to make reparation to God for the contumely with which the Lutheran heretics treated the ceremonies of Holy Church. Upon these occasions all the students used to attend, and their eyes would frequently turn to Stanislas, and that from no motive of idle curiosity, but that they might kindle their own devotion by the sight of his angelic fervour. It was as if a heavenly spirit had come down to pray amongst them, and to teach them how to pray, telling them, by the radiance of his countenance, of glorious mysteries, invisible to mortal eye, which he was privileged to contemplate. There were parts of the sacred offices which, they observed, affected him peculiarly. When any hymn or canticle was being sung which led the mind to muse on the heavenly country and our banished state on earth, Stanislas was sure to fall into a rapture. The *Salve Regina* produced this effect almost inevitably. It seemed to be the very utterance of his

heart, expressing, as it does, at once the groanings of the exiled, the longing desires of the soul to behold its Lord, and the tenderest confidence in her who is the Mother of Jesus and our mother too. All these sentiments found so perfect a response in Stanislas's bosom, that they never failed to excite in him transports which carried him beyond the regions of sense. His fellow-students would also love to watch him when engaged in worship before the Blessed Sacrament, at which time his face would beam with an unearthly splendour. As his prayer was often one long ecstasy, they could behold him at their leisure without fear of his perceiving that he was an object of remark. Convinced by all they saw that this child belonged more to heaven than to earth, they would retire from the wondrous sight exclaiming, "Truly we have an angel at our college in human form."

"When we looked at Stanislas," says his former comrade, D. Antonio de Mier, "we felt ashamed of ourselves, and this" (he adds) "not only when he was engaged in prayer, but upon the most ordinary occasions and in common conversation." Of words, however, he was extremely sparing, not only avoiding any transgression of what the rules of the college permitted in that respect, but limiting his conversation to what was actually due to their proper observance; yet all without constraint, without any of that awkward rigidity or exaggeration into which it is so easy for the young to fall who, desiring to live for God exclusively, have not as yet acquired the spiritual experience always clearly to discern the line which separates compromise from condescension, or gracefully to follow it when perceived. Stanislas, heaven-taught in all things, did all things well. He was ever simple, kind, accessible, considerate;

behaving when in class with a most engaging modesty, and, notwithstanding the singular merit with which he performed his tasks, especially in the matter of composition, appearing utterly unconscious of his superiority, a circumstance which particularly endeared him to his associates. At recreation his face beamed with a sweet hilarity; indeed, no shade ever obscured the serenity of his countenance, which bore an habitual expression of holy joy, even when tears were falling in showers from his eyes. Every moment that was at his own disposal he gave to God—if one might not more truly say that his life was wholly in God; and he came forth from his interior retirement only to acquit himself of his duties, for immediately he was in the inner sanctuary again, and when possible, on his knees, in which attitude he would perseveringly remain, with his spirit so immersed in prayer as to be utterly unconscious of his failing powers, until, falling prostrate on the floor, he became aware that his bodily strength was not equal to the fervour of his soul.

There was in the college a Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin, St. Barbara being its secondary patroness. As it may be supposed, Stanislas's devotion to the Queen of Heaven induced him to lose no time in having himself enrolled among the associates. He had also, as we learn, a particular devotion to St. Barbara. That saint, indeed, was held in high veneration throughout Germany and all the northern regions of Europe. Everywhere she had churches, altars, and sumptuous chapels dedicated to her honour, and her festival was celebrated with peculiar splendour; but nowhere, perhaps, with so much solemnity as at the Jesuit College at Vienna, where this flourishing confraternity existed. Ignorant as he yet was of the singular favour she was

to obtain for him, Stanislas nevertheless felt a strong attraction to devote himself to her service from the moment he entered the college; accordingly, he embraced with joy the opportunity of numbering himself amongst her special clients. The confraternity furnished him also with a fresh field for the exercise of his burning charity. To induce his brethren to come and taste with him the sweetness of the love of God was his continual aim, whenever their occupations threw them together; and this new bond gave him a title to exercise a little Apostleship amongst them, which he so well knew how to render acceptable. The grace of acceptability seemed, indeed, to have been poured on all that Stanislas did and said. There was no resisting the beauty of holiness made visible, as it were, in this angelic boy, or the captivating charm of his conversation. That conversation was all of God, and of the great work of salvation for which we are here on earth; and, sparing as he generally was of his words, they could flow in gentle abundance whenever an occasion offered of discoursing on these themes. It was delightful to hear him speak of the loveliness of a soul in grace, his tongue seemed gifted with the fresh and gushing eloquence of one who has seen with his eyes that which he describes; and, as his listeners gazed at him in mute admiration, they might well believe that they themselves beheld that loveliness revealed in Stanislas's blissful face. Then would the young saint go on to paint, with all the feeling which his own glad experience imparted to him, the delicious joy of giving the first fruits of one's affections to God; and none amongst his hearers, however careless or indifferent they might be, but felt a divine attraction beginning to grow within them as they hearkened to the gracious words

which fell from his lips, so sweetly did he descant upon what in itself is so passing sweet. But there was one topic in particular upon which the saintly boy discoursed with an impassioned fervour. When he spoke of Mary the blood mantled in his cheek, and the brightness gathered in his eyes. It was manifest to all that his spirit could scarcely contain itself for the floods of tenderness which were rushing over it; and those to whom it was given to see him at these rapturous moments felt that they looked upon one whose true place was before the supernal altar of incense amongst the seraphic choir. Truly it seemed impossible that Stanislas could long continue his stay on earth.

But before his departure he was to drink of that chalice of which all the followers of a crucified Lord must be more or less partakers. His first bitter sorrow was now impending. Not long was he to enjoy the peace of his Father's house, and to repose under the shadow of the altar; not long was he to dwell in a happy home, blessed himself, and dispensing blessings to all around him. That house, renewed in piety and fervour by the saint's presence, was soon to be broken up, and its inmates were to be separated and scattered; so different are God's ways from our anticipations. His gifts and bounties have to be, as it were, caught at on the wing, for if they are ever coming they are also ever going—like to the Saviour of men Himself, who passed along doing good, but tarried nowhere, not even when to His all-seeing eye the fields looked ripe for the harvest, and when He bade His disciples pray that labourers might be sent to reap the rich fruits; not when men crowded round Him and besought Him to remain with them. Such seems to be the rule of His dealings with us, as regards both the external and the internal helps

with which His liberality furnishes us. We can keep none of them, we must profit by them as they pass. He gives us His saints, and then He takes them away, at the very time, perhaps, when they seem to be doing a great work. So it was in the case of Stanislas. Just when the students of the Jesuit College were, under the fruitful influence of his example, making rapid progress in perfection, and the flattering prospect might be entertained that a band of youths would ere long go forth to carry the good seed into other regions, suddenly all came to an end. Truly may we repeat, how different are God's ways from our anticipations !



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SAINT IN THE HERETIC'S HOUSE.

THE Emperor Ferdinand died on the 25th of July in this same year 1564. We have seen how he favoured the Jesuits, and accommodated them with a house for their college. Unfortunately this benefaction had the precarious character of a loan. The Fathers had but the use, not the possession, of this building, the continued tenure of which depended upon the imperial will ; and, in fact, only eight months were allowed to elapse after Ferdinand's demise before Maximilian, his son and successor, who, unlike his father, regarded the Jesuits with little favour, availed himself of his proprietary claims over the house to reclaim it from the Company. This measure dealt a fatal blow to the college ; its inmates



had necessarily to be all dismissed ; their education could no longer be superintended by the Jesuits. Many returned to their own families ; others, whose relatives were desirous that they should continue to profit by the instruction of the Fathers, who still kept their school open, quartered themselves about the city wherever they could find lodgings. The young Kostkas had, of course, to remove with the rest ; and it may be imagined how acutely Stanislas felt the change : it was as if he had been permitted to enjoy a vision of heaven and a taste of its beatifying joys only to be driven back to the cold banishment of earth. He could not restrain his tears—he wept at leaving the hallowed precincts of the college, whose enclosing walls shut him in from the world, and shut the world out from him ; and he wept also at bidding adieu to many dear companions, to whom he had bound himself by ties of Christian friendship. Their grief at losing him was extreme, for it was not the mere ordinary sorrow of youthful partings which they experienced ; the affection entertained for Stanislas by his associates was singular and exceptional, combining, as it did, all that familiar love which his youth and amiability inspired with the deep veneration which mature sanctity alone is usually able to excite. He was at one and the same time loved as a dear brother and honoured as a saint.

The estimation in which he was held by his college companions was indeed clearly proved when, in after years, the cause of his beatification was undertaken, and those who had known him at this period were interrogated on oath. The one expression which they all employed in describing him was that he was like “an angel in human form ;” and so abiding was the impression made upon their minds, that we find one of

their number, afterwards Archbishop of Gnesen and Primate of Poland, requesting on his deathbed to have some objects brought to him which had belonged to the boy-saint. In his eyes they were precious relics which would help to fortify him against the terrors of death ; and, when he entered on his agony, he was heard repeatedly invoking Stanislas in accents of the tenderest confidence. Another of his school-fellows, Bernard Macieiewski, afterwards Cardinal, sent rich offerings to his tomb, and was one of those who took a most active interest in promoting his beatification. To Antonio de Mier's testimony we have already alluded ; and all these persons, we must remember, had nothing to draw upon but the memory of what Stanislas had been at that early age, so patent did it please our Lord to render the eminent holiness of this elect child.

But to proceed with our narrative. The college being broken up, what were the young Kostkas to do ? This question was now eagerly debated between Bilinski and Paul ; for as to Stanislas, he had no voice in the matter, his part being simply to acquiesce in whatever his brother and the governor might determine upon. Should the party return to Poland, or should they remain in Vienna ? By the former course they would appear to be sacrificing the very object of their recent journey, forfeiting all the advantages which were still attainable ; but perhaps—or, we might rather say, doubtless—this was not the only, or the principal, point of view from which the question was regarded by Paul Kostka and his tutor. If Vienna could still supply the best means of instruction, it offered, at the same time, facilities of another kind to which neither was indifferent. The gay city presented varied attractions in the way of society and amusement, to which the rude hospi-

talities of the antique hall of the Polish castellan could bear no comparison. It may be that Bilinski and Paul thought it wisest not to return ; but there can be small doubt that they also deemed it most agreeable to remain ; and so it was decided that they should remain.

The next step was to seek a suitable lodging. Stanislas would have desired, and propriety would have suggested, as most conformable to the ostensible object of their residence in the city, that they should choose some quiet house, away from the great thoroughfares and places of public resort, where they could pursue their studies with the least interruption. But this did not fall in with Paul's notions at all. He was fond of worldly company, pleasure, and show, and his desire was to secure a suite of apartments such as, in his estimation, became a nobleman of distinction, in which he could receive and entertain his friends in a style gratifying to his pride and love of display. Bilinski, instead of discountenancing and checking these tastes in the vain youth of whom he had the charge, unfortunately shared them to a great extent, and accordingly seconded his views. As for Stanislas's opinion in the matter, the governor regarded it very little, and the domineering Paul simply despised it. Our saint had, therefore, the painful prospect of being domiciled in some house where all that surrounded him would but serve to distract him from the heavenly life which he was inwardly leading. Nevertheless, he bore the distressing suspense with his accustomed gentleness ; no bitterness or excitement mingled with his grief, which, however poignant, was never gloomy or disquieting. But a trial was before him far exceeding his worst anticipations.

On the Platz Kiemark, in one of the most frequented

quarters of the city, towering above the neighbouring edifices, rose a lofty mansion, which, by its conspicuous position, could not fail to arrest the attention of the passer-by. This mansion had attracted Paul Kostka's eye. He noted its noble façade, its imposing elevation, and the fine view which its windows commanded. He found, on inquiry, that the house belonged to the Senator Kimberker; and learned also, to his great delight, that being unable, on account of its size, to inhabit the whole himself, the possessor was desirous of letting a portion of it. Kimberker, however, was a violent Lutheran. Were the sons of the noble Pole, who would not suffer the foot of a heretic to tarry on the soil of which he was the lord, to go and dwell under the shadow of such a man's roof—nay, concede to him a certain right of control over them as residents in his house? Was there, in all Catholic Vienna, the metropolis of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Empire, no house fit to receive them save this abode of an enemy of the faith; and if indeed it were so, would not the meanest lodging be preferable? But Paul thought light of every objection, as weighed against advantages which flattered his vanity and self-importance. What was Kimberker's faith, or lack of faith, to him? His house was in a fashionable quarter of the town, and it was the best house in that quarter. So far, therefore, from having any hesitation in the matter, Paul was only impatient to secure the vacant apartments. But Stanislas, who had become aware of the project, and had learned that Kimberker was a Lutheran, was struck with dismay. With tears he besought his brother not to do this thing, using every argument fitted to dissuade him, and representing the profound sorrow it would cause to himself; but Paul's heart was closed against all such

affectionate appeals. Pride and selfishness shut up the heart which they tenant, and in no case more completely than in that of the young, when they allow these hardening vices to get dominion over them; for to that callousness which they produce in all, is super-added the thoughtlessness belonging to their age. Paul would care for nothing but himself, and think of nothing but himself. Remonstrances had, therefore, no influence with him; they were simply offensive, being regarded as so many would-be obstacles to the accomplishment of his will; and so Stanislas's representations had no other effect but that of heightening those feelings of irritation which his elder brother was beginning to entertain towards him.

Thus harshly repulsed, Stanislas was forced to take refuge in silence. The holy youth poured his grief into the bosom of his Heavenly Father, and there not only found consolation and support, but regained that perfect serenity which had been inculpably disturbed for a brief space by this cruel trial, the severest which he had ever encountered. He must live in the heretic's house, since such was his brother's will, which he had no power to resist; but nothing could hinder him from living there the life he had resolved to live; and that was a life more than ever dedicated to God. Of this life we have a description, which rests upon the most conclusive testimony, that of his governor, Bilinski, of his brother Paul, of his servant, Lorenzo Pacifici,\* and of two Polish noblemen, cousins of the Kostkas, who shared the apartments in Kimberker's house, all being rendered on oath and recorded in the processes. We

\* The name of this servant is apparently Italianised; for the man was a German, as P. Bartoli, upon one occasion, incidentally states.

have seen how, from his earliest infancy, Stanislas had no taste for the things of earth. He needed not to be drawn from them to the contemplation of divine things, for, from the first, he seemed a heaven-born soul, abiding as an exile and stranger in the world. All his longings, all his loves, were in the invisible land, in the Christian's own true Fatherland—"in patria;" and now the rude shock which his affections had received only served to plunge him more deeply into the interior life, and made him cast himself more lovingly than ever into the Everlasting Arms. He had never spoken much; he now spoke less, and with a very limited number of persons; yet he had a few chosen friends from among his late associates at the college, where he had contracted no intimacy except with such as loved to speak, and let him freely speak, of the only subject which interested him. Some of these students had, like him, remained at Vienna to pursue their collegiate course, and he occasionally took a little recreation in their society,—recreation, however, of a spiritual kind. He met them, not to indulge in the sports usual at his age, not to cultivate their affection, or to solace himself with the love they bore him; love, indeed, spontaneously sought him, but it was never by him either sought or desired. To take sweet counsel together, to talk of God and of Mary, to invite others to love the Supreme Good, and the Immaculate Mother, more and more—such were his desire and aim. So delightful was it to hear him discourse on these themes, that seldom did his companions wish to substitute any other topic. If, by accident, the conversation rambled off to anything of an idle and secular character, Stanislas showed a singular dexterity in bringing it back to what was good and profitable to the soul; nothing else ever passed his

own lips, and he seemed as if he had no ears for aught beside, being as one who hears a strange tongue whenever worldly subjects were introduced.

With his own circle he had very little communication, except at meal time; and even while sitting at the same board, he could scarcely be said to form one of the company, his mind being habitually elsewhere. The conversation was altogether worldly, and, as any attempt to change its tone would have been utterly hopeless, since neither his governor nor his brother would have listened to him for a moment, so also on his part he was unwilling to give even a passing heed to their unprofitable discourse. He rose early from table, leaving the repast but half finished; by which proceeding he made three gains: he saved time, he was able to practise greater abstinence, and he avoided hearing much vain and empty talk. Often, while Bilinski and Paul were amusing themselves, as they were wont after dinner, with cards, dice, and such like diversions, he would slip out quietly and run to the Jesuit church, which was not far distant, and there, prostrate on the pavement, with his arms stretched out in the form of a cross, would hold long and rapturous converse with his God. Not once, or twice, but many times, was he surprised in these prolonged and most marvellous ecstasies, altogether abstracted from his senses; for it would happen that, being at last missed at home, the servants sent in search of him would find him in this state, and lift him from the floor. After a while Stanislas would come to himself, and, sighing softly at being thus recalled to earth, yet withal smiling as he beheld the uneasy faces gathered round him, he would reassure them by saying, "It is nothing, it is nothing." His dress was plain, and as humble as

he could be permitted to wear ; often, indeed, it was insufficient to protect him from the cold of a Viennese winter ; and it was noticed in particular, as afterwards of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, that he never wore gloves. He always dispensed with the attendance of a servant when he went out, but this not simply from a motive of humility, but chiefly from the desire to hide his devotion from the eyes of men. Scarcely ever, when he left the house, had he any other object than to go to the Jesuit church ; a practice, however, of which the family were as well aware as if he had not striven to conceal it ; for whenever, by accident, he was wanted, a servant was always, in the first instance, despatched thither to seek him.

He communicated every Sunday, and at any solemn festival which occurred during the week ; and, to prepare himself to receive this Bread of Angels, he kept a strict fast on the previous day. But his governor, when he noticed this frequent abstinence from food on the part of his charge, interposed his authority to enjoin a better diet on the score of health. Stanislas would then, with pious ingenuity, often avail himself of this very plea of health to decline the meat pressed upon him : he was not hungry, or he was disinclined to eat, and it would do him no good. All seemed little that he could do to honour the Adorable Sacrament, towards which his heart was ever turning with love unutterable. He heard two Masses daily, often three, and even then could with difficulty tear himself away. His duties called him elsewhere, but soon again he was at the foot of the altar. Always previously to entering his class he went to pray before the Blessed Sacrament ; and when the lessons were done he might again be seen before the Tabernacle. Willingly, indeed, would he



have spent his whole time there. God rewarded the love of His young servant with overflowing consolations, the very riches of which were a source of embarrassment to his modesty and humility, for scarcely could he set his foot on the threshold of the church, and catch a sight of the Tabernacle, when his spirit was moved to its very depths; tears filled his eyes, and he would hasten to hide himself behind a pillar, or take refuge in a corner, where he hoped he might escape observation; and then he was soon in a state of ecstasy.

No one who considers how intense was the devotion of Stanislas to the Blessed Sacrament can feel surprise at the nature of his sentiments for Mary, of which we have spoken; while, on the other hand, whoever has heard or read of his passionate love for the Mother of God will have naturally expected to find him a most fervent adorer of the God of the Eucharist. For these two devotions are necessarily and indissolubly connected with each other. God took His Human Nature of Mary. The flesh and blood of Mary became the flesh and blood of God. He was "made of a woman;" "*genuisti qui te fecit,*"\* sings the Church to the Divine Mother. The first woman, Eve, was made of the first man, Adam; hence, when he beheld her, he said, "This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."† But the Second Adam was made of the second Eve, the true mother of the living, the Mother of the Living God; for the Lord, as the prophet had foretold, created a new thing upon the earth: a woman compassed a Man.‡ The more fully, then, any one realises the Mystery of the Incarnation, the more deeply must he admire and venerate the ineffable grandeur and perfec-

\* "Thou art the Mother of Him who created thee."

† Genesis ii. 23.

‡ Jeremias xxxi. 22.

tion of Mary. The more he is enamoured with the beauty and fragrance of the "Flower of Jesse," the more tenderly must he love the fair tree upon which It blooms. And this God, made Man of Mary, this "Blessed Fruit of her womb," is also a "God with us" upon our altars. We have His glorified Humanity ever present with us, united to His Divinity, and that Presence must, therefore, ever be intimately associated in our hearts with her from whom He received that Humanity. And so, in the pure heart of Stanislas, these two loves, love of the Eucharist and love of Mary, were blended in blissful harmony, each quickening and intensifying the other.

When Stanislas could not escape to the church, he would retire to some distant chamber in the Lutheran's house, which possessed this solitary advantage in his eyes—that, being so spacious, a considerable part of it was untenanted. But, the better to avoid detection, he varied his place of concealment, choosing now one room, now another. These were his hermitages and his oratories, where he held sublime colloquies with his God. Heaven seemed to claim Stanislas as its own while still on earth, and to descend wherever he was; a vision of glory appeared ever to attend him when in prayer. It was not given to other eyes to witness it, but they could see its splendour reflected in his face as in a mirror, for he was often discovered in his hiding-places by the servants when, from some accidental cause, they entered one of the vacant rooms. With such unearthly radiance did his countenance at those times shine, that one might have deemed him to be a worshipper before the rainbow-circled throne, on which He sits who, to look upon, is "like the jasper and the sardine-stone."\*

Apoc. iv. 3.

Not seldom, too, he was raised, in his ecstasies, some feet from the floor of the room ; and they who thus beheld him have rendered their testimony to the fact on oath. When not directly engaged in prayer, Stanislas had generally some book of piety in his hands ; the work to which he was most partial being a manual composed by Mgr. Frederic Nausea, Bishop of Vienna, on the principal festivals of the Blessed Virgin. So dear, indeed, to him was the subject of which it treated, that, whatever book he might be reading, he would keep glancing on, in the hopes of meeting with some few lines, at least, about Mary ; or, if no more, at least the mention of her ; and when at last he found what he sought, a gleam of pleasure would pass over his face, and he would reverentially press to his lips the letters representing that dear and sacred name ; which truly was light to the eyes, music to the ears, and honey in the mouth of Stanislas. Then straightway he would raise his tearful eyes to heaven, with that look of pathetic and longing sadness to which we before alluded, the longing of the exile for his true home. It was apparently with the object of having always before him that name, in which all the sweetness of heaven and earth was to him summed up, that he left it inscribed upon almost every leaf of the books which he was in the habit of reading ; if it were not rather that the heart had half-unconsciously prompted the hand to write, as the musing lover carves the name of the loved one on the forest trees. At the foot of the pages, and on the margin of his class-books, this invocation was commonly found written : “ *O Maria, sis mihi propitia!*—(O Mary, be propitious to me !)” And, in fact, all his exercises were prepared under her immediate invocation, and were all in a manner dedicated to her.

In his themes, when allowed to choose his subject, it was always the perfections and the glories of Mary on which he loved to descant. So beautiful were these compositions, that it was a marvel to all that a youth who had not yet passed through his course of rhetoric should be able to express his thoughts in language so choice and refined. Having entered the college young, he had to compete with those who, not only were older than himself, but had enjoyed for some time the advantages of a higher education, and were consequently in advance of him in attainments. Yet the unquestionable superiority of his compositions, as compared with those of his seniors, soon made itself remarked. \* Excelling, however, as he did, all his competitors, Stanislas never strove to excel; he sought no praise; he coveted no pre-eminence; he did not even study from a desire of knowledge; he loved not science for its own sake; his sole object in improving and perfecting his intellect was to render it better capable of knowing God, that so he might thereby love Him the more.

After making due allowance for his superior natural capacity, and the attention that had been bestowed at home upon his education, there can be no doubt that Stanislas was supernaturally assisted. For the greatest wonder has still to be told. We have seen how much time he spent in prayer, and might hence have concluded that the time left for study must have been very scanty, but we have direct and positive proof that such was actually the case. Lorenzo Pacifici, who was his servant for

\* One of the Jesuit Fathers, writing to St. Francis Borgia concerning Stanislas, after alluding to his assiduity in prayer during his residence at Vienna, adds, "Et tamen condiscipulos (studebat autem rhetoricæ) non assequebatur modo, sed etiam vincebat, a quibus paulo ante superabatur."

more than a year, subsequently took holy orders, and became a Minor Canon of the Church of San Mosé at Venice. In his old age, he deposed, upon oath, that he scarcely ever saw Stanislas studying, but constantly observed him praying or reading spiritual books. It is plain that he did not owe his proficiency to his close application ; and, indeed, his master of rhetoric himself judged that his superiority was the fruit of prayer rather than the result of study ; so that we are constrained to conclude, with P. Longaro, that his rapid and extraordinary advancement was a special gift, which he had obtained from "his dearest mother Mary in reward for never having chosen in his compositions any other theme than that which to him was the sweetest of all—her ineffable greatness." Mary was, indeed, "propitious" to him. She did not merely bless his labours ; she may be said to have spared him labour altogether. When he held the pen she taught him what to say ; it came to him, he had not to seek it. It is usual to speak of the *inspirations* of genius : they come, but they will not be summoned ; labour cannot acquire them, nor can application secure them ; the favoured few whom they deign to visit have not so much to seek them as to invite them by putting themselves in an attitude to receive them, and, so to say, court the *afflatus* which brings to their ear tones wafted from imagination's lofty summits. And may we not discern a kind of analogy between what this attitude of high expectation effects in the natural order in the sons of genius, and what the raising of the heart to God and the hearkening to His voice obtain in the supernatural order for contemplative souls ? They who habitually lay themselves open to divine influences often receive unconsciously much also which they neither sought nor

expected, for even their natural faculties become in a manner spiritualised by contact with heavenly things, and capable of being the subjects of a superior illumination and guidance. So it was with Stanislas : the Mother of the Incarnate Word was pleased to be his instructor, and obtained for him those influences of the Spirit by which light flows into the intellect from the Source of all wisdom, causing the soul to understand in a moment what might otherwise have taken hours of study to acquire, or the most prolonged mental application might have failed to attain. Thus was our saint filled with the fruits, not of divine wisdom alone, but of human also, and proved the truth of the saying of the Son of Sirac, that "the soul of a holy man sometimes discovereth more than seven watchmen that sit in a high place to watch." \*

\* Ecclus. xxxvii. 18. P. Surin, in his *Catéchisme Spirituel*, where he is speaking of that special union with Jesus which is a fruit only of solid devotion and fervent love, and which consists in a communication of the riches of the Soul of Jesus to our soul in the memory, understanding, and will, says, in reply to the question, "How is the communication of understanding with understanding effected?" "By a participation of intelligence ; man experiencing, when he desires to apply himself, that there takes place in his mind a kind of effusion of light, of discernment, and of knowledge, *even with regard to the natural sciences*. It is like a source which is opened in the understanding, whence science and light flow in abundance, especially when it is a question of speaking." (P. vii. c. viii.)

The whole subject is theologically treated by Benedict XIV. in his great work *On Beatification and Canonisation* :—"Theologians say that infused knowledge is twofold : one absolutely infused, the other accidentally. Absolutely infused knowledge is that which no creature can acquire by natural strength, but is impressed on, and caused in, the creature by God alone ; and this is said to be absolutely and simply in the order of what is divine and above nature. But accidentally infused knowledge

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## CHAPTER V.

## STANISLAS PERSECUTED BY HIS BROTHER.

It is the spirit of mortification and self-denial in the saints which renders them chiefly obnoxious to the world, because it is this spirit which is most directly and palpably opposed to that which possesses and animates itself. All the Christian virtues, it is true, especially in their highest perfection, will in turn, and upon occasion, excite its animosity, because they condemn its own shallow morality; still they are not in themselves held in disesteem. The world not only tolerates many of them, but awards its meed of praise to not a few, often even paying to them the tribute of a certain simulation. Among these may be reckoned the amiable and endearing, the benevolent and generous virtues; to which may be added, in a measure, the class to which fortitude and patience belong. But mortification and self-denial will always be unpalatable to the world, which from its very nature cannot relish, nay, cannot even understand them. Temperance is the very most it is able to understand, and not always does it really comprehend or accept all that is included in that

is that which may be acquired by the strength of human abilities, but, in fact, is not acquired; and thus, too, in a certain way, is said to be above nature, with respect to its origin and the manner of its causation. . . . Infused knowledge is that which is not acquired by personal labour and ability, but is infused, solely by imploring the Divine assistance, into a man who before knew nothing, as St. Thomas teaches; adding that the infusion of this knowledge is to be ascribed to a miracle." B. iii. c. xliii. 8. (*Heroic Virtue*, vol. iii. pp. 112, 113.)

term. The three things which are the object of the world's sovereign dislike are abstinence from its pleasures, because herein it perceives an implied contempt; abstinence from its society, for herein it discerns a preference of something to itself, and this is an affront to its pride and self-love; and chastisement of the flesh, because it reads therein a condemnation of its own practice and a war against all it loves and cherishes. It was in these three ways that the boy Stanislas provoked displeasure; and not all his exceeding gentleness, coupled with those graces and winning qualities which the most worldly cannot help admiring—not even his tender youth, which in itself alone might, one would suppose, have proved his shield and protection—could excuse in the eyes of the worldly-hearted the offence of his mortified life.

If any one ever seemed not to stand in need of mortification it was this innocent and blessed child; there seemed to be in him literally nothing which called for the rod of discipline. God had marked him as His own from his very birth, and even before his birth; He had endowed him with the choicest natural gifts, and presented him with the richest treasures of grace. Stanislas walked on earth with his soul in heaven, enjoying a close union with his God, such as ordinarily saints have attained only after carrying the cross for many years; nevertheless, he was not to be exempt from the cross, and what he had received as a free gift God willed that he should afterwards merit as a reward. He had always been ingenious to deny himself in a thousand little ways, and when he lived with the Fathers of the Company he commenced the use of the discipline and the wearing of a hair shirt; but on becoming an inmate of the Lutheran's house he redoubled his austeri-



ties, and began to lead a life of the most rigid mortification, chastising his innocent body as severely as if he felt that rebellion of the flesh against the spirit which in many of the saints it has needed all their fortitude and watchfulness to subdue. A stranger as he was by God's grace to these risings of corrupt nature, insensible to all the world's allurements, and ignorant of what it was to experience the motions of pride, Stanislas mortified himself, not to conquer his passions, but in order that they might never assail him. He prevented their assaults with a holy vigilance and with an unsparing rigour. His fasts were frequent: he fasted, as we have seen, in preparation for the Holy Eucharist; he fasted also on our Lady's vigils. Willingly would he never have tasted anything except bread and water, but, with the eyes of his governor upon him at table, it was impossible for him to satisfy his desire in this respect. As we have said, however, he always rose from a half-finished repast, thus avoiding the dessert, that portion of the meal which is designed rather to gratify the taste than to satisfy the appetite. So, too, at supper, he would plead that he was not hungry, and retire to rest without partaking of a morsel. The repose he allowed himself to take was not long. We have seen how the day was passed by him in the heretic's house, and we are not left to conjecture as to the employment of the night—that almost total blank in the existence of ordinary men, but with saints the season of their richest harvests of grace. At midnight he rose while the sharers of his apartment were sleeping, or seeming to sleep—for occasionally one or other of them would, from curiosity, watch his proceedings—knelt on the floor, and, extending his arms in the form of a cross, prayed in this posture until extreme fatigue apparently

forced him to drop them. He then crossed them over his bosom, and continued thus to meditate long enough often to weary out the patience of his observer, and never less than several hours. Before returning to his bed he used to inflict a severe discipline upon himself, lacerating his shoulders so mercilessly that his night-clothes would be covered with marks of blood.

These practices elicited continual reprimands on the part of his governor, who did not fail to urge such motives as he believed would have most influence with his charge. God, he said, had given Stanislas a delicate constitution and organisation, and, by so doing, had signified His will that he should not practise these rigorous exercises ; that it was an unpardonable indiscretion on his part, and, in fact, was tantamount to suicide. As for himself, he felt bound, in duty and conscience, to interfere, seeing that he must render an account to his noble father of his safety and well-being. A grave responsibility consequently rested upon him, and with responsibility authority was necessarily conjoined. After assuming for awhile this high, conscientious tone, he would recur to what had become a very frequent subject of remonstrance. Could not Stanislas demean himself like other persons of his rank ? His behaviour was not only unsociable, but unbecoming in one of his birth and station. The youth listened respectfully, but his governor's lectures had no other effect except to make him take some precautions in his use of the discipline, that nothing if possible, might remain to betray the rigour of his nightly flagellations. Our saint, in fact, knew that Bilinski was quite incompetent to judge in such matters, of which he had neither knowledge nor experience ; besides, they were concerns between God and his own

soul, for which he was amenable only to his spiritual director. On the other hand, the complaints of his unsociableness and unbecoming behaviour were altogether unreasonable. If he did not join Bilinski and Paul in their worldly recreations, his preceptor and guardian had no right, as such, to find fault with his conduct. No one could accuse the angelic boy of morose behaviour ; never did he throw a gloom over the circle in which he sat by a rigid censorious air or a joyless countenance ; on the contrary, that countenance always wore a sweet expression of innocent happiness, such as might have decked the face of unfallen man in the Paradisiacal garden. Never did he utter one unkind word, never was he guilty of one disobliging act. No matter : he was not one of them ; hence his presence was unendurable, and his absence no less offensive. Feelings of this kind are apt to accumulate and gather force from their very groundlessness and injustice ; as they have no reason to support them, so no reason seems of avail to combat them.

There was no considerable difference (as has been said) in the ages of the two brothers, although Paul assumed such airs of superiority over Stanislas ; but, if the difference in age was slight, that of disposition, as we have seen, was extreme. Paul was entirely given up to the world ; he loved to ruffle it, in gay attire, amongst the young nobles of his acquaintance, who, as indifferent as himself to spiritual concerns and as neglectful of their religious obligations, were, like him, enamoured of that so-called freedom which youths affect, but which is the noviciate of the slavery of sin. No silly girl could be vainer of her dress, or more desirous to shine, than was Paul Kostka ; no grown man more arrogant and haughty. His governor was

very little wiser and very little better than his ward. Both were frequenters of the broad way. Pacifici, the servant already mentioned, classed them in his deposition under one designation, calling both of them "worldly." Hence Stanislas's conduct was felt to be a silent and abiding condemnation of their own, and, as such, was distasteful to both—to Bilinski as well as to Paul; but the latter was especially bent on having his brother such as he was himself, and when he found he could not prevail upon him to follow in his wake, his proud temper became irritated, and he was continually breaking forth in expressions of anger and contempt, which the presence of his cousins, who abetted him, only rendered the more violent. Stanislas's constant prayers, his frequent visits to the church, the plainness of his dress—which, however, he never refused to modify when it was needful to pay some visit of ceremony—his silence at table, when his brother thought fit to give a little license to his tongue; his avoiding the company of himself and his friends, not only declining to make merry with them, but keeping frequent fasts while they were feasting—such, and such-like practices, were so many insults and provocations in the eyes of Paul, which he felt himself constrained to revenge upon the perpetrator.

Bilinski, although personally not so cruel or so tyrannical in his treatment of Stanislas as was his brother, in the main sided with Paul, as we have already noticed, and exerted all the influence which his situation gave him in the same direction. Not a day passed but he read Stanislas a lesson, made up of those commonplaces which are so often in the mouths of the worldly: the possibility, and, indeed, the propriety, of reconciling the legitimate claims of society

and of God, of being at once sociable and devout, externally conforming ourselves to the circle in which we move, while internally we offer to God the only service which He values, that of the heart; the vanity and pride of singularity; and the presumption implied in the idea of pleasing God by conduct which must be displeasing to a parent, for the noble Pole, he said, had sent his son to Vienna to acquire the accomplishments, the finished manners, and easy bearing which befit nobility, whereas every day Stanislas was becoming more shy, more rustic, and more unmannerly. To these, and similar reproofs and exhortations on the part of his governor, as of his brother, Stanislas had but one reply. We quote his precise words, which the memory of those who heard them preserved:—"I was not born for temporal things, but for eternal. For these I desire to live, and not for those." Finding grave remonstrance and sharp reproof alike ineffectual, Bilinski next tried the power of ridicule. Paul and the cousins were willing coadjutors in this form of persecution. They all joined in perpetually rallying and taunting the inoffensive youth; and, amongst other epithets intended to gall and mortify him, the nickname of "the Jesuit" was a favourite one with the whole party. But Bilinski made a great mistake in supposing that he would thus succeed in raising feelings of shame in the breast of his young ward. Dear to the heart of Stanislas, and glorious in his estimation, was the title thus bestowed upon him in scorn. His governor knew him not. He was too unlike him to understand him. "Wide as is the heaven from the earth," said Bilinski, in after years, to two Fathers of the Company, "were the habits of the lord Paul, and my own, from those of the Blessed Stanislas. Hence the holy youth had to endure from the lord

Paul a cruel persecution, never having a good word from him, although we every one of us had experimental knowledge that whatsoever the blessed youth said, and whatsoever he did, all breathed devotion and sanctity." And Paul, who was present and heard Bilinski's words, confirmed their truth, weeping and sobbing so bitterly, that none who witnessed his deep compunction but were moved to mingle their tears with his; "and we were of the number," adds the Jesuit Father who testified to these things in the processes. Thus much we are induced to say in anticipation, to temper the indignation of the reader at the account which follows with the thought of what Paul Kostka afterwards was, when the veil had fallen from his eyes and the hour of grace had come.

In the company of his gay friends Paul was often besieged with questions about his brother. Why did he not come amongst them? Where was he? Why did he shun them? Why did he absent himself from their parties of pleasure? How did he pass his time? How did he amuse himself? And when they learned that he made prayer his recreation no less than his business, they began spitefully to criticise and ridicule his devotional habits, and to represent themselves as hurt and offended by his preference of a secluded life to their light and frivolous society. Stanislas was Paul's brother, and, although his all-absorbing pride and self-love left no room in his heart for any fraternal tenderness, nevertheless he felt himself wounded in the person of one so closely related to him. The depreciating remarks so frequently made upon Stanislas in his presence irritated him beyond endurance, but his resentment fell, not on those who uttered them, but on him who had innocently provoked them. Had Stanislas only consented to

behave as he desired, Paul would have been spared these daily mortifications. His anger was now no longer satisfied with expressing itself in words ; partly as a relief to his exasperated feelings, and partly in the hopes of overcoming what he styled the obstinacy of his brother, he did not content himself with hurling at him the most opprobrious epithets, but would fall upon him in his fury like a maniac, not only striking him with his hands, but beating him with a heavy stick ; throwing him down, and trampling on him while he lay upon the floor ; kicking him, and discharging blow after blow upon him with his stick. Stanislas might have defended himself, for, as the difference of age between them was not great, so neither was there much inequality of strength ; what emboldened the elder was not his own superior power, but the meekness and patience of his unresisting victim. For Stanislas submitted like a gentle lamb, and did not so much as utter plaint or moan. As he lay upon the floor he would cross his arms upon his breast and, with the countenance of one engaged in tranquil meditation, inwardly invoke the holy Names of Jesus and Mary, offering himself the while to endure yet more for the love of his crucified Lord. Attracted to the spot by the sound of the blows and Paul's loud imprecations, Bilinski would sometimes run to the rescue, and drag the boy out of the hands, or, rather, from under the feet, of his merciless assailant ; yet even then he had scarcely a word of remonstrance for Paul, all his reproaches were reserved for Stanislas. How blamable, he would say, must that behaviour be, and how stubborn that perverseness, which could provoke such treatment, and convert even a brother into so bitter an enemy ! Thus Stanislas had to bear the very burden of Paul's offences

against himself. But neither did this unjust treatment, nor anything else that he was called to endure, cause him to murmur, repine, or lose heart; rather he rejoiced that his fidelity to God should thus be put to the test, for he well knew that virtue is not proved to be either solid or true till it has been tried in the fire and beaten on the anvil of affliction. It was a conflict in which it was given him to win a victory—a victory over evil, our only adversary—and the joy of victory was in his heart, and even visible on his brow. The victorious might of enduring meekness was his. It was Paul and Bilinski who were beaten, and they knew it; and the knowledge only added fuel to their wrath and bitterness to their resentment.

The persecution to which the gentle youth was subjected lasted not a few days only, nor a few weeks, nor a few months, but two whole years; until the day when the bird escaped for ever from its hard captivity, and fled to the hill of refuge; neither was it intermittent, with breaks and pauses intervening—it was daily, it was nightly, and, one may say, without respite. Stanislas, as we have seen, shared a large sleeping apartment with Paul and his two cousins. These young Polish nobles, who made common cause with his elder brother in illtreating him, rendered in after years their conjoined testimony to his saintliness and to his meek behaviour under this barbarous usage. One of them belonged to the house of Rozrarewski, and was afterwards Senator of the kingdom and Castellan of Zrem. He often watched Stanislas, and observed him rise quietly from his bed when he thought that all were asleep. He marked how first he prayed awhile on his knees, and then, by and by,



prostrated himself with his face on the ground, his arms extended in the form of a cross, in which posture he would remain for a length of time. Irritated at the sight of a devotion which he had no sympathy with, and, indeed, was incompetent to understand, and instigated by the devil, who is always busy in the troubled waters of the heart, young Rozrarewski would get up and grope about the room, as if seeking for something, in the uncertain glimmer of the night-lamp which burned in the chamber, and would pretend to stumble over the prostrate worshipper, kicking him, as though he did not know what it was under his feet, and would then deliberately walk over and trample on him with his whole force, and that repeatedly. Yet Stanislas gave no sign of consciousness any more than if he had been a stone. He neither moved nor spoke—whether it were that his superhuman patience and ardent love of his Lord made him rejoice to be trodden under foot for His dear sake, and treated like a worm of the earth, as Jesus Himself had been; or, as is indeed probable, his spirit was altogether alienated from his senses, and rapt in God.

The other cousin, whose name was also Stanislas, and who was subsequently Treasurer of Prussia, treated our saint no better, as we learn from his own avowal. Years afterwards, when Stanislas was first publicly venerated with the title of Blessed, the Abbess of the Monastery of Jaroslav, who was his sister, sent him one of the earliest representations of the saint which had been executed. He went to the convent to thank her, and, taking out the portrait, gazed at it in silence for awhile, the blood which rushed to his face betraying the inward emotion of his soul, then, raising it to his lips, he kissed it affectionately many

times, and at length burst into a flood of tears. The Abbess supposed him to be weeping from the pure consolation of spirit which he experienced at the sight of one so nearly allied to him, who had been raised in so brief a time to the highest pinnacle of honour which it is given to man to reach. But soon she learned that not joy, but shame and remorse of conscience, was the source of these abundant tears, when he exclaimed, "*Oh quoties ego hunc, cum in exteris nationibus nobiscum literis operam daret, pedibus calcavi: quando videlicet, dormientibus nobis, humi provolutus orabat!*—(Oh how often, at the time he was studying with us in a foreign land, have I trampled him\* under foot, when he used to lie prostrate on the floor in prayer while we were sleeping!)" And he proceeded to describe the scene which we have just related, at the same time testifying to the innocency, modesty, purity, and integrity which shone with such brightness in the blessed youth. The eyes of those three young men were blinded by passion at the time, or, rather, their hearts were hardened by the love of the world, so that they were insensible to what they saw and heard; nay, so hardened, that they were even proof against the miraculous testimony which it pleased God, on one occasion, to give of the favour with which He regarded Stanislas. "I saw him one night," says his cousin, "returning to his bed after several hours of ecstasy. He placed a light near his pillow, and began to read some pious book. Sleep shortly overtook me, as it did Stanislas also. The pillow took fire, and the bed was

\* The force of the *hunc*, denoting, as it does, "him who is portrayed here before me," is lost in translation, as is also the self-upbraiding contrast indicated by the juxtaposition of the *ego*.

soon in a blaze. Wakened by the smoke and the glare of light in the room, I perceived Stanislas in the very midst of the flames. I thought he was dead, and called him by his name as loud as I could, to ascertain the dreadful fact, when, to my amazement, I saw him sit up in his bed, with a calm and smiling countenance, and then come forth from the centre of the flames, which were consuming all around him, with not so much as a single hair of his head injured."

We have spoken of the might of meekness. Solomon spoke of it long ago, when he said, "The patient man is better than the valiant, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities."\* The blood coursed as warmly and freely in the veins of Stanislas as in those of the impetuous and overbearing Paul. Stanislas was neither of a phlegmatic temperament nor of a timid disposition. His submission to the cruel treatment he received from his brother and cousins was not the tame acquiescence of the slave, whose spirit has been broken by oppression, and who does not rebel because he knows he must come off the loser. His submission was a freer act than was Paul's tyranny; or, rather, it was Paul who was mastered by his passion, it was Stanislas who was lord of his own soul. Witness the undisturbed and serene countenance with which he used to rise from the ground after being trodden under foot by his brother. To look at him, you might have thought that he had just finished his meditation, and was rising from his devotions with heaven reflected in his face. If he met Paul a minute afterwards—Paul, whose heart was still surging like the ocean after a storm—he would unaffectedly address him with his usual sweetness, as if nothing had occurred.

\* Prov. xvi. 32.

He never flagged in his efforts to please him, he never cooled in his demonstrations of fraternal affection. No complaint ever escaped his lips when speaking to those who would willingly have hearkened to him, and who cordially pitied him. Never did he write one syllable to father or mother of all he was enduring; and it must be remembered that, had he done so, he would have secured to himself immediate relief; for he was the darling of their hearts, and they would never have allowed him to suffer ill-usage at his brother's hands. But to soften that brother's heart, he condescended even to the performance of menial acts. He would brush his clothes, or clean his shoes, or render him any other kind service in his power. Nay more, when Paul expressed a wish that Stanislas should take dancing lessons with him, he consented, distasteful as it was to him—so distasteful, that no punishment could have been so severe as not to be preferable in his eyes. In short, he made every sacrifice which, without compromise of conscience, he felt he could make; and he made it cheerfully. So long as it was a sacrifice of mere personal inclination, he never refused, he never murmured; but when it was a question of higher duties, and of faithfulness to God, he was inflexible, or, as Paul and Bilinski, in their desire to veil from their own eyes the odiousness of their conduct, called him, stubbornly obstinate. But they knew better; in their inmost hearts there was a latent consciousness that they were persecuting innocence and virtue.

Stanislas was not contented with making no complaints of the cruelty with which he was treated, he even endeavoured to conceal it from others, by an air of sweet hilarity, as if all went well with him; nay,

so far did he push this delicacy of feeling, that if, as would sometimes happen, Paul, in his blind fury, dealt him a blow on the face, Stanislas would endeavour to hide from his brother the very marks of his brutality; and, to spare him any mortification which the sight might cause him, would avoid meeting his eye as much as possible, until the traces had become less evident. And in all these acts of meekness and charity there was no mixture of any personal motive, however innocent. To render good for evil, to repay injuries with kindnesses, outrages with benefits, to assure his brother of his love—a love which had a far higher source than that of mere natural affection, and hence was regulated by widely different principles—this was his sole object: for himself he had no private aims; he sought not to propitiate his brother that he might procure comfort for himself or freedom from suffering, desiring only that he might be permitted to serve God in peace and without hindrance. But all this generosity seemed to be lost upon Paul, and all these sacrifices to be thrown away; and yet it was not so, as time was at last to show. The seed then sown was to bear glorious fruit when the sun of grace should come and warm it into life, and draw down upon it the fertilising showers of penitential tears. How often may it not be so in cases where it is not given to us to know the inner history of those upon whom tears and unrequited love seem to have been spent in vain to win them to God!

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## CHAPTER VI.

THE VOCATION OF STANISLAS TO THE  
COMPANY OF JESUS.

It must not be supposed that Paul's object in this cruel persecution of his brother was to induce him to offend God. What he desired was that Stanislas should show an external conformity to the world's ways, follow its fashions, and, in short, act like other people. This was all he wanted; and it seemed to him, so he persuaded himself, to be a reasonable wish. He was the elder brother; Bilinski, their governor, sided with him: was not Stanislas bound to accommodate himself to their mode of life, and give up his singular manners and habits? He himself saw no danger in society or in its amusements; Bilinski saw none: what intolerable presumption, then, was it for the youngest of the party thus to set himself up to judge and condemn what his elders considered lawful, attracting attention and provoking disagreeable remarks by the eccentricity of his behaviour! This was all very uncomfortable to Paul's sensibilities, and very irritating to his pride. And then, selfish persons, it must be remembered, always measure and weigh offences in others, not by any standard of justice, but by a purely subjective rule—the annoyance which they themselves experience.

But, perhaps, some may wonder why Stanislas, who was so compliant where it was possible to comply without displeasing God, even to the extent of acquiring the frivolous art of dancing for the sake of pleasing his brother, should have refused to conform himself also in other matters not in themselves sinful, such as

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consenting to mix a little more in society. Simply for this reason : Stanislas saw danger where Paul saw none ; and, if it be asked how it came that this poor young soul, ignorant what it was to feel the sting of temptation, should so much as guess the existence of a peril of which he had no experience, the answer is to be found in this very purity itself. It was his very purity which made him fearful. The mere innocency which belongs to childhood and early youth does not enjoy this defence. Ignorance and incaution are its accompaniments ; and were it not for the timidity which bashfulness produces, and which God has given to tender youth as a shield, even in the natural order, it would rush into peril, altogether unaware of the risk it incurs. But it is not so with supernatural purity, purity inspired by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of holy fear. No natural bashfulness can compare with this coyness and sensitiveness which the Holy Ghost imparts to the faithful soul. Moreover, these feelings are not merely holy instincts ; they are coupled with an intelligence transcending the mere natural understanding. Stanislas, we have seen, used to faint when he heard evil language, which nevertheless must have been well-nigh unintelligible to a child of his age ; and now that reason was in him perfectly developed, he shrank, divinely illuminated, from temptations of which he had neither experience nor knowledge.

With his nobility, his grace, his beauty, his charms of manner, and high mental endowments, Stanislas would have been the idol of the world had he mingled in its circles ; it would have thrown open wide its arms to welcome him ; it would have caressed, it would have flattered, it would have worshipped him. Doubtless he made no such reflections ; he was too

humble, too childlike, to think of himself, or to dwell on his own personal advantages; but a higher light than that of human reason warned him of the peril, and kept his foot from treading on what, to him, was forbidden ground. Hence it is that Stanislas has been regarded as the martyr of purity, of which he is now the glorious patron. To keep his heart pure for God he bore rebuke, ill-usage, and scorn; for this he suffered himself to be beaten and trodden under foot; for this he endured, during the space of two years, every indignity, every cruel ignominy which the ingenious malice of his tormentors could heap upon him; and for this, also, he added mortifications, and austerities, and penitential rigours of his own voluntary choice. But the same divine light which warned him of the dangers of a treacherous world drew him also powerfully in an opposite direction, and made that world, so seductive generally to the opening mind of youth, look to him, not only as a land of snares and perils, but as a dreary region of exile and privation. And this heavenly attraction was not leading him simply to a life of separation from the world. Before his birth his vocation to the Company of Jesus had been mysteriously declared; and the Sacred Name, miraculously engraven on his mother's bosom, had sealed him with the distinguishing title of that holy Order. God purposed to bestow Stanislas on the Company, and after having, so to say, brought him up for it with the most delicate care, under His sovereign eye and in His closest and most familiar intimacy, it only remained now to complete the donation, and to place the precious gift in the hands for which it had been designed.

Stanislas had not completed his sixteenth year when he first felt himself called by God to serve Him in the



Company of Jesus. To this call he inwardly responded with promptness and joy. Not only was it always his delight to accept and to do the will of God, at whatever cost, but nothing could in itself have presented greater attractions to his soul, enamoured, as it was, of a life wholly divorced from the world and dedicated to God. The complete self-abnegation of the Jesuit, who, according to the spirit of his Order, must live and breathe, as it were, only for the greater glory of his Lord, was as alluring to Stanislas, covetous only of divine things, as it is repelling and repugnant to ordinary human nature. But what prospect was there that he would be permitted to obey the call? Rather was it not certain that his father would not only refuse his consent, but be filled with anger and indignation at the very request, should his son dare to make it? True, he loved Stanislas above all his other children, tenderly loved him; but because he so loved him, he would the more deeply resent whatever threatened to rob him of his treasure, and to crush his cherished hopes. Paternal love will sacrifice much; it will be ready to put aside self in every way for the dear object's sake; it will sacrifice all, except that dear object itself. To be willing to make that last sacrifice implies either a deep love of God, sanctifying the affections, and subjecting them to its supreme sway, or such an exceeding and overflowing tenderness as can refuse the beloved child nothing which it desires, even when that desire brings desolation to the parent's heart. Such tenderness may not seldom be found in the mother's bosom, but rarely in that of the father. Certainly Stanislas did not reckon upon meeting with it in his own parent. Not only was he sure that from him he would encounter a stern refusal, but he felt persuaded that the mere expression

of his wish would raise such a stir and commotion as would infallibly result in his being summoned back to Poland, where the accomplishment of his object would be even more unattainable. Stanislas had always been remarkable, even in childhood, for his discretion and prudence, and for a maturity of judgment which was wonderful at so tender and inexperienced an age. Doubtless this disposition to ponder every step that he took, operated now to keep him silent. Another restraining cause seems to have been bashfulness; he felt all-unworthy of such an honour, notwithstanding the ever-increasing urgency of the solicitations of grace. He shrank, too, it may well be believed, from a contest with his father, a contest in which there would be no hope of ultimate victory to support and cheer him in a position so repugnant to his feelings. But, whatever may have been the motives which led him to bury the secret of his vocation in his own bosom for the space of six months, certain it is that to the day of his death this prolonged silence was matter of bitter self-reproach, and that he characterised it as an act of ingratitude, cowardice, and feebleness of spirit. And when he found, as he declared he did, in the Company a very paradise on earth, sighs would mingle with the transports of his joy, as he remembered the risk he had run of losing it by what he called his pusillanimity; deserving thereby that God should have denied, as He has to many, a grace which he who does not accept virtually refuses, and thus renders himself unworthy of the offer being again renewed. This, at least, was his own view of his conduct, and of what he called the greatest of his faults. We may easily believe that, if fault it was, he over-estimated its magnitude.

After he had thus inwardly battled with himself for

six months his conscience took the alarm ; he became convinced that he was not dealing generously with God, and forthwith, making an effort, he conquered his reluctance to speak, and, with many tears, told his confessor, P. Doni, that God for six months past had been calling him to the Company, but that, overcome by an unhappy shame, he had refrained all this time from manifesting his vocation. The words were no sooner spoken than the soul of Stanislas was filled to overflowing with sensible consolation, the sweetness of which surpassed anything he had heretofore experienced. It was the reward of the violence he had done himself ; it was a cordial given to help him on his road. This is God's way of dealing with His servants, with those especially for whom He has designed high vocations, or for whom He has some great work in store. He solicits their consent, as He did that of Mary by Gabriel's ministry, for He puts compulsion on no one ; and then, when the soul brings all it has to offer, its good will and acquiescence, He fortifies it to do His will and accomplish His purpose. He strengthens it to take the next step, albeit that soul may feel faint unto death, like the prophet when he slept under the juniper tree, after valiantly executing his Lord's behest against the prophets of Baal. "*Surge, comede: grandis enim tibi restat via*—Arise, eat : for thou hast yet a great way to go," said the angel to Elias ;\* and in the strength of the food divinely provided for him he journeyed forty days and forty nights, until he came to Horeb, the mount of God. "*Grandis tibi restat via:*" yes, Stanislas had yet an arduous road before him, and needed strength for the journey.

The difficulty with himself had been overcome, but

\* 3 Kings xix. 7.

there were yet the difficulties which external circumstances presented ; for if, on the one hand, it was certain that it would be utterly impossible to obtain the consent of his father, on the other, the Jesuits would not receive him without that consent. Experience had taught them that they would risk too much by acceding to any such request—risk what they felt they had no right to imperil—the interests of the Order itself. Not long before, several youths belonging to some of the first families of Vienna, touched, like Stanislas, by divine grace, had begged the Father Provincial to grant them the same favour which Stanislas now solicited. The Father Provincial had allowed himself to be moved by their earnest petitions, and had admitted them to the Order, in spite of the opposition of their relatives, who, in consequence, had made violent complaints, and caused the Company much trouble and anxiety by their hostility. This storm was scarcely appeased, and the Fathers, in order to prevent the recurrence of any similar dissatisfaction, and the possible risk of seeing the college forsaken by its students, had laid down a rule to themselves, not to receive pupils as novices without the consent of parents. It is true that the college was now broken up, and Stanislas could urge that the rule no longer applied to him ; or, rather, that there was no one now who came within the application of a rule made under different circumstances. “Nevertheless,” says P. Bartoli, “seeing that his father had entrusted him to our care, when he sent him to study at Vienna, it might still appear to be in some way a duty on our part not to receive him without the paternal blessing and consent.” For Stanislas this amounted to an irrevocable rejection. Darling as he was, he knew well what sort of benediction he was

likely to receive from his father if he signified his wish to become a Jesuit; the heart of his lordly parent would become as hard to him as polar ice, and as little likely to thaw with time. What, then, was he to do? God seemed to require an impossibility. But God never *does* require impossibilities; He renders possible what He enjoins. "Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zorobabel? thou shalt become a plain."\* Stanislas knew this; he knew that nothing was an obstacle with God. His will is act: "He spake the word and it was done." When great obstacles rise like mountains in our path, we may, it is true, consider them as irremovable, relatively to ourselves, because it is the ordinary way of God's providence, by thus hedging us in, to signify to us the limits of what we may or can do; but when these obstacles exist simultaneously with an unmistakable inward vocation from God, the accomplishment of which necessitates their removal, we may be confident that they will be levelled before our face. Of all this Stanislas was well assured, and, strong in this faith, the depths of his being remained calm. But nature must suffer, except when sustained by consolations communicated to the sensitive region of the soul, and this cannot always be, nor does it enter into God's purposes that so it should always be. Nature cannot but be affected according to her essential constitution, and consequently feels and judges of circumstances by mere human reason. As, then, there seemed naturally no hope of the realisation of his desires, Stanislas could not but experience a poignant sense of sorrow and desolation. But this sorrow and desolation of spirit only made him turn his eyes with greater fervour of supplication to the hills whence help cometh. Ac-

\* Zach. iv. 7.

cordingly, he redoubled his prayers, his mortifications, his watchings, his austerities, to obtain from God what man denied him.

The 4th of December, the feast of St. Barbara, was drawing near. Its return was marked this year by Stanislas with great observance. He prepared himself for it by much abstinence and fasting, by severe use of the discipline, and by prolonged prayers and night-watchings. He also studied the saint's life with loving attention, that attention of the heart, the effects of which are so widely different from the closest intellectual application. Thus it is that saints read, and thus it is that with them reading is praying. They let the words drop into their soul, and the words carry grace with them. He read, then, the acts of the saint, and the record of the many graces and favours with which she had rewarded her clients. One in particular singularly attracted him. For those who had been specially devout to her in life, she never failed to obtain the inestimable blessing of not departing hence without the consolation and aid of the Holy Viaticum. Stanislas's heart swelled with joy at this thought. With redoubled fervour he continued his preparation, and, communicating on her festival, begged his dear patroness, with many tears, to number him also among her faithful servants, and to accord to him that signal grace which was the object of his longing desire. Had Stanislas a secret presentiment, divinely infused, of his approaching illness? or did he feel within himself its incipient menace? However this may be, never was prayer more opportunely made, or more signally answered, than was this petition of the blessed Stanislas to the holy virgin and martyr, St. Barbara, whom the Church honours to this day as the patroness of happy deaths.

## CHAPTER VII.

MIRACULOUS VIATICUM ; AND VISIT OF MARY  
WITH HER CHILD.

“HEAVEN and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” This was the solemn declaration of the Saviour ; who also said, “Amen, amen, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.” What can surprise us after this assurance, unless it be that Christians ask so little and expect still less ?

About a fortnight after Stanislas had celebrated with so much devotion the festival of St. Barbara, he began to languish, and soon fell seriously ill. The servant who attended on him attributed his illness to two causes, his night-watchings with severe disciplines, and the prolonged cruel treatment he had endured from his brother Paul. These causes were quite sufficient to account for it ; nay, it might rather excite surprise that he had hitherto been able to bear up in spite of all he had had to suffer, or that he had not received on some occasion a mortal injury, seeing that Paul, in his ungovernable rage, neither measured the strength nor counted the number of the blows he gave him. But God had protected and supported him until this hour ; and now, when He allowed these ordinary causes to produce their natural effect, it was but to furnish the occasion for working out His own extraordinary purposes. He designed to afford His servant such miraculous proofs of the favour with which He regarded

him, as should inflame the ardour of his charity to such a degree, that at times, we are told, his life was even endangered by its excess.

Stanislas, then, languished and fell ill. At first the fever was not of a violent character, and did not excite any serious anxiety in those about him. He was ill enough, however, to keep his bed, ill enough to be left in peace, free to give himself to prayer, and undisturbed to hold secret colloquies with God and His Blessed Mother, with saints and with angels. All Paradise was around him as he thus lay on his sick bed, enjoying, in spite of unabated fever, a repose to which he had long been a stranger. Meanwhile the enemy was watching him. Satan is as ignorant of the future, which is hidden in the bosom of God, as we are ourselves; but he possesses means of conjecturing it which are beyond our ability. He can scan our interior bodily organisation, and he can even read our thoughts and feelings so far as they are translated by impressions on the material portion of our complex being, unless, indeed, he be hindered by the power of God from thus availing himself of those angelic faculties which he has not lost by having become a devil. Satan, then, perceived that Stanislas was sick unto death, that the fever which lay upon him was in its nature mortal, and could not be subdued by any human remedy. And so he judged that his own time was short. Stanislas was about to escape him in all the bloom and sweetness of his innocence, perfected, enhanced, and adorned by sanctity; and the tempter seemed to be unable to come near him. God had rewarded the faithfulness of that soul in which was no guile, that lover of Mary and of purity from his very babyhood, by shielding him from the infernal suggestions of hell—" *Scapulis suis obumbrabit*



*tibi.*"\* He reclined under the shadow of the everlasting pinions, and the noon-day devil could never approach him; and so Satan watched him, and gnashed his teeth in the impotency of his rage. Yet, at least, he would trouble his peace, and scare and torment him, if he could not tempt him to evil. And here, perhaps, we may see the explanation, in part, why it is that God's saints have so frequently seen the enemy of souls under frightful visible forms. He has no need to rush upon us ordinary Christians under the semblance of an infuriated beast about to devour our mortal bodies; he can more surely and effectually injure us by laying snares within for the immortal soul, with the complicity of our unsubdued treacherous flesh to aid in our ruin. Be this as it may, as Stanislas lay in sleepless rest, suddenly he beheld in the chamber with him a black dog, which he instantly recognised as a hound of hell, not only from the fact that the door, being closed, allowed of no entrance, but from its prodigious size, and from the two horrible eyes which glared upon him from its frightful head, with an expression of rage and malice surpassing that of the most ferocious beast of earth. After a moment's pause it rushed at the bed with its hideous jaws wide open, as if about to tear its occupant in pieces. But Stanislas, strong in faith and confidence in God, and in his good angel, made the sign of the cross; and then might it be seen whence came this accursed hound, for at the sight of the symbol of man's redemption he shrank back, and dropped to the floor, as if he had been dealt a mortal wound. But again he arose, and, after making a turn of the room, again moved towards the bed, with bristles

\* "He shall overshadow thee with His shoulders." Psalm xc. 4.

erect, ready to make a spring. Again Stanislas armed himself with the holy sign, and again the monster sank to the ground, to rise once more, however, for a third attack, and to be repelled in the same manner as before. The next instant he had vanished, and Stanislas, shedding tears of gratitude, offered fervent thanksgivings to God for his deliverance.

But from this day he became much worse, and the doctors, who had at first made light of the disorder, began to look grave at the character which it was assuming. Better than they from observation, did Stanislas from his inward experience know the danger in which he lay. He was now persuaded, and with good reason, that he was about to die; nor had this thought in itself anything to alarm or to distress him. Heaven was his true country; all he loved and desired was there. Death was to him a call from exile, the tomb the portal of life. And yet one bitter thought he had to trouble him, the thought of leaving life without the Holy Viaticum, without giving a last embrace to his Saviour, and, face to face, as it were, once more asking of Him the pardon of his sins, while as yet He was his advocate, not his judge. To make the last tremendous passage unvisited by Jesus to strengthen him was, indeed, a heartfelt affliction to the dying saint; yet what hope was there for him in the house of the Lutheran Kimberker? what hope that his Lord would be permitted to enter within the fanatic sectary's doors, who hated Holy Church and her rites, and, above all, denied and abominated the Adorable and Most Blessed Sacrament? Nevertheless, Stanislas would make the attempt. He accordingly made a touching appeal to his brother Paul and to Bilinski, earnestly beseeching them to intercede with their Lutheran host in his name; surely

he must be moved to compassion, and could not have the heart to embitter the dying moments of a fellow-creature by refusing him this last and only consolation. But they knew Kimberker better, and were so well aware of the bad nature of the man, that they had not the courage so much as to mention the subject to him, convinced that he would rather turn them out of his house, the dying youth included, than suffer priest or Sacrament to enter his doors. They were unwilling, however, to grieve Stanislas by a direct refusal, for his condition moved even Paul to softness, and deeply affected Bilinski, who had the responsible charge of him. So, instead of acknowledging that they dared not grant his request, they betook themselves to the resource so common with false friends. They tried to comfort him, assuring him that he was not nearly so ill as he supposed himself to be; that there was no cause for apprehension, since the doctors did not think his illness dangerous, and there was consequently no call to administer the Last Sacraments; that he ought to take heart, and he would soon be better. But they lied to him, and they knew it. We have Bilinski's own recorded testimony that he never left the bedside of Stanislas for seven days and nights, and had his eyes constantly upon him, dreading that nature might sink at any moment. The sick youth was fain to perceive that nothing was to be looked for from those about him, and that he had to encounter that invincible obduracy which cowardice produces in the selfish,—an obduracy against which all argument is powerless, and which the tenderest entreaties will fail to melt.

Stanislas was silent; he urged his request no more; but he betook himself to the Almighty and All-Merciful, to whom one inability alone (so to say) seems to apper-

tain, that of rejecting the heart's desire of those who turn to Him with loving confidence. Nor had he forgotten St. Barbara and her patronage of the dying, and the petition he had so lately made to her. He now renewed it with tearful earnestness, representing his pressing need, and how he had come into this house, not of his own will, but constrained by that of his brother. All unworthy as he was, and the least of her servants, he claimed the exercise of her privilege in his behalf; she would well know how to use it. What followed, to the glory of that holy virgin-martyr, and of Stanislas, we have now to relate: but first, let us hear the testimony of its eye-witness, Bilinski.

During one of those nights which he spent by the bedside of the sick youth, he suddenly observed his countenance light up with a heavenly glow, and assume an expression of mingled sweetness and reverence; but scarcely had he time to marvel at the change, when his wonder was increased by Stanislas turning his eyes towards him, and saying in a clear and distinct voice, "Kneel and adore the Blessed Sacrament. Two angels of the Lord are with It, and the virgin-martyr, St. Barbara." "I know and am certain," said Bilinski, relating what he had witnessed, "that Stanislas had at that time the perfect use of all his faculties, which, indeed, he preserved during the whole course of his illness." As soon as he had spoken, Bilinski saw him place himself in an attitude which manifested the veneration with which his whole soul was penetrated. All languid and exhausted as was his frame, he knelt upon the bed,\* and, striking his breast three times,

\* In some accounts it is stated that Stanislas knelt upon the floor at the foot of the bed; but, as Bilinski's words appear to import that he knelt on his bed, we have preferred adhering literally to his account.

said, "*Domine, non sum dignus;*" after which he raised his face, as in the act of receiving his Lord in the Adorable Sacrament. Bilinski looked on with awe, beholding, as it were, the reflection of what was miraculously passing, for his own eyes were sealed to the vision. Stanislas then lay down again in bed, and there he remained, all absorbed in the Presence of Him whom he possessed within him.

Bilinski's testimony, however, is not the only authority upon which the singular favour bestowed on Stanislas rests. It was God's will that for its further attestation the saint himself should relate it, during his noviciate at Rome, to a youth of the name of Stefano Augusti, a native of Reggio in Lombardy, who had been assigned to him by his superiors as his instructor in the Italian tongue. This young man was remarkable for his great candour and simplicity, and souls of that stamp were very dear to the childlike heart of our saint. They attracted his confidence, and disarmed his holy reserve. One day, then, when conversing together about the high merits and prerogatives of St. Barbara, probably near the time of her festival, "'Brother Stefano,'"—we quote Augusti's own words,—"'said Stanislas to me, 'how much I owe to God and to this holy martyr, Barbara!' To which I replied that, as regarded God, we were all under infinite obligations to Him, but in respect to the saint, it would appear that he had some special reason for devotion to her; and that, if it were so, I prayed him not to conceal it from me. He remained silent, but after I had repeated my request two or three times, he said at last, 'Know, then, that having fallen ill, when at Vienna in Austria, in the house of a heretic, and desiring ardently to receive Communion, I recommended myself devoutly

to that saint; and while my heart continued to be filled with this same desire, two angels appeared to me in the room, and with them the holy martyr, Barbara. One of these angels gave me Communion.' Having thus spoken, he drew a deep sigh, and his whole face was suffused with so vivid a blush that I, observing it, did not venture to press him with any further questions."

Such were the few simple words in which Stanislas told of the heavenly vision; perchance he almost regretted to have said as much; anyhow, he besought his friend very earnestly to repeat to no one what he had confided to him; and Augusti kept his word until he considered himself released from his promise by the death of the saint, to whose glory, and that of God, he judged it well to publish the circumstance. It had, however, already become known to several persons at Vienna, to whom Bilinski had related it. The house of the Lutheran Kimberker passed subsequently into the possession of a Catholic; and Bartoli testifies to the veneration in which that room was held ninety years after it had been honoured, not alone in the manner which we have just described, but also by another heavenly visit which we are about to relate.

Full of consolation, Stanislas now awaited in calm preparation the last passage from time to eternity, which he believed to be imminent, and that not without the best reason, seeing that, independently of his apparently dying condition, the very grace which had been miraculously vouchsafed to him seemed in itself sufficient proof that his end was near. For, the special privilege of St. Barbara being to procure for her clients that they should not die without the Viaticum, and this having been the sole request which Stanislas had

addressed to her, his having obtained his desire through her intercession, as testified by her presence, was a clear sign to him that he was about to depart. And but for a miracle he must have died. The physicians, in fact, had given him over, they had ceased to administer remedies which could no longer avail, and he seemed to be entering on his agony. God permitted nature so far to take its course, in order to furnish the occasion of giving a fresh and most singular proof of the predilection with which He regarded His favoured child, and thereby to unite him still more closely to Himself by the bands of love. Ardently as Stanislas desired to fly to his heavenly home, to live longer, that he might love God with a still more perfect love, was a precious boon; and it was rendered still more precious by the manner in which it was conveyed. The hands which brought enhanced the value of the gift. It was the Blessed Mother of God herself—she whom Stanislas loved with such filial devotion—who was to come and heal her sick child. The sight of her alone would have sufficed to recall him from the gates of death; but Mary did not come alone: she brought her Divine Infant with her. The Apostle Paul was rapt into the third heaven, but heaven came down to Stanislas. The veil seemed suddenly to roll away, like a cloud, from before the sick youth's eyes, and the Virgin of virgins, in all her unimaginable beauty, stood by him, bearing Jesus in her arms. She smiled upon him, and held up before him the Joy and Consolation of the universe. Stanislas gazed in adoring ecstasy, and then, emboldened by the benignant aspect of the Divine Infant, stretched forth his arms in the vehemence of his love, even as it were to take Him from His Mother's embrace. And

now followed a scene on which we look with wondering delight—a scene which brings before us, in so touching a form, the infinite condescensions of the God-Man. The Virgin Mother, seconding the desires of the holy youth, parted with her Treasure, and deposited Jesus in his arms, that He and Stanislas might exchange mutual caresses. It is a marvellous thought that men should have been allowed to look on God in human flesh, to hear His voice, to breathe the same air with Him, to be conscious of His near Presence. Yet, if the Almighty were pleased thus to stoop to favour His creatures, it might have been imagined that He would have appeared in awful majesty, to be adored at reverential distance. But no: He suffered men to touch Him, to press upon Him, to throng Him; He allowed His apostles to give Him the kiss of salutation, and the beloved disciple to recline upon His Bosom. Nevertheless, even this did not content the overflowing love of Jesus. Not satisfied with encouraging the familiarities of friendship, He further promised that he who does the will of His Father shall be to Him as His Mother. In the astonishing favour granted to Stanislas, He seemed as if He desired to renew and confirm this gracious assurance. Stanislas has perfectly done the will of His Father, and so He will come to him in vision to admit him to this ineffable familiarity, and He will come to him as an infant, that He may render such familiarity possible. He will come and nestle in Stanislas's arms, as in Mary's; cheek shall rest against Cheek, heart shall beat against Heart; nay, lips shall touch Lips. He will grant to him the desire of the spouse in the Canticles: He will kiss him with the kisses of His Mouth. And Stanislas will dare to return the caresses he receives; for has not Jesus come



as a little child, not that He may only give, but that He may also receive, fond tokens of familiar love, of love unabashed by fear? But who shall describe the rapturous adoration with which they were bestowed, or the worshipful tenderness which flooded the soul of Stanislas, as he imprinted reverential kisses, and dropped warm tears of adoring love, on the ambrosial Feet of the Divine Child! \*

How long this wonderful scene lasted we know not. To Stanislas, for the joy he felt, it seemed but as a moment. As intense misery prolongs, so intense happiness annihilates time. Need we say that the touch of Him the very hem of whose garment healed the sick, had made Stanislas whole? He had held in his arms and folded to his bosom the Lord of Life, and the blood bounded once more in healthful freedom through his veins. Mary, too, assured him that he should recover; and, as she took back her Babe from his arms, she bade him devote the renewed life which she had obtained for him to His special service. "You must end your days," she said, "in the Society that bears my Son's Name. You must become a Jesuit." As she uttered these words, she looked at him with an expression of unutterable love, blessed him, and disappeared from his sight. A few days afterwards Stanislas was in the Jesuit church, giving thanks to

\* No opinion, of course, is here expressed as to the mode in which our Lord appeared in this vision. Certain theologians, indeed, hold that on some occasions He has come in Person, as He did to St. Paul. This may have been either by bi-location, or by His leaving Heaven for the purpose. St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine, and others, assert, for instance, that our Lord descended corporally to imprint the Stigmata on St. Francis; but all are agreed that these Personal appearances have been of very rare occurrence.

God and his Blessed Mother, and prepared to obey her commands by preferring his petition to the Fathers for admission into their Order.\*

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### STANISLAS'S FLIGHT FROM VIENNA.

WHEN Stanislas had finished his fervent thanksgiving to God and our Blessed Lady he sought his confessor, P. Doni, and related to him the vision with which he had been favoured, and the command which he had received. The whole affair, he thought, now wore a different aspect. It was no longer a question of contenting his personal desire, but of obeying a heavenly behest. Mary had signified her will and that of her Divine Son. All reasons, weighty as they might appear, which were grounded on mere prudential considerations seemed without force against such a manifestation. And, in fact, P. Doni was powerfully impressed by what Stanislas related to him, but knew not how to assist him. The matter did not rest with

\* Germany always retained a devout remembrance of Stanislas, and Vienna especially, where he passed two years of his saintly life, manifested great devotion towards him. The house of the heretic Kimberker, as has been noticed, was subsequently converted into a sanctuary, where the faithful could come and honour the saint in the very room where he received Communion from angels' hands, and in which Mary visited him with her Divine Son. Mass is allowed to be offered in this apartment, upon an altar on which stands an image of the Blessed Stanislas. This sanctuary is now under the care of the Redemptorist Fathers.

him, and he could hold out no hope that his superiors would be induced to depart from the rule they had laid down to themselves. The only consolation he could offer him was that She who had given the command would doubtless facilitate its execution. Meanwhile he referred him to the Provincial, who was also Rector of the Viennese College, P. Lorenzo Maggi. To him, then, Stanislas preferred his suit, urging the stringent injunction laid upon him by the Mother of God, and representing the painful position in which a refusal would place him. But not all his arguments, accompanied as they were by tears and entreaties, availed to obtain his object. True, the Provincial received him with the warmest affection, embracing him like a tender parent, entered into his sentiments, compassionated his situation, and deeply deplored the violence which he was constrained to put upon his own feelings in rejecting one whom he would so gladly have welcomed as a dear son. But, notwithstanding the obligation which, as he confessed, lay upon Stanislas to seek admittance by every means in his power, he could not see that the duty of the Fathers, as members of an Order, whose interests they were bound to consult, was changed by the personal obligation which affected the applicant. The difficulty, as respected themselves, still subsisted in all its force. To give what would be viewed as a mortal offence to one of Kostka's rank and influence in a country where their brethren were but very recently established, appeared to be too dangerous a step for them to consider themselves warranted in taking.

But if the Fathers were immovable, so also was Stanislas. The Queen of Angels had spoken, and he seemed to hear her command continually reiterated in his ears. She would not command if obedience were

impossible : it was thus he prudently argued within himself ; the refusal he had encountered had, therefore, no discouraging effect on his mind. Ultimate success was divinely assured to him, but he was also intimately persuaded that such success was conditional on his own exertions. It was not a prophecy that had been made to him in that marvellous vision of the Mother and the Son, it was an injunction that had been laid upon him ; but it was an injunction which, while it bound, also strengthened him. He had heard it with the kisses of the Infant Jesus still warm on his cheek, and with Mary's beatific smile gladdening his eyes ; and he seemed therewith to have received supernatural vigour to fulfil it. He now took, or, rather, solemnly renewed, a vow which he had already made, to become a religious in the Company of Jesus ; and if by no other means he could obtain this favour, then would he as a pilgrim beg his way from one Jesuit house to another, and never return to his own land, or give himself rest, until he had found those who would accede to his request. This vow was taken, not precipitately, in the inconsiderate glow of a fervour incident to youth, but after much prayer, and in the clear light which prayer only brings. Meanwhile, however, he was leaving no measure untried which might hold out the least prospect of immediately attaining his object. Cardinal Comendoni had been sent by Pius V., the reigning Pontiff, as Apostolic Legate to the court of the Emperor Maximilian, to transact some ecclesiastical business, and was at Vienna at that time. Now, this Cardinal had received the purple while acting as Nuncio Apostolic in Poland, where he had afterwards remained as Legate, having left the court of Sigismund only a year before, in order to repair to Austria. With Kostka and his family, whom

he held in high esteem, Commendoni had been well acquainted, and Stanislas had accordingly visited him at Vienna. To him, then, he had recourse, beseeching him to use his powerful influence as intercessor on his behalf with the Jesuits. Commendoni's reception of his young friend was most encouraging, and he agreed to speak in his favour to P. Lorenzo Maggi ; but when he had heard that Father's reasons, he felt that he could do nothing further, and that it would be at once unreasonable, as well as imprudent, to make any use of his authority as Apostolic Legate in the matter. To do so would be to incur the responsibility of compelling the Jesuits to expose their Order in Poland to the danger of a storm similar to that which had scarcely been allayed in Germany.

This application having failed, nothing more now remained to be done in that quarter, and it was evident that the door of access was hopelessly closed against Stanislas in the Austrian capital. What, then, was he to do? What was the next step which he ought to take? Night and day he sought aid from above ; but the tears with which he implored it flowed from his earnest desire and holy impatience to fulfil the Divine command, not from any doubt or anxiety that he should fail of obtaining what he considered as promised and pledged to him. Providence, about this time, led him to make the acquaintance of P. Francesco Antonj, a young Portuguese Jesuit, who had lately arrived at Vienna, to fill the office of preacher to the Empress Maria, and to dispense the word of God to the Spaniards and Italians in that city. He was a man, not only of ardent zeal, but of great ability, deep discernment, and singular prudence. In him Stanislas was drawn to place much confidence, and to him he confided his determina-

tion to become a Jesuit, together with the causes that had led to this resolution, and the apparently insuperable difficulties which beset his path. P. Francesco, having heard Stanislas plead his cause, and having also weighed the objections which stood in the way of his reception, came to a clear and definite opinion on the subject. It was the duty of Stanislas to obey the Divine call; on the other hand, it was just and fitting that the Jesuit Fathers should not compromise the interests of their Order. Again, it was idle to think of obtaining the consent of the Senator Kostka. No course, then, was open save that which Stanislas himself had contemplated—flight. Nor did P. Francesco hesitate to give his personal approbation to this plan, or to forward it by such means as were in his power. Young as was Stanislas, he discerned in him, not merely generosity of heart to venture on a step involving much peril and many privations—such readiness may not uncommonly be met with in youth—but a thoughtful, prudent, and well-balanced mind, one not likely to allow zeal to get ahead of discretion, or to permit of his beginning to build a tower without sitting down to reckon the charges. Indeed, there was, perhaps, nothing more remarkable in Stanislas, associated as it was with so childlike a temper and so fervent a temperament, than the staid maturity of his judgment. We have already noticed the finished character of his sanctity from his earliest years, but this particular merit cannot be brought into too prominent relief, as we may almost be tempted to forget his supernatural discretion, his solidity, and his firmness, from the very exuberance of the more attractive and engaging qualities which adorned him. But, under the shadow of the luxuriant foliage and the bright fragrant flowers of the spring

and summer-tide of the spiritual life, hung, ripe and mellow, the gold-burnished fruits of autumn, marking him as one soon to be gathered into the heavenly store-house.

P. Francesco, then, saw clearly that the prudence and perseverance of Stanislas could be trusted, and so he commended his project: let him follow the inclination, or, rather, the inspiration, of his heart, and seek elsewhere what was denied him at Vienna. To Father Peter Canisius, Provincial of Upper Germany, who was at that time at Augsburg, he advised Stanislas to address himself, hoping that his application might succeed, or, if not, that at any rate he would obtain his desire from the General of the Order at Rome, Father Francis Borgia. He himself would furnish him with a letter to each, which would serve to attest that he was the person he declared himself to be, as well as to confirm the truth of his story. The whole journey, of course, must be made on foot. He, who had been delicately nurtured and reared amidst ease and abundance, must travel as the poor travel, and live on alms, like the destitute wayfarer. Augsburg, supposing that he had to go no farther, lay many a long league from the capital; while, if Father Canisius did not think proper to receive him, he would have to make a farther journey of little less than a thousand miles to reach Rome. But to Stanislas the prospect of toil, and fatigue, and suffering was nothing; nay, it was all joy. The paradise for which he sighed lay before him, and sweet would every step be which brought him nigher,—the sweeter for its very weariness, from the thought of the goal of rest to which he was tending. An immense weight seemed now removed from his mind. Sympathy and kindness he had not wanted for, but

advice, support, and a fortifying approval he had hitherto lacked ; for none of the Viennese Fathers had taken upon themselves the responsibility of giving counsel in the matter ; and, if Stanislas had ever mentioned to them his project of flight, doubtless they had been careful to avoid pronouncing any opinion which might wear the semblance of a sanction, and thus implicating themselves, to a certain degree, in the affair.

Stanislas was now eager to execute his purpose ; but this eagerness did not prevent his acting with the cool deliberation for which he was so remarkable. He had his own way of doing things, with which no impetuosity of feeling was ever permitted to interfere. He had resolved, upon this occasion, not to fly without announcing his purpose, nor without receiving what might be interpreted as a dismissal. Such a determination seemed irreconcilable with the success of his plan ; nevertheless, the delicacy of his conscience and his habitual cautiousness made him desire some special cause to justify his sudden departure. Accordingly, he awaited the next stormy outbreak of temper on the part of his brother, and in the meantime provided himself with a suit of coarse clothes and a hat, such as were worn by poor peasants, for his travelling equipment. He was thus ready to start the moment a fitting opportunity should be afforded him ; and such occurred almost immediately. The beating of Stanislas seems to have been a sort of habitual relief to which Paul had recourse whenever he happened to feel out of humour ; it had become quite the natural thing to do ; besides, when not already in a state of irritation, the very sight of his brother would not seldom excite the dormant evil passions of his heart. There was scarcely a thing which Stanislas could do or say, or, on the



other hand, could omit to do or say, which might not, at any moment, rouse the demon of fury in Paul's breast. Once again, and for the last time, a scene of this kind was to take place. Assailed by every abusive epithet, hurled to the ground, struck, trampled upon, kicked, Stanislas bore all with his customary patience ; but when suffered at last to rise, instead of going away quietly without uttering a word, as at other times he had always done, he allowed, or, rather, compelled the anger which such conduct as that of his brother was calculated to excite, to manifest itself in the emotion of his countenance. To do this, Stanislas had to put as much constraint upon himself as others have to suppress the exhibition of their resentment at unkind words and cruel treatment ; for he had so long mastered nature—having, we might almost say, crushed it in the bud by the abundant aid of divine grace—that to act according to the sentiments of the new man was far more easy and grateful to him than to obey the instincts and impulses of the natural heart. Yet we cannot reckon this assumed demeanour as an act of simulation on the part of the saint, still less can we characterise it as one of false pretence. He willed to show, and he willed also to allow himself to experience, in his sensitive nature, a feeling of anger, dictated and controlled by reason, for conduct which justly deserved it. And so it is that the saints, whose passions are under their dominion, can righteously exhibit affections to which they are not in subjection—thus at a humble distance, and in their measure, imitating the acts of the God-Man, in whom, while He shared all that goes to constitute perfect humanity, the inferior portion of man's nature was so entirely the servant of the superior part of the soul, that a holy Father has said, that the

passions in our Divine Lord's Humanity ought rather to be called *pro-passions*.\*

When Stanislas, then, rose from the floor with a flash of beautiful indignation in his eye, and all the dignity of a princely race upon his brow, Paul stood gazing at him for a moment, mute with wonder. Still more astounded was he when his brother thus addressed him:—"This behaviour of yours, which I have endured so long, I now protest and declare to you, will one day compel me to fly and seek freedom as best I may. It will be for you, who drive me to this, to render an account of me to your father." Paul, who had been petrified for a moment with surprise, hearing himself thus reproached and upbraided by one who had hitherto been his unresisting and uncomplaining victim, felt all his rage rekindling; he expended it, however, in violent language, threats, and curses, ending by bidding him make away with himself if he pleased, so only that he got out of his sight as soon as possible. Stanislas had now gained all he wanted: he had received his dismissal, and his heart bounded with a joy which would have sparkled in his countenance had he not cautiously restrained the expression of his feelings. He lost no time, as may be imagined, in obeying his enraged brother's injunction by leaving his presence, resolved to depart upon the following morn.

All that night he spent in fervent prayer. Never, perhaps, had he passed sweeter hours, or experienced more heavenly consolation. He wept tears of holy joy at the thought, not simply of his anticipated deliver-

\* It need scarcely be observed, that in our Lord's Sacred Humanity the passions were subject in a higher sense than they could be in any of the saints, in whom (always excepting the Blessed Mother of God) there existed the *fomes peccati*.

ance, but much more because he was making himself poor for the love of God, and going forth into the world without purse or scrip, without friends or protectors, but all the more entirely, therefore, cast into the loving arms of his Heavenly Father, and committed to the tender care of Mary, his dear Mother. The first glimmer of that summer's day began to steal over the slumbering city, and found Stanislas still praying. With an arduous journey before him, he, in his simple, trusting faith and love, had sought his repose in God only. He never pressed his couch that night; but, as the day broke, he rose from his knees, put on his best apparel, and, taking his packet of poor clothes, softly left the apartment.

The servant Pacifici awoke with the early dawn to see Stanislas standing by his bedside, clad in festal dress, and with an air of holiday joy upon his countenance. How beautiful and glorious his young master looked thus nobly attired! We can fancy the servant rubbing his eyes, and marvelling whether it were not a pleasant dream. But he was soon convinced that what he beheld was a reality when Stanislas spoke, and bade him, when the dinner-hour came, tell his governor and his brother Paul, who were still asleep, not to expect him, for that he had been invited elsewhere, and could not decline the invitation. With those few words he departed.

Stanislas gone out for the day! It was strange; but it must be true, for he had said it. Yes, he was gone; gone, indeed, for the day—for the remainder of life's day. He had, in truth, received an invitation which he could not decline. They must not expect him; he will not come again to fill his place at table; never more will he sit at the world's board. He is

gone to partake of another feast. Paul and Bilinski are still sleeping on, and know not what they have lost. Yet not lost: for some blessings men value not till they have passed away; and Stanislas is only withdrawn from their eyes that they may learn at last to know, to value, and to love the treasure they have so long possessed without appreciating it.



## CHAPTER IX.

### STANISLAS'S JOURNEY AND ITS WONDERS.

It was a little later than the middle of August when Stanislas set off on his solitary journey. He repaired first to the Jesuit church, where he heard Mass, communicated, and received the blessing of P. Francesco Antonj, who at parting gave him the two letters he had promised, one to Father Canisius, and the other to the General of the Order, Francis Borgia. These credentials were his sole provision for the way; as for money, he went forth utterly unprovided with any: this has been expressly recorded. Whether or no the holy youth had expended all of which he had the disposal, or that he did not choose to be a debtor to any one in an affair in which he acted for himself, or that his love of poverty, poverty for love's dear sake, was so sweet to him that he would make the treasure his in all its purity and perfection, so it was that Stanislas went forth more penniless than the beggar of the highway, who, at least, generally owns the scant remnant of his last alms. Light and joyous, however, was his step, and

the moment he had left the city behind he renewed with increased ardour the fervent vow which he had made to God and His holy Mother, never to cease his pilgrimage until he was received into the Company of Jesus, the portal to him of that heaven to which he was bound. Life would be well expended, so as he had but the grace to arrive and die on that blessed threshold. And truly it was little more that he was to be permitted to do. By and by he looked back, and, as Vienna began to disappear in the distance, he thought he might venture to put on his pilgrim's clothes, for as yet he wore the world's livery about him. And so he turned off the road and found a spot where, sheltered from view, he could effect the desired change. With what joy did the happy youth strip himself for ever of the dress which marked his secular rank, and put on the coarse tunic which enrolled him amongst the poor of Christ and the pilgrims who seek a better land ! With what exultation did he gird his waist with a cord, and hang the corona of our Lady by his side, and with staff in hand, a rough stick which he had found, sally forth from the sheltering nook to regain the high road ! But he was still encumbered with the worldly gear he had put off, and which was now enveloped in the cloth which had previously contained his peasant's dress. He must needs get rid of it, and so he bestowed it, for the love of God, on the first poor man he met, and then went onward with a still lighter step.

The saints are the heroes, the champions, the knights-errant, so to say, of God's kingdom, the Catholic Church ; but, as the glory of that kingdom, and even of the King's daughter herself, is chiefly within,—as, moreover, the aims and objects of the sub-

jects of this kingdom, and their standard of the good, the excellent, and the admirable differ so widely from those of the world,—no wonder that the mere story-loving reader should find their adventures dull, and that his curiosity should derive little gratification from the narrative of their exploits and victories—exploits and victories, too, which often read so much like sufferings and defeats; and yet even to such there are scenes, one would think, in Stanislas's life which cannot be devoid of attraction. A certain romantic interest, of the natural order, seems to attach to the noble boy, born to the enjoyment of every earthly advantage, and adorned with every personal grace and virtue, escaping from a brother's cruelty, and treading, in the disguise of a vagrant, the hard and dusty highway, in order to seek refuge in a city which lies hundreds of miles distant. But if there be something to charm even from a natural point of view, there is also, we cannot but feel, a special beauty of the supernatural order attaching to all that relates to Stanislas. Heaven and all the wonders of the invisible world are around us as we journey with him; the strains and fragrance of Paradise seem ever floating on the air, and its glorified inhabitants always ready to manifest themselves to view. But we must leave our saint awhile, to return to the Lutheran's unblest abode.

Before the hour of the midday meal, the servant Pacifici gave Paul and Bilinski the message with which Stanislas had charged him. They, too, were surprised. He had never taken a liberty of this kind before. Besides, he never accepted worldly invitations, and had probably long ceased to receive them. Still, although this proceeding was quite unprecedented on his part, they did not at first take the alarm. Likely

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enough, they supposed that his absence was to be accounted for by what they would have called some devotional freak. But as the day wore on, and the shades of evening began to close in, wonder increased, and then rapidly grew into anxiety. Night fell, and no Stanislas! What could have become of him? Bilinski, who had the fear of an angry father before his eyes, dreaded lest some evil accident might have befallen his charge; but Paul, who well remembered what had passed the previous day, and the words which Stanislas had uttered, began inwardly to suspect, either that he had taken refuge in some place of concealment in Vienna, or had, perhaps, even fled from the city. Servants were now despatched in all directions to make inquiries, but one by one they returned without bringing any tidings. The Jesuit Fathers could give no information concerning him, nor had they the slightest knowledge where he was. But Paul, not contented with the servants' report, hastened himself to their house. Fierce and angry, as passionate men are wont to be when alarmed, he questioned the Fathers in overbearing and violent language, plainly manifesting his opinion that his brother was concealed amongst them. They answered him with all forbearance and gentleness, and, after having fully satisfied him of the groundlessness of his suspicions, added that they did not believe that Stanislas was hidden anywhere in Vienna; if gone, he must have left the place. Paul felt convinced that they spoke the truth: Stanislas indeed had fled, and he was the cause. The last words his brother had spoken to him now re-echoed with fearful import in his ears: "You will have to answer for me to our father."

To hasten in pursuit of the fugitive, and, if possible,

overtake him, was now the only remaining hope, but it was too late that night to do anything except make their arrangements for the morrow, and decide upon their road,—an embarrassing point, since they could not tell in what direction Stanislas had fled. Kimberker was now taken into their counsels, and it was finally settled that they should follow the Augsburg road. It was the common report in Vienna, and was stated in letters written less than a fortnight after the event, which P. Bartoli, the biographer of St. Stanislas, had under his eye, that the Lutheran consulted a woman skilled in the black art, in order to discover the way Stanislas had taken, and that, in reply to her incantations, the devil indicated the Augsburg road, and the inn at which the fugitive was resting that night. However this may be, the Augsburg road was the one selected, and probably by Kimberker's advice, although the existence of a Jesuit college in that city may have also suggested to them the probability that it was thither Stanislas designed to betake himself. But, as regards the consultation with the witch, if it really took place, as there seems no good reason to doubt, the act was Kimberker's alone; for Paul, in after times, when become a changed man and a fervent penitent, positively denied, on the part of himself and his governor, having had any dealings with hell, and that not without some mixture of indignation at seeing it asserted in a Life of his saintly brother published a few years after his death.

With the early dawn a carriage was at the door, drawn by two horses, stout of limb and sound of wind. Paul and Bilinski were ready and impatient to start; Kimberker chose to bear them company, and one of the servants of the Kostkas made the fourth in the



vehicle. They were full of hopes, if only they were upon the right track, of overtaking Stanislas in the course of the day. He must be on foot, they knew; for he had no means at his disposal of travelling in any other mode; and, tenderly brought up as he had been, it could not be imagined that, exposed as he would be to the fervour of an August sun, he had as yet accomplished any very great distance. But the fervour which burned within had triumphed over all, and had carried Stanislas far upon his road; for, desirous of putting as great a distance as possible between himself and Vienna on the first day, he had pushed on at a pace which to Bilinski, who considered him to have, as was probably true, a delicate organisation, was matter of much astonishment. Night watches, fastings, rigorous austerities were, indeed, familiar to the saintly youth, but to athletic exercises his tutor knew he was quite unused. Doubtless, therefore, he was supernaturally strengthened.

He passed that night in such an apartment, we may believe, as casual charity thinks good enough for the homeless, nameless wanderer. There he, the son of nobles, took his rest, rejoicing at receiving this first alms for the love of God, with that refined joy, understood only by saints, which equals, nay, surpasses, that of giving—surpasses it, because it has for its subject that utter self-abasement which perfect souls are ever seeking as their centre and goal, coveting humiliations as ordinary men covet honours. But the rest which Stanislas took was in God; sleep, with him, never long interrupted prayer. In the morning, after thanking the good man of the house, but without tasting a morsel of food, because he hoped he might find some church on his road where he could receive the Super-substantial Bread, he set forth once more

with a gay and gladsome spirit ; nay, he almost leaped with joy as he sped along, invoking and conversing with saints and angels, and anon turning to his own sweet Mother, Mary, with some prayer which he knew to be dear to her, or some tender ejaculation from the depths of his loving and child-like heart. For joy was always one of the striking characteristics of Stanislas's sanctity, and enters into our elementary conception of him, as penitential humility does into that we form of St. Aloysius : both fruits of one and the same Spirit, who is a " Spirit of joy," as he is also a " Spirit of compunction ;" undivided and inseparable gifts, eminently possessed by all the saints, although one or other may have a special visible prominence, so as to colour the representation which we picture to ourselves, or the aspect in which they come before us.

Noon was approaching, and Stanislas was meditating on the *Salve Regina*, that prayer of his peculiar predilection, when the sound of wheels and the clattering of horses' feet behind him caught his ear. He looked round, for the pace at which the vehicle was proceeding roused his apprehensions. It was but a glance, but it told him all. He saw Paul's fierce, eager countenance ; he saw him stretching forward, and urging on the coachman to greater speed ; and Paul must have seen him also. All seemed now to be lost : he was overtaken, and, if not discovered already, must be so immediately. Yet Stanislas was not disconcerted ; he had God and His Blessed Mother with him, and his good angel, whose invisible presence he always lovingly and reverentially recognised. But, if not disconcerted, he was, we cannot doubt, greatly alarmed ; and, if ever he commended himself cordially to the Divine protection— if ever he called on Mary with the deep cry of the heart,

it was then. She must save him ; for was he not engaged in fulfilling her own behest ? There was a bye-lane branching off from the high-road, a short distance in advance. Stanislas quickened his pace, that he might, if possible, turn off before the carriage reached him, and before the party should come in full view of him. He never turned his face to look back again, and succeeded in gaining the lane, down which he hurried, just as the vehicle was overtaking him. There was, however, humanly speaking, but a poor chance of escape, as he must have been observed, and his beggarly dress would avail little for his concealment, since it was not to be supposed that he would attempt to escape undisguised. His very haste, too, must have roused suspicion, even if he had not been recognised. But no, he had not been recognised ; the carriage reaches the lane, passes by, and leaves it behind.\* The eyes of

\* Some accounts say that the party overtook Stanislas, and passed him ; but that given in the text has been preferred, because it seems alone consistent with all the recorded circumstances. If the carriage overtook Stanislas and passed him before he turned off into the lane, it is not easy to understand how its inmates can have observed this evidence of his desire to escape their notice, unless, indeed, they looked back, which is not mentioned, and which they were not likely to do, if they had as yet conceived no suspicion of the identity of this way-farer with the object of their search. On the other hand, it is expressly stated that the recollection of his demeanour, as of one desirous to avoid them, formed, in a great measure, the ground of the suspicion which occurred to them after they had pursued their own road to a considerable distance. It is easy to reconcile the two accounts. Stanislas may, in a sense, be said to have been overtaken, if, as we suppose, he had but just time to reach and hurry along the cross-road as the carriage came up ; while, on the other hand, the carriage may be said to have passed him when it left the lane behind and continued its course along the high-road.

his pursuers had been holden, that they should not know him, and their minds had been inexplicably diverted from reflecting on the wayfaring youth, whom they saw, it is true, but to whom at the time they did not give a thought. But after a while they remembered him, and called to mind his height and general appearance, the sudden haste he had exhibited to leave the highway, and the glimpse they had caught of him hurrying on in the shade of the cross-road into which he had retreated. It was Stanislas himself, they were now convinced. How was it that the idea had not previously occurred to them? But it was not too late to repair their error. They would easily overtake him, run as fast as he might; and so they turned the horses' heads, and retraced their road to the entrance of the lane at full speed. The rapid pace at which they drove soon brought them again close upon the steps of the fugitive. By and by the road made a considerable curve, on account of the windings of a torrent stream whose course it followed, until, somewhat further down, it crossed by a bridge to the opposite bank of the river. But Stanislas had no need thus to lengthen the way. Full of faith, as a pious and well-grounded tradition attests, he descended into the bed of the impetuous stream and walked dryshod on its surface, as his Lord once trod the waters of Galilee.\*

\* This incident rests on the testimony of the servant who accompanied the party, and who ended his days holily as a Franciscan Minor Observantine (probably in the convent of that Order afterwards built by Paul Kostka at Prasniz). Bartoli, in his narrative of the flight of Stanislas, does not insert this incident; but in the course of the Life he subsequently alludes to it, and indicates as his reason for having omitted it, not that he personally entertained any doubt as to its truth, but that it had not been established, as the other facts had been, by

His pursuers, however, must soon be upon him if God did not continue to extend to him His miraculous protection. Perhaps nothing can be a more beautiful and instructive sight than to behold this servant of God using every human means in his power, and straining every nerve to accomplish his purpose, as if all depended on his own efforts, and meanwhile keeping his eye constantly fixed on Him who has pledged His divine word that the prayer of faith shall never be disappointed. Mountains shall be removed, and the bosom of the yielding waters shall become like the adamantine rock, sooner than that His promise shall fail. Stanislas placed that firm reliance on heavenly assistance which springs from the knowledge of having received a heavenly command. God and His Blessed Mother were bound to enable him to do as he had been bidden ; nevertheless, this obligation assumed on their part, or, rather, the promise implied in their very command, did not exonerate him from the duty of exertion, although it relieved him from all distressing anxiety as to the

juridical testimony. Pacifici, who was left at home in care of the house, stated in his deposition that he remembered that some other miraculous circumstances, besides those attested by him on oath, were related concerning this flight, which he could not accurately recall to mind. This was thirty-four years after the event. When the party returned, he had heard Paul talking about these things to Kimberker ; for, as their conversation was in German, he had (as he deposes) understood what was said, being himself of that nation. We thus incidentally learn that he was not acquainted with the Polish language, which would account for his not gathering the details of this incident from his fellow-servant, who, it appears, was a Pole, and most likely was dead when this deposition was taken. He had often related the fact to his brethren in religion. Bartoli's reserve on this occasion is a proof of his conscientious accuracy, and of the care with which he sifted his authorities.

result ; since, if success was conditional on exertion, as in the case of our salvation, it was conditional only upon the good-will prompting such exertion, and not on its own inherent efficacy. Thus the saints seek and find strength in the very consciousness of their own powerlessness and nothingness. God was now about to manifest His protecting arm, not to Stanislas alone, but to his persecutors, forcing them to confess His power, and to acknowledge themselves vanquished. The horses, which hitherto had proceeded vigorously, and had given no signs of flagging, began to show a disposition to slacken their pace. The coachman urged them on, and Paul urged the coachman, but all in vain. Voice and whip were alike exerted without effect. The beasts went slower instead of faster, and by and by they came to a stand, an obstinate, pertinacious stand, out of which no power could move them. Man alone resists his Maker. The obedience of the dumb, irrational beast to the Divine will, however mysteriously made known to it, is unflinching and insuperable. Whether these horses saw an adversary in the way, as Balaam's ass saw the angel and the drawn sword, or by what other inscrutable means they were warned not to advance, we cannot tell. One thing we know, and that is, that the passive resistance they offered had nothing of the character of common restiveness, and, as the sequel proved, was not the result of fatigue. The infuriated coachman, almost spent with his own fruitless efforts, after swearing at the horses and swearing at himself, at last exclaimed that there was something beyond nature in the whole thing, for his cattle were well able to have gone twice the distance. Something superhuman was at work against them, and, if it were not from God, he knew not from whom it could be.

That it was God Himself who was against them, Paul and his companions felt well assured. Paul especially seems to have been struck with a sudden sensation of awe. Bold and unscrupulous as he was, he had not altogether lost the fear of God, and he shrank from the thought of contending with the Almighty. Courage, indeed, has no place or capability of existence in face of the Omnipotent Creator and Ruler. Men are bold against God only because they do not realise His presence; they are bold against an abstraction. They forget Him who alone *Is*, or they shut their eyes on Him in order that they may be bold against their own idea. But only let the shadow of the supernatural pass over them, and horror will seize on the stoutest heart. "When a spirit passed before me," said the Themanite, "the hair of my flesh stood up."\* Not one of the party but was willing now to give up the pursuit; for they were all confounded by a prodigy which was rendered only the more striking when, the carriage being turned, the horses drew them back to Vienna at their usual rapid pace.

When Paul, on his return, related what had befallen them to Antonio de Mier, that friend of Stanislas already mentioned, the bare recollection made him cross himself as he recurred to this incident, and he said that the sudden obstinacy of the horses so plainly evidenced the hand of God, that even could any one assure him that he would succeed in finding Stanislas, he would not go back to seek him, lest, by opposing the Divine will a second time, he should provoke God to inflict a severe chastisement upon him. And it was not to Antonio de Mier only that he spoke in these terms. He freely avowed the same sentiments, and detailed all

\* Job iv. 15.

particulars of the pursuit, to the many inquirers, chiefly his own and his brother's fellow-students, who were eager to learn what had occurred; and he described them also minutely to the Jesuits, to whom his heart had told him that Stanislas belonged, as soon as he was convinced that his brother had really fled. He might be gone to Augsburg, he might be gone to Rome, but, whithersoever he had betaken himself, Paul knew that it was only to become a religious in the Company of Jesus; and of this fact Bilinski and himself were to be certified not many hours after their return.

The next day, a young Hungarian, one of Stanislas's fellow-students, dear to him for similarity of disposition, to whom he had confided the secret of his intended flight, went to Bilinski and told him that, if he would look between the pages of a book which he mentioned, he would find there a letter which Stanislas had left for him. The letter was found as described, and contained a declaration on the part of the writer that he had fled from Vienna, from his brother, and from him (Bilinski), for no other end save that of retiring from the world, and following the voice of God, which called him, with a certainty which he could not question, to serve Him in the Company of Jesus. He requested him to show this paper to his brother Paul, whom he begged to send it to his father. If they both loved him, as, bound to him by the closest ties of blood, they undoubtedly must, they would not grieve that he should have sought to obtain a good than which neither could they procure him, neither could he desire for himself, a greater upon earth. Nor was it from want of respect for them that he had thus by stealth withdrawn himself and fled. Let them ask themselves whether, if



they had been aware of his intention, they would not have forcibly detained him. Since they assuredly would have done so, to have apprised them of his design would have been to deprive himself of the power of obeying God. All he had done, then, was that which right reason commands: he had preferred God's will to theirs. As Christians, they could not find fault with this, nor in justice could they make it a matter of complaint against him.

This letter was shown to many persons, and created a great sensation in Vienna; not that any one who knew Stanislas was surprised at his election of the religious state, since his whole life had been nothing but a protestation of his alienation from the world, and the entire dedication of his heart to heavenly things. That which excited their wonder and admiration, was that a noble and delicate youth, scarce seventeen, should have the resolution to set off on a long, solitary, and perilous journey—for to Rome they felt certain that he was gone—flinging aside all human respects, and prepared to beg his way in the disguise of a poor vagrant. But upon no one did the letter make so deep an impression as upon Paul; for, although its good effects did not manifest themselves immediately, it undoubtedly sowed the seed of his future repentance and conversion.

It was now necessary to break the matter to his father, and how distressing and painful this business was both to Bilinski and to Paul may well be imagined; to the former, as having been entrusted with the charge of the youth; to the latter, from the knowledge of the blame attaching to himself. The first thing that Bilinski did was to forward the paper which Stanislas had left to the Senator John Kostka, together with a letter from

himself. Paul also wrote a long and particular account of the flight and pursuit, as well as of the marvel which had hindered their further progress, all directed to the object of self-justification, of which he was inwardly conscious he stood much in need, albeit Stanislas had generously omitted all allusion to the treatment he had received at his hands. Kimberker, the Lutheran, also wrote, as did the servant who had accompanied them, and they all corroborated each others' statements. But nothing could avail to pacify the father's wrath. All he saw in these several accounts, all he understood, was that he had lost his son, lost his dearest treasure, lost him irreparably. Whether they were to blame or not, what cared he? Of course they were to blame. What angry man, robbed of the thing he values, but will have it that some one is in fault? He feels too much the need of something whereon to discharge the first outbreak of his fury to care to give impartial consideration to the conduct of others. He does not wish to see any one exonerated from censure. His sole consolation is to have objects against which he can inveigh. The narrative of the hot pursuit, therefore, and of the marvellous incident by which the recovery of Stanislas had been prevented, was, in his eyes, nothing but a tissue of false excuses to palliate negligence. Not even the testimony of the Lutheran, confirming the statements of the rest as to the supernatural character of the occurrence by which Stanislas had been saved from falling into their hands, as he otherwise must have done, availed to open the father's eyes, or to lead him to discern the finger of God therein. Wounded pride mingled with his grief, and lashed it into fury—the pride of the parent in the child of his hopes—a reflected pride, which, like the cast shadow, is always the

strongest ; so deeply did he feel the mortification of a son of his wandering in the garb of poverty through Germany and Italy, perhaps at that very instant holding out his hand to receive the pauper vagrant's dole. He felt as if the name of his noble house was engraven on his child's brow, and that men must point to him in scorn, saying, "That beggar is a Kostka!" Poor father! he little knew that his son, by his very contempt of all earthly honour, was thus winning for himself an unfading wreath of glory even for this world. He little knew that the time would come, and that not far distant, when all Poland would be full of pictures of Stanislas, representing him as a lone wayfarer in the wild open country, clad in coarse tunic, girded with a rope, and a rough staff in his hand—in that very fashion which he now figured to himself with such burning shame and indignation—and before them nobles, palatines, and kings would be coming to kneel in veneration, and that disgraceful flight would be celebrated in all the pulpits of the land as a glory and a triumph, and those coarse pilgrim garments, or the scarcely less coarse habit of the Jesuit novice, would be rendered well-nigh invisible by the coating of gold and jewels with which his images should be overlaid. In the Senator Kostka's eyes, however, blinded as they were by inordinate human pride and a fond earthly ambition, Stanislas had disgraced himself and his noble family for ever. It was, therefore, against this child of his, whom he had so dearly loved, and who had so deeply disappointed him, that his anger was chiefly directed ; and against the Jesuits, who had deceived and robbed him, as he said, and sent his son, in miserable plight, to tramp his way to Rome. Accordingly, in letters written, in the first outburst of his fury, to Cardinal Osius, which Bartoli

had read, he threatened, and declared it to be his purpose, to ruin the college which had been founded two years before at Pultowa by the Bishop of Pultusk, Andrew Noscowski, through the influence of Commendon; and not only to drive the Jesuits out of the kingdom of Poland, but never to suffer them to set their foot therein again so long as he lived. As for Stanislas, he would be well able to discover him wherever he was, and would never rest content till he had dragged him back in fetters through the land.

We must now return to follow our pilgrim's steps. A distance of four hundred miles separates Vienna from Augsburg. Stanislas set himself no less than thirty for his daily task, and must accordingly have been under a fortnight on the road. How glad we should be to have a record of each day; but saints do not write their memoirs, and Stanislas had no companions save the angels of God. All we know is that he lived on alms, and, for the most part, slept on the bare ground under the canopy of heaven; and that by prayer and thanksgiving he sanctified and made meritorious every step of his long journey, taking no account of weariness, never tarrying by the way, or suffering himself to droop under the heat of the midday hours. At last, one evening at the close of August, as the sun was sinking in the west, Stanislas caught a sight of the towers and churches of the fair city of Augsburg; here, at length, he hopes to find the rest he sought: the goal is won, his toils are ended. But not yet. God is pleased to try His servant by one of those disappointments which fall heaviest, not so much because they are the severest as because they come unexpectedly—just, perhaps, when we think our end is attained and our labours closed. At such times, the delay of

hours will seem worse than that of days. There is the spent strength, too, to add to the sickness of the heart at hope deferred. We can well understand, then, the feelings of Stanislas when he learned that the Provincial was not at Augsburg ; he was gone to Dillingen. Yet he was soon expected back ; and we have no reason to believe that any difficulty would have been made on the part of the Fathers to giving Stanislas hospitality until his return. Surely he may be said to have carried his recommendation in his face, even if he had not borne his credentials in his hand. But Stanislas would not stay, not even for a day, to recruit his strength. If he with whom it rested to receive him was not at Augsburg, then he had not attained his heart's desire. Like the carrier-pigeon, who will not give rest to his pinions till he has reached his destination, because there is his nest and his home, but, so soon as the hand has released him, flies straight on unerringly till he has fulfilled his mission, so Stanislas would not pause nor tarry, but at once resumed his road, directing his steps towards Dillingen.

How dear to God was this act of fervour we may judge by its reward—that “much more” which, even in this life, is promised to every sacrifice, and which was so bountifully accorded to this child of grace, and of the “Mother of grace.” Stanislas's sacrifice of a well-earned rest was not a mere sacrifice of duty. Without sin and without reproach he might have taken it ; but love forbade, that love which finds no rest save in fulfilling the will of the Supreme Love. He had left Augsburg many miles behind him when the road led him through a village. A church stood by the way-side, and through its open door Stanislas saw some country people engaged in their devotions. His heart

bounded with joy. Mass was, of course, being offered : he would go in and assist at the Adorable Sacrifice, and receive the Bread of Life. But after he had knelt down and prayed awhile, he suddenly perceived, to his dismay, that he was in a Lutheran church.\* So great was his grief at the disappointment of his expectations, and much more at beholding a holy place, consecrated to Catholic worship, thus fallen into the hands of heretics, that he burst into a flood of tears, which the God of all consolation hastened to turn into tears of joy. Suddenly he beheld a bright company of angels advancing towards him. Their more than earthly beauty, and the radiance of their countenances, told him what they were and whence they came. One of them bore with profoundest reverence the Most Adorable Sacrament. He approached, and once again was Stanislas communicated by angelic hands. Truly, as we said, Heaven surrounded Stanislas wherever he went, keeping him, as it were, in its charmed circle. The vision disappeared, and the pilgrim, having received his Beloved, the Gift of gifts, proceeded on his way with joy, at once so recruited in strength, and so refreshed and invigorated in spirit, that he felt as if he could, if need be, have walked without resting to the very world's end. It is said, indeed, by some that an angel, probably the tutelary spirit whose happy office it was to guard and attend one so like to himself, accompanied him in a visible form on his way ; † but, however this may

\* Whoever has visited the old German churches—those of Nuremberg, for instance—now used as Lutheran places of worship, but still suffered to retain, in a great measure, their former Catholic dress, will be the less surprised at the mistake into which Stanislas fell.

† This seems to have been the tradition preserved at Dillingen, according to P. Paulo Zetel, Professor of Philosophy at that

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be, we know that Stanislas performed the remainder of his journey full of God and of heavenly consolations. The first and the most toilsome stage of his pilgrimage was accomplished when he reached Dillingen, and stood at last at the door of the Jesuit College in that city.

University.—*Philosophia Sacra, sive Vita D. Stanislai Kostka, S. J., cap. xv.*

**PART II**  
**THE EARTHLY PARADISE.**





## CHAPTER I

## STANISLAS'S PROBATION AT DILLINGEN.

STANISLAS stood at the door of the Jesuit College like one who has reached the porch of Heaven's gate. He presented his letter for Father Canisius, and was immediately introduced into his presence. Two saints were now face to face—one already renowned for the victories he had won over heresy; who was at that moment opposing a powerful barrier to the progress of Lutheranism, and even rolling back its tide in that city of Augsburg, where scarce a tenth part even of the Catholics within its walls had remained untainted by the new opinions; who was so electrifying men's minds, and, what was better, so mightily stirring their hearts, from the cathedral pulpit by his marvellous gift of preaching, that people hastened from distant parts of the empire to hear him, attracted by the fame of the man who had merited for himself the title of Apostle of Germany, and such veneration even from the highest dignitaries of the Church that the pious Cardinal of Augsburg one day prostrated himself before him, declaring that he would not rise until he had been permitted to wash his feet: such was Peter Canisius, mature of age, rich in labours, laden with honours. The other,

who was humbly bending before him, was a youth as yet unknown to the Church, who was to drop into an early grave before he had accomplished one public act, before he had even made his voice to be heard. Nevertheless, the veteran of the faith, with whose praises Christian Europe was ringing ere his career was closed, was to wait till our own day for his beatification, while the young saint whom God had called to Himself before he had finished his noviciate was proclaimed "Blessed" only thirty-four years after his death, and for well-nigh a century and a-half has been raised to the altars of the Universal Church.

Canisius had no sooner cast his eyes on the youth kneeling at his feet with so much modesty and humility, and with such a beseeching countenance, than, before he was aware who he was or had glanced at the contents of the letter which he presented to him, with the quick spiritual discernment of a saint he read on his brow the stainless purity of that beautiful soul, and knew how dear he was to God. To be convinced of this he needed not P. Antonj's assurance, but when, upon opening the letter, he learned all that his petitioner had given up to follow the divine call,—how he had sacrificed country, parents, worldly rank, and brilliant prospects, and had undertaken a weary journey alone, unfriended, in a beggar's garb, and all only that he might gain the one object of his desires, admission into the Company of Jesus,—he felt all the love of a father for him kindling in his bosom. He tenderly embraced him, pressed him to his heart, and made him welcome to remain. Stanislas, on his part, manifested a perfectly filial confidence, and in the several conversations which Canisius held with him laid open his whole heart and conscience to him with that candour which belongs to innocency.

He kept nothing back, but told him all the marvellous graces and favours he had received from Jesus and Mary; he told him of the great goodness of God in vouchsafing to call him to the Company; of the express command he had received from the Blessed Mother of God, and how he had repeatedly made fruitless endeavours to obey it; and then he spoke of the ardent desire which consumed him to belong to the Company of Jesus, and prayed him by the bowels of the mercies of that same Saviour, who shed all His Precious Blood for him, and for the love of his most dear Mother Mary, to grant him this consolation: but here his voice failed him, his eyes became suffused, and he burst into an uncontrollable flood of tears. Such pathetic eloquence might have touched a heart less loving than that of Canisius. Filled with admiration at beholding so much virtue at so tender an age, he again pressed Stanislas to his bosom, and bade him hope for the speedy accomplishment of his wishes; in the meantime let him cast himself without reserve into the arms of the good God and of his dearest Mother Mary. He assured him also of his own protection.

But Canisius was a great master of evangelic perfection, and the greater was the sanctity which he recognised in this elect soul, the more did he feel bound to perfect and strengthen it in the school of humility. In so doing, he was, moreover, adopting those precautionary measures of which prudence will not suffer the omission in such cases; neither would he allow the confidence with which Stanislas had inspired him at first sight to lead him to dispense with them. Stanislas was young; and the young are fervent, impressionable, generous in their resolves, and courageous in putting them into execution, so long as

dangers and difficulties excite their imaginations and stimulate their energies ; but these same resolves, so firm while there is something to oppose, resist, or even endure, in order to compass the desired object, will not unseldom flag under a dull, daily round of tasks which are humiliating to self-love, and which supply no possible food to enthusiasm or secret self-exaltation. He would put Stanislas, therefore, to a hard trial, one calculated both to prove his resolution and to confirm and solidify humility, the basis of all the other virtues, while it would afford the generous youth a field for exhibiting what he truly was.

The Jesuits had a large college at Dillingen, called after the name of its patron, St. Jerome. Many of the sons of the first nobility were educated in this school, and here Canisius resolved to place Stanislas ; not, however, as his rank and merit would have entitled him, to be their companion, but to help the servants in doing the domestic work of the house, until he could come to some determination respecting him. When he intimated this purpose to the saintly youth, so far from experiencing either disappointment or surprise, he exceedingly rejoiced. To say that he desired mortifications would be only to state of him what may be said, not only of the saints in general, but of all ardent aspirers after the more perfect life. They rejoice to be humbled, because it is the road to perfection, and the path wherein they can tread most closely in the steps of a Crucified God ; but it was not on this account only, holy as such motives would have been, that Stanislas exulted. He had passed into the further state of taking such pleasure in humiliations, that to him they were no longer humiliations, but just what he particularly relished. Accordingly, the situation of a menial

involved with him no mortification at all, for his humility sought abjection, and plunged, so to say, into its depths with keen delight, as the eagle soars into the heights of heaven. This measure, as Bartoli observes, was a masterstroke on the part of the Provincial, as he accomplished two objects thereby. He furnished Stanislas with an occasion of manifesting his virtue, and he set before the eyes of the young students a model of rare excellence. All took place as he had anticipated. Stanislas gave that peculiar proof of the saintly character, the performing of ordinary actions extraordinarily well, which we all know in theory, but which, simple as it seems, proves, as a persevering practice, more difficult than the imitation of solitary heroic acts of a far more arduous nature. It might have been imagined, from the ease and adroitness with which he went through his daily work, that he had been bred to it from childhood; and, in particular, it was noticed with what attention to the wants of all, and to the least sign made him, he waited at table. In short, he might have been a servant all his life but for a certain inborn grace, and for that delicate refinement of feature and appearance which so peculiarly distinguished him, as well as for that perfect nobility of manner which his humility and modesty veiled and adorned without concealing. Stanislas could learn in a day the work of a servant—nay, he seemed to step into the office naturally—but these other things he could neither unlearn nor conceal, or, rather, he possessed them without bestowing on them a conscious thought.

No one in the house, whether student or domestic, had been apprised of his rank, or of any other particulars concerning him, and he was not likely to be the person to give them any information on these points.

But he could not escape notice. His most amiable and winning beauty, which drew the heart of the beholder heavenward,—his modesty, with all its virginal bloom, which had the gift of enamouring with holy purity all who witnessed it,—his expression, at once grave and radiant, as we figure the angelic countenance,—these and the many other indescribable graces and sweet charities which revealed themselves in every act and every look, charmed the students of St. Jerome, and they felt to love holy discipline, with all that is true, modest, just, lovely, and of good fame,\* the better when brought into contact with the young Polish servant whom the Provincial had sent to the college. But the curiosity of youth, not to speak of that of the servants, who had still nearer and more frequent opportunities of observing Stanislas, was sure soon to solve the mystery, which, as we may suppose, Canisius had not purposed to render impenetrable. When it transpired that this youth was the son of a Polish nobleman of the highest rank, that he had braved the anger of relatives, and sacrificed rich and flattering prospects, to seek admission into the Company, and that to attain this end he had made a long journey on foot in the garb of a beggar, their admiration rose to enthusiasm, and they could scarcely take their eyes off him, regarding him as something worthy of high veneration. Nor did these sentiments stop short at the object which awakened them; they served also to kindle a generous emulation to copy those virtues which had made Stanislas Kostka so admirable. Such is the prerogative of saints, to draw the hearts which they captivate towards God; and we may add that in its measure we find it the attribute of even inferior

\* Phil. iv. 8.

degrees of holiness, rendering the looks, acts, and casual words of those in whom the love of God is deeply rooted potent engines of conversion; a circumstance which should engage us to mistrust the sterling merits of that amiability which can only win personal love, and to suspect our worth in God's sight when we are only successful in centering affections upon ourselves. Many acknowledged that the very sight of Stanislas moved them to devotion; and it was the common report that the greater number of the students, through the sole influence of his angelic demeanour (for it must be remembered that they did not enjoy the advantage of his companionship), were stimulated to enter on a stricter course of life, and some even to leave the world and embrace the religious state.

Stanislas had been bid to hope, but he was still kept in suspense, waiting for the Provincial's decision. Accordingly he remitted nothing of the fervour of his supplications; day and night it was the subject of his prayers; and, in order to impart greater efficacy to them, and to merit their more gracious acceptance in the sight of God, he accompanied them with severe penitential practices, disciplining himself with iron chains, and making long night-watches, to which he added a continual rigid fast. As he was scarcely ever observed to take any nourishment, it came to be remarked amongst the young men, who would wonderingly say to each other, "See, Stanislas never eats or drinks though he works so hard through the whole day!" This was all that was wanting to complete the perfect picture of an angel which he already presented to their eyes. That Stanislas suffered a good deal during his short stay at St. Jerome's, beyond what we know of his own self-inflicted austerities, appears certain. In the



processes we find it recorded: "*Stanislaum multa perpessum, ita ut a Domino Deo pro obtinenda corona missus videretur*—(Stanislas suffered many things, so that he seemed to have been sent by the Lord God that he might obtain his crown)." P. Longaro believes that allusion is here made to what he had to bear from the ill-will of some of the lower servants, to whom the example which the life of this holy youth daily presented, appeared in the light of a continual reproof for their own negligence, laziness, and, perhaps, worse faults; but in what manner they manifested their dislike is not particularised.\*

A fortnight's trial was quite sufficient to remove all possible doubt as to the perseverance of Stanislas, and Canisius could with full satisfaction have at once crowned his dearest hopes by admitting him as a novice in the Company, but there were other circumstances which required consideration. The prudent Provincial judged the neighbourhood of Germany to Poland to be a serious objection. He apprehended the violence of the Kostkas, who would probably adopt every means in their power to have him back; it would be wise, therefore, to place a greater distance between Stanislas and his relatives. He would be safe at Rome: he would, indeed, be perfectly safe there; so to Rome he would send him. How discreetly Canisius acted in this affair the sequel proved; for when we afterwards find John Kostka hoping to succeed in tearing the novice from the arms

\* The refectory where Stanislas discharged the menial office of a servant has been preserved, and is still shown to strangers. Ancient documents attest that there was formerly an altar dedicated to the saint in the college of Dillingen, which was daily visited by a devout throng. The Jesuit Fathers at Rome parted with a joint of one of the saint's fingers in favour of this house.

of the Company in Rome itself, and despatching thither his son Paul, empowered to use every effort for that purpose, what may we not suppose he would have dared and attempted on German ground? There it is more than probable he might have found assistance, the like of which certainly would have failed him in Rome, viz., that of the princes and secular authorities, whose sympathies he could doubtless have enlisted in his cause. We have already seen how precarious was the countenance or support which the Jesuits could expect from the Apostolic Majesty of Germany, and know how little available power they could have exercised for the protection of the lamb which had taken refuge in their fold.

Stanislas had been nearly three weeks at St. Jerome's when the Provincial sent for him, and told him that he thought it the most prudent course to send him to Rome to the General of the Order, Francis Borgia. He would himself write in his favour, and bade him entertain no doubt but that all his desires would be fulfilled. The journey which lay before him was certainly long and tedious, and he would have to make it all on foot; but he must console himself with the thought that his removal to a distance from his country made him safer from any violent attempt on the part of his father to reclaim him. But fatigues, privations, and sufferings were reckoned as nothing by Stanislas, to whom the attainment of his one desire was everything, and who rejoiced at the prospect of being placed in fuller security. Canisius accordingly ordered some fresh clothes to be procured for him, not permitting him to make the journey again in that extreme poverty of attire in which he had reached Dillingen; and, as two of the religious were about to proceed to Rome,

he profited by the opportunity thus afforded to provide Stanislas with companions on his way. It was an act of much self-denial on the part of the holy Provincial thus to deprive himself of this youth, whose spotless innocency and virtue had inspired him with the warmest affection; and need we add that Stanislas, so loving even to those who cruelly treated him, and who would have robbed him of all he valued, was full of ardent gratitude for the benefits he had received, and for the paternal kindness shown him? He had found a true father in this saintly man, one who loved him, not according to the flesh and with a selfish love, as the earthly parent too often loves, but in God and for God. Nor let it be thought that such love wants for tenderness; rather it is the engrossing human passion which robs the heart of tenderness. Those who love their children with greedy parental affection may be fond parents, but they are not tender parents. Fondness is not tenderness, though it simulates its character. The conduct of Stanislas's father was, as we shall see, a striking proof of this fact, were proof needed. No one, indeed, who had witnessed the parting of Canisius and Stanislas could have doubted that their hearts were united by the closest bonds of love. "Mutual were their embraces and their tears, as they tore themselves one from the other, and they spoke their farewells more with the heart than with the tongue," says P. Longaro, who, in the too short biography he has left us, gives always a passing word to the tender and touching incidents which abound in the life of this most amiable of saints.

## CHAPTER II.

## STANISLAS'S RECEPTION INTO THE COMPANY.

CANISIUS wrote, as he had promised, to the General of the Order, Francis Borgia. After mentioning the two companions of Stanislas, one of whom he names as Jacopo Levanzio, a Genoese, who, as it appears, was already known in Rome, and for whom Borgia had sent, while the other he calls Magister Reiner, of Liège, a man of mature age, who had taught rhetoric with high commendation in the college at Munich, he thus proceeds:—"The third whom we send is Stanislas, a Pole, a noble, virtuous, and studious youth, whom our fathers at Vienna did not venture to receive into their noviciate, for fear they should excite the anger of his family. When he came to us, desiring to fulfil the vow he had long made—for, before he was admitted, he had absolutely vowed himself to the Society some years previously—he was put to the proof, for a time, in the college of our brethren at Dillingen, and was always found faithful in his service and firm in his vocation. He was desirous, meanwhile, to be sent to Rome, that he might be further removed from his relatives, whose persecution he feared, and that he might make greater progress in piety. He has not lived with our novices, but he may be entered amongst them there, in order to go through the regular proba-

tion of his calling. We expect splendid things of him. Your Paternity will not disapprove, I trust, his coming thus unbidden, not only because this opportunity of sending him presented itself, but because he himself, never having been fully received by us, was desirous that it should be so.\*

The young religious who was associated with Stanislas on his journey, became at once an object of pious envy to many of the students of the seminary, who, to enjoy the company of the angel, as they esteemed him, who had tarried a brief space amongst them, would have gladly begged their way on foot for those weary eight hundred miles. The three travellers set off towards the close of September, with light and gladsome hearts, the two Jesuits charmed at having Stanislas for their companion, and Stanislas, who considered himself the favoured one in being associated with these religious, rejoicing in spirit at the assurance

\* *Tertius mittitur Stanislaus polonus, nobilis, probus, et studiosus adolescens, quem Viennenses nostri novitium recipere ausi non fuerunt, ut ne familiam ejus exacerbare viderentur. Cum venisset ad nos, et cuperet explere votum diuturnum (nam ante annos aliquot se Societati, priusquam admissus esset, plane devovit) Dilingæ in convictorum collegio fuit probatus ad tempus, seque in ministerio fidum et in vocatione constantem semper præbuit. Optabat interim Romam mitti, ut a suis, quorum persecutionem metuebat, longius abesset majoresque progressus faceret in pietate. Inter novitios nostros nunquam vixit, quibus isthic poterit adhiberi, ut justum tirocinii sui specimen præbeat. Nos de illo præclara speramus. Neque moleste feret Paternitas tua, uti confido, hunc injussum accedere, non solum quia hæc mittendi se obtulit occasio, verum etiam quod ipse nondum a nobis omnino receptus ita fieri desideraret."*

The original of this letter is preserved in the room where Stanislas died. It is dated from Munich, where Canisius then was.

he had received from the lips of Canisius that he would obtain his desire at Rome, and at the thought that every step brought him the nearer to its accomplishment. But the joy of the three travellers was not a joy of earth; it did not express itself in the unloosing of the tongue, in noisy mirth, or in unrestrained and careless gesture. Together they walked, with a recollection and modesty so heavenly, that to look at them you might have thought that you beheld the three angelic visitors who, at even-tide, came to Abraham's tent. Each hour had its allotted occupation. With the early dawn they were on foot, making their meditation as they went, holy thoughts and aspirations rising fresh from their hearts to God's throne at that primal hour, when earth also sends forth her purest incense. Each walked in silence, alone with God, offering to Him his tribute of treasured love and adoration, and letting the vessel of the heart steam up, so to say, only heavenward. Thus was the day begun and consecrated to God. As it advanced, they would sing in unison the praises of God and of the divine Mother, and recite her rosary, with other devout prayers. Then silence again, for the examination of conscience; and when at times they must needs sit awhile to recruit their strength, some spiritual book would be read by one of the party, and only laid aside for converse on heavenly things, when they would mutually communicate and thus make common property of the internal lights and other graces which had been separately vouchsafed to them. The saint's two companions used afterwards to relate how, when in the distance he perceived some image of our Lady by the road-side, he would hurry on, that he might, for one brief moment, kneel at the feet of his dear Mother. He would look

at her, not uttering a word, but with all his heart of love glistening in his eyes, then, making her a profound inclination, he would rejoin his friends, and so pass on with them as before. Days of inexpressible sweetness were those; not a shade of mental weariness even momentarily darkened the brow of the three wayfarers during the happy month which they spent upon their journey; but they went forward with that lightness and elasticity of spirit with which the voluntary poor of Christ, who carry neither purse nor scrip, are blest, drinking of the way-side stream, and eating the casual bread of charity, "with gladness and simplicity of heart." \*

The party reached Rome on the 25th of October, and went straight to the house of the Company. The day is registered in the book containing the names of the novices, which remained in Bartoli's day, and is probably still preserved. The entry is followed by Stanislas's subscription in his own hand, although it was not until the 28th that he actually received the habit. Our saint was again in presence of another saint; and, as Canisius had not needed P. Antonj's letter to recommend the bearer to his esteem, so neither did Borgia need that of Canisius to form his opinion of the youth who, in his poor garments, little less poor but more travel-worn than those in which he had appeared before the Provincial at Dillingen, knelt at his feet with an air so humble and so modest, begging with tears the favour of being admitted into the Company. Never, perhaps, had innocency, purity, and every other angelic virtue shone with such visible lustre as it pleased God they should assume on Stanislas's youthful countenance. As the holy man contemplated him, his heart was trans-

\* Acts ii. 46.

ported with joy, and with true saintly humility he felt inwardly confounded at the sight of such eminent perfection in one so young, while he, far advanced in age, was, as he esteemed himself, so great a sinner. He embraced him, and pressed him in his paternal arms, even as Canisius in like circumstances had done, blessing the good God for the rich present which in Stanislas He was making to the whole Order. And this is the light in which, after his example, the Jesuit Fathers have ever regarded this saint: one of the fairest ornaments and brightest glories of the Company, given to them (as P. Bartoli deemed) more for their sake than for his own. For, indeed, he seemed to come to them, not to learn perfection, but as already a finished model of perfection. "*Carus omnibus, molestus nemini,*" wrote the Rector of the Vienna College to the General, "*puer ætate, vir prudentia, corpore parvus, animo magnus et excelsus*—(Dear to all, displeasing to none, in age a boy, in prudence a man, in person small, in spirit high and exalted)." The simplest and the strongest words alone seemed fitted to describe Stanislas. These lines had not yet met Borgia's eye, but he read all that they were to tell him in the blessed countenance of the youth. He conversed with him a long time, and would fain hear from his own lips every particular respecting his divine call to the Company, the command he had received from Mary, and the opposition and difficulties he had encountered. He questioned him also minutely concerning his escape, and the labours and privations and sufferings of his journey; and all the while that he was gratifying the holy curiosity he felt in the story of God's dealings with this chosen soul, he was also satisfying himself that Stanislas had already passed through his probation, and needed no further trial.



So full of God did he recognise him to be, so ready to undertake and to endure anything whatsoever for His love, that he at once decided upon admitting him to the noviceship. Accordingly, he clothed him with the Jesuit habit on the 28th of October, the feast of the holy Apostles Simon and Jude.

When Stanislas found himself clasped in that paternal embrace, which welcomed and owned him as a son of the Company, the joy he experienced can only be described as a species of rapture. And when he saw himself a clothed novice of the Order, when that happiness which for two whole years he had so ardently coveted was at last his own, he could not contain his exultation. Grief, pain, contradiction, contempt, all these he had borne with an unmoved countenance and an unruffled spirit; but now the great floods of joy which rushed over his soul were beyond his control, and he remained for several days quite absorbed within himself, making from time to time ecstatic exclamations, like one unconscious of listeners, and alone with God and his own ineffable gladness. "This, then," he would say, with tears of consolation streaming from his eyes, "this is the holy house of God, the safe harbour from the world's tempests, the ante-chamber of Paradise!" And, again, as he fondly glanced at the habit in which he was clothed, "This," he would say, "is indeed the livery of the Company, a livery more precious than imperial purple or any other worldly pomp." His joy was enhanced by the thought that he seemed to receive it from the very hands of Mary, his Mother and his Lady, the Queen of Angels, by whose command he had sought it, and who by that very command had pledged herself to bestow it upon him. "O the great love," he would exclaim, "of my dear

Mother Mary! How may I correspond with so many graces?"

Thus joy and love were as two wings to Stanislas. He never rested in his satisfaction, nor sat down awhile, as it were, to take breath when the storm and the danger were past. On, on! was ever the cry of his soul, which seemed as by a divine presentiment to know that his place above awaited him, that time for him was short, while each golden moment of his brief remaining space was worth a whole eternity of bliss. He is come to labour, not to rest, but it will now be gladsome labour, for he will labour with, not against, the stream. He has escaped from the opposing currents and adverse winds of the world; every breath in this holy atmosphere is directed heavenward, and helps to fill his sails and to bear him on his way to the eternal haven.



## CHAPTER III.

### STANISLAS ENTERS ON HIS NOVICIATE.

BEFORE we proceed to contemplate Stanislas in this last stage of his mortal life, as a novice in the Company of Jesus, the noviciate on which he was now entering deserves a short passing notice, for it was one of the most remarkable in the annals of the Order. As regards numbers, it was so full that the Company possessed no house in Rome large enough to contain the candidates for admission which flocked to them from

all parts of Europe. They were accordingly divided amongst three different houses, all of which in their turn had the happiness of enjoying for a brief season the bright example of our saint. The greater part were at the professed house, which at that time was called Santa Maria della Strada, upon whose site the Gesù was afterwards built. Others were placed at Sant 'Andrea a Monte Cavallo, which was the house destined for the noviciate, but which at that time was far too small to contain all the novices. The remainder were at the Roman College, being such as, having completed their year of probation, were applying themselves to study, besides some others who were sent there to serve in the humblest domestic capacity. Stanislas was in the first instance kept at the professed house; he was then sent to the Roman College, whence he passed to the noviciate house of Sant 'Andrea, where his blessed death took place.

But if the number of the novices was in itself a striking fact, the personal qualifications of a very large proportion of their body, whether we regard birth, talents, or sanctity of life, were still more worthy of remark. To name a few: there was Claudio Acquaviva, son of the Neapolitan Duke of Atri, the same who was afterwards General of the Order, and ruled it for thirty years; at whose feet, eighteen years later, Aloysius Gonzaga was to kneel, begging admission into the Order, even as Stanislas, now his co-novice, had just knelt at the feet of Francis Borgia. There was also his nephew Ridolfo, a youth most like to our saint in angelic manners and spotless virtue, and afterwards a glorious martyr. Another Stanislas was also there; he, too, was a Pole, and belonged to the noble family of Warscewiski,—a man arrived at middle life, who

stood high in the favour of King Sigismund, whom he had represented as ambassador to the Sultan and other potentates, and had served in the high office of Chief Secretary of State, but far more honourably distinguished for his uncorrupt and irreproachable life. This noble might, if so he had willed, have enjoyed the richest bishopric in Poland, but, withdrawing himself from those honours which unsolicited came to seek him, he turned his back upon the world, and preferred to become a humble novice in the Company of Jesus. There was Fabio de'Fabj, the very least of whose merits was the ancient Roman blood which ran in his veins, and the memory of whose eminent virtues was long cherished in the Order; and there, too, was Alessandro Vallengani, afterwards renowned for his Apostolic labours in India, Japan, and China. Neither was this noviciate less rich in doctors learned in the highest sciences, who had already rendered themselves famous, than in future holy priests and evangelical missionaries. To name some of the most noted: there were Torres, a theologian renowned in all the universities, and distinguished at the Council of Trent; De Leon, chosen by the Sovereign Pontiff for his profound knowledge of the sacred canons to revise and correct the Decree of Gratian; Prandi, eminent in philosophy, who had held the first chair in the University of Bologna; these three, and many others of note in their day, were the co-disciples of Stanislas in the school of the religious life, and of that humility which is the sublimest wisdom.

Placed amongst persons of such extraordinary merit, it would have been no small praise to say of a youth of seventeen that he could bear a comparison with them; yet this would have fallen far below the truth; for, in fact, scarcely had Stanislas made his appearance in the

noviciate, when the wonderful operations of grace in his soul were immediately recognised by his associates, and he drew to himself the admiration, the love, nay, the veneration, of all hearts. Claudio Acquaviva was appointed as his master in the Spiritual Exercises, which it is the practice for the novices to make on their first entering the Company. He was himself, it is true, still a novice in the Order, but he was no novice in the paths of perfection and the science of the saints. He was a man already well versed in spiritual ways; but when he observed the fervent young neophyte to be so filled with the fire of divine love, that no sooner was the mere subject of the meditation propounded than a heavenly flush suffused his face, and tears of tenderness gushed from his eyes; when, moreover, he noted the high intelligence of heavenly things, such as the inward teaching of the Spirit of God can alone impart, which shone in the replies which his questions elicited, he inwardly confessed to himself, as he afterwards openly averred, that he was, in truth, the disciple and Stanislas the master. The countryman of Stanislas, the noble Warscewiski, who had entered the noviciate but a month before our saint, said, indeed, that he needed no other instruction, and no other exercise in the ways of spiritual perfection, than to listen to Stanislas, to watch him, and to imitate him. He it was who, when the angelic youth departed to glory, took pen in hand, and committed to writing, and gave to the world, the narrative of his holy life, being thus the first to publish to his countrymen, with the pledged authority of his own great name, the claims of Stanislas Kostka on the love and veneration of the faithful.

But while such were the sentiments with which Stanislas inspired his companions in the noviciate, he,

all unconscious of the estimation in which he was held, was wholly filled with reverential and humble admiration for those by whom he saw himself surrounded. When he cast his eyes on any of his brother novices, it would be hard to say which feeling predominated within him, confusion or consolation. We may, however, well believe that it was consolation, for the truly humble, the humble according to the mind of the Spirit, delight in their own confusion, and so the two feelings were as one in our saint's lowly heart. His companions were in his eyes so many angels, and himself, associated with them as a brother, was all unworthy to be their servant. Hence his behaviour to each and all was that of blended reverence and love, for to every one of them in particular he looked up as to a master and a model, striving to make gain for himself by the imitation of their virtues. With a like reverential affection did he regard the rules of the Order; and his first care was to transcribe them all with his own hand, and then he wore them continually upon his bosom: he would have placed them within his heart had that been possible. This love of the rule, only second to, if rather it be not one and the same love with, that of perfection, has been remarkable in all the saints who have belonged to religious Orders. We need here only allude to that twin glory of the Company, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who is naturally so closely allied in our minds with St. Stanislas Kostka, and in whom this love was also so strikingly conspicuous. Neither must we view this characteristic as one of no peculiar practical interest to ourselves, whose lot is cast in the world, as though it were a virtue incidental to a particular state, and, as such, simply forming matter for admiration and general edification. For the rule which represents the spirit

of the Order represents, consequently, the spirit of the vocation wherewith its members are called, and the vocation of a soul is nothing less than the eternal will of God in its regard. But each of us must have some vocation, however humble, since each of us was created by God, who must have had His own design in our creation. With the great majority, this vocation may not rise above their own ordinary state in life, and therefore is necessarily represented by what are called the duties of our state. These peculiar duties, then, are to such persons the counterpart of what the rule is to religious; and when we consider the dull dissatisfaction with which they are so frequently performed by many who fancy they could serve God better in various ways, were it not for the yoke these duties lay upon them, and the low, earthly, and natural motives and affections with which they are fulfilled by others, so that what might and ought to become an occasion of merit and a means of honouring God often becomes a snare to engage the heart in the love of creatures, we cannot but feel that these recorded perfections of saints in the religious life have a direct practical bearing on seculars, and deserve a very particular consideration from every one of us. There is, of course, no Catholic but confesses his obligation to perform the duties of his state, just as there is no religious who questions whether or not he is bound to observe his rule. Of this sense of obligation we are not here speaking, but of the love, the sort of *cultus*, so to say, with which saints have regarded their religious rule, and this on account of its identification with the will of God in their regard, and as being the appointed mould in which their special perfection is to be cast. In this particular, then, they offer a direct model for our imitation.

Stanislas had scarcely begun his life in the noviciate when an angry letter from his father reached him. It was taken, as was customary, to the master of the novices, who, unable to understand it, for it was written in the Polish language, called Warscewiski to his aid, who translated it to him. This letter was full of threats and indignant reproaches, and contained not a single expression of parental affection. Stanislas had degraded his noble house, and exposed it to public scorn and contempt, by wandering through Germany and Italy in the disguise of a dirty vagabond, and skulking about like a miserable thief, and had ended by inflicting on it a further disgrace by putting on the religious habit in Rome. Let him beware of ever again setting his foot in Poland, for, instead of the golden chains becoming his station, he had ready for him fetters of iron, bound and loaded with which he would have him dragged through the land. Such was the style of this letter, very similar to that in which, as we have already noticed, Kostka had written to Osius, the Pope's legate. Certainly anger had smothered prudence as well as tenderness in the father's heart, for such effusions were ill calculated to win back a child to his parent's arms. But that mattered little in the case of Stanislas, since all the blandishments which might have been used to tempt him to return would have been equally ineffectual. No love of earthly father or mother, no tender entreaties, no sweet memory of home and domestic joys could have lured back the fugitive, even while he was suffering all the privations of his hard journey, and before he had tasted the delights of his Heavenly Father's house on earth; they would not have retarded him one step of his way, nor so much as have obtained from him one backward glance of fond, albeit passing,



regret. His face was set to go up to the City of Peace, there to accomplish the loving sacrifice of himself which his soul burned to make, and nothing could have availed to change the strong purpose of his soul.

But, apart from this consideration, such a letter (as P. Bartoli observes) comes all too late. For many youths, called to religion, and obeying the call, will not as yet have overcome the soft relentings of nature, and will weep and sigh at almost every step they take from their paternal roof to their new abode. Yet by and by, when they have entered on the religious life, and have tasted the milk and honey of the promised land, those sweetnesses of Paradise which God, the tenderest of parents, is wont to give to His babes just weaned from earth and from the joys of home, they laugh when they look back at the melancholy plight in which they came, since now, had they to depart, it seems that their very hearts must break for grief. If such be the wonderful change which passes so commonly over the minds of novices, even when they have brought with them much of the remaining weakness of their human affections, how, may we imagine, had it fared with Stanislas, who so triumphantly trod them under foot before he had experienced the happiness which he was to find in religion! He shed tears, it is true, when he read the letter, but it was only for the blindness of his unhappy father that he wept. He wept at seeing him value so highly what is worthy only of contempt, and despise what is alone worthy of our esteem. Commanded by his superior to make some reply, the holy youth, after imploring the divine guidance, addressed his father in terms, indeed, of filial reverence, but conveying a full and frank expression of his mind. For his justification he had no need to allege any other argument than that of the

Apostles before the council of the Jews. He told him how for eighteen months God had clearly made known to him his vocation to serve Him in the Company of Jesus, and how he had bound himself by vow to obey the command laid upon him. He begged his father, accordingly, on the grounds of Christian piety, and of reason itself, to consider and judge whether greater respect and obedience were not due to God than to men. To Him we belong ; He is the sovereign Master and great Father of all ; and it was only to enable himself to keep his plighted faith to Him that he had been induced to have recourse to flight. As for the threats held out, his father might rest assured that there was no death so cruel which he was not ready to endure rather than fail in the obedience which he owed to God. He did not feel himself worthy to suffer anything for the Lord Jesus, but if He who has suffered so much for us should deign to grant him this favour, there could be nothing which he would esteem so great a happiness. But why should his father repine because God had vouchsafed to admit him into the number of His servants ? Was it not an incomparable happiness for a parent to have a son in the very court of the King of Heaven ? If he loved him—and he had done nothing to forfeit or make him unworthy of a father's love—he ought to rejoice at beholding him where he was, so happy, so blessed, enriched with so true, so great a treasure, that the empire of a thousand worlds could not equal it in value. Far better, then, would it be if, instead of threatening him with punishment, his father would confirm the gift he had made of himself to God, and pray that he might faithfully persevere in His service until death. If he would add his paternal blessing to this effect, he asked it of him on his knees ;

and this blessing would unite itself to that which his Father in Heaven had already bestowed upon him when He accepted him as His son.

With these and such-like expressions Stanislas manifested clearly to his father how entirely detached he was from every earthly tie, and how closely heart and soul were united to God. He evinced the same strong attachment to his vocation, and the inestimable value in which he regarded it, in very similar language when, soon afterwards, Nicolas Lassoeki, a Canon of Cracow, who had just arrived in Rome from Prussia, came to the Jesuits' house to visit him. Having related to his young countryman how, at Helsingborg, he had seen the letter which (as we have already noticed) Kostka had addressed to Cardinal Osius, full of fury and indignation because his son had joined the Company, Stanislas looked at the Canon with that touching expression, that peculiar pathos, which was the nearest approach to melancholy—but how unlike any earthly sadness!—which was ever witnessed on his countenance, and, placing his hand on his bosom, said, “Oh! how differently would my father think and speak if he could look here within, and see the great and precious goods with which God has enriched my soul by calling me to the Company of Jesus! Oh! how far more happy I am in my poverty than if I had acquired the riches of the whole earth; and how much more honoured ought my family to esteem itself in having me the least amongst these great servants of God's house, than if I had succeeded in attaining the greatest worldly grandeur in my own ancestral home! But has not my father other children of whom he may dispose at his will for the aggrandisement of his house? What ingratitude is this to God, who has given him many

sons, and to whom he has the heart to refuse to return even one! And what a thought for a Christian to entertain, that the nobility of his house is dishonoured by a son of his being in the service of the great Monarch of Heaven! Has he ceased to love me that he should grudge me this honour? Could he deal worse with me if he hated me? Who can wonder if I do not hearken to a father who thus acts like an enemy; and that, to a love so hurtful to me, I prefer that of God, who prepares an eternal and priceless reward for those who serve and please Him?" The Canon Nicolas Lassocki never forgot that answer, nor the look which accompanied it, and would often relate how much he had been moved by the supernatural wisdom which revealed itself in every word which fell from the lips of the marvellous youth, and in every feature of his speaking countenance.

The letter which Stanislas had written to his father, reasonable as it was, had no effect in appeasing his anger. It was his child, his own son, his own property, as he reckoned him, which he must have back, and not reasons for acquiescing in a loss and a mortification which he felt to be unendurable. Having, however, utterly failed of success by his display of wrath, and his assertion of paternal authority, he now bade his son Paul write to his brother and endeavour to prevail upon him to return; but by what arguments we know not, as neither the letter itself nor any definite account of its contents has come down to us. It appears, however, that, on the whole, Paul's tone was gentler than that which the injured father, as he considered himself, had adopted, and from which, no doubt, he thought he owed it to his own dignity not to depart. As a brother, Paul could mingle persuasion with

remonstrance, and say or insinuate much to which the parent could not conveniently condescend, yet who might nevertheless be glad that these milder arts should be tried, in the hope that they would prove more effectual than had his own violent menaces. This letter reached the hands of Stanislas very few days before his mortal sickness attacked him ; and all we know is, that he was preparing himself by earnest prayer for his reply, and beseeching the Fathers and his companions to join their supplications to his, that the Holy Spirit might guide his pen so to write of eternal things as to succeed in opening the eyes of his blinded brother to the fallaciousness of the world's maxims. But he did not live to execute his purpose. Meanwhile, his impatient father, who was counting the days till the expected answer should come, unable any longer to endure the suspense, determined on sending Paul to Rome to draw Stanislas, at any cost, from his retreat, and bring him back to Poland. Well ought Kostka to have known that, in the city of the Father of Christendom, and under the paternal protection of the General of the Company, the saintly Borgia, Stanislas was entrenched as in a fortress, and that interest, influence, force, would all be equally powerless to tear the lamb from the fold. Had Paul, therefore, reached Rome in time, he would have found the means at his disposal limited to his own powers of persuasion, and the expected struggle resolve itself into a conflict of argument with his brother. In this conflict Stanislas must have come off victorious, even had he not won over his antagonist to his own side : that triumph was reserved to be achieved by Stanislas, not on earth, but in heaven ; and when Paul entered the Eternal City with the view of prevailing on him to return to the

world, the saint was already pleading before the throne of God for grace to emancipate his brother from its thralldom. We have mentioned these circumstances by anticipation, in order to conclude the little that remained to be said about the Senator Kostka. In the absence of any record, we may hope that the news of his son's death softened his heart, and that Stanislas obtained for him the blessing of making a Christian end.\*

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## CHAPTER IV.

### STANISLAS A MODEL OF NOVICES.

IN any record of the virtues of the saints of God, and especially of those who have dedicated themselves to His service in religion, where the daily life is cast in a uniform mould, there will appear to superficial observers a certain sameness. That peculiar variety which springs either from outward incident, calling forth unexpectedly the specialties of character, or from defect, as in the less perfect, where inward conflict with unsubdued nature produces inequalities, which, like the irregularities of hill and dale in the landscape, or the alternate changes of cloud and sunshine in the visible heavens, relieve monotony, must here be wanting; and it may be asked, must not perfection, and especially religious perfection, be always identical, or at least, so

\* No Life of the Saint which the writer has had the opportunity of consulting, mentions the precise date, or gives any particulars respecting John Kostka's death; but he does not seem to have long survived his son Stanislas.

very similar to itself, as necessarily to produce this kind of sameness, and involve repetition in its description? To a certain extent, and in a certain sense, this may be the case. Viewed in their general aspect, the saints are very like each other; but to those who study them closely, a peculiar variety is discoverable—variety in unity—and this of a most charming description, because resulting from more delicate shades of difference. This variety proceeds partly from the fact that God's work of grace in souls is never perfectly identical, and partly from the fact that grace is built on nature, which it does not destroy. Nature in individuals differs in its characteristics, and so, also, the combination of nature and grace in them must present its differences. As some tissue of rich variegated silk, when turned to catch the light, displays at each movement the diverse tints of its interlacing threads, so the play of grace and nature combined will elicit an enchanting variety of mental and moral colouring. The nature of Stanislas seems to have been eminently lovely and lovable. Although grace prevented him so early, that there was no occasion when Nature could be seen working alone, nevertheless, as its lineaments are never obliterated, even after years of Christian conflict, so are they most clearly discernible in the innocent days of childhood, before the strength of the passions has called for their repression, and while the trials and temptations of the world are as yet things unknown. Thus it is that in the most gracious child Nature is ever transparently visible. Of Stanislas it may be truly said that he always continued to be a gracious child, and his beautiful nature was always perceptible, shining through and in unison with his rich gifts of grace.

We have said that he was successively placed in three

different houses, and we have thus the independent testimony of his companions in each of them. Many of these testimonies appear in the processes, and they all agree in stating that there was something peculiar in his manner of acquitting himself of the most ordinary acts. Things which looked alike in others, in him were different : yet in what did the difference consist ? There was a charm and a grace investing all his actions, which, while it most strongly impressed and sweetly captivated the mind, evaded all definition or description. Whether he prayed, conversed, or simply moved about, it was all the same : Stanislas was not like any one else. This difference did not reside in any eccentricity or singularity, for simplicity always eminently distinguished him ; and if he, so artless, studied anything, it was only that he might seem and be as nothing. Nor was it only as if the beauty of his actions resulted simply from their being performed excellently well ; rather it was that beauty seemed inherent in him, and to belong to him as the blush to the rose and the down to the butterfly's wing. It was more as if he were a creature which, from its very nature, could not but do things in this beautiful way—could not but present this lovely appearance. Hence, embarrassed for a comparison, his associates could think only of that so often used regarding him : he represented to them their notion of an angel. The comparison, as applied to saintly characters, may seem almost trite and hackneyed, but it had a peculiar depth of meaning as employed to describe Stanislas. It was not simply that his purity, perfection, and sweetness were so admirable that men were fain to liken it to that of a being superior to the frailties, and exempt from the taints, of mortal nature ; it was not so much that his perfections made him



resemble an angelic being, as that he seemed to be in very deed an angel who had descended upon earth to act like a human being. Such were the thoughts of the saint's companions when they recalled his memory. Even so might we imagine Tobias pondering in his mind in after days, and going over, in recollection, his journey with Raphael the Archangel : he would remember how the beautiful youth, Azarias, had demeaned himself in each incident of the road, and how, at the time, he knew not what it was, but there was something which stamped all that his guide did and said as differing from the sayings and doings of other men ; but now he knew the reason, and could understand that it was his pure, angelic nature, which had shone through its disguise, and had glorified his simplest acts. Nor was it the saint's companions only who remarked the singular lustre which shone in all he did ; for the master of novices himself, and all his superiors, were in the habit of holding him up to the younger religious as their perfect model, even in minutest things, for their daily imitation.

No mere natural charm could ever have produced the impression which Stanislas made. His habitual sweetness and equality of mind, which nothing ever disturbed, proceeded from his having his heart and thoughts always in heaven, always fixed upon God. Hence he never varied ; for he was always gazing at the Sun of Grace, and that Sun was ever reflected in his countenance. Like the angel, he seemed to depend upon nothing terrene for joy, for comfort, for nourishment, but, while living outwardly a common life, to be all the while as one who, beholding the face of God, "uses an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen

by men."\* There was in him a union of cheerfulness and modesty which was most winning. A smile readily appeared upon his face, but he was never heard to laugh. His laugh was only visible, not audible, because it never passed the limits of an innocent smile. There was a certain gravity, too, which mingled with the mirth of his countenance, the joy of which was a joy which breathed devotion. But if it was the continual occupation of his mind with the thoughts of God and divine things which imparted to Stanislas's bearing and conversation their heavenly character, and even left its impress on his very form and face, it was also the perfect degree in which he possessed all the virtues which he had been studying and imbibing since his cradle in the light of the Divine countenance, which rendered him so specially lovable and engaging. Among these we may notice particularly his humility. So utterly preclusive of every attraction is pride, that worldly society has to adopt in its code and cultivate what we may call a kind of spurious humility, in order to render its members at all tolerable, not to say agreeable, to each other. We may venture to say that, if the natural self-love veiled in the breast of the least proud amongst us were to appear without disguise or control, it would render him at once unbearable to his friends and neighbours. Yet, however well this spurious humility may play its part, it can, at best, make but a poor and ineffective imitation of the genuine. The spurious may, indeed, help a man to avoid offence, but it is the genuine only which wins love.

From his childhood Stanislas had given constant proofs how dear to him was this virtue which forms the only true and solid basis of the Christian character.

\* Tobias xii. 19.

While he was in the world we have seen him shunning as much as possible all its distinctions, loving poverty and simplicity in all things, and making himself the servant of all. The need of assuming a humble disguise when escaping from Vienna was to him one of the happiest of necessities, and his esteem for what was lowly and contemptible in the eyes of men led him to render it even more mean than the occasion demanded. Again, never had he enjoyed such a pure delight as when he filled the office of domestic servant in the seminary at Dillingen ; and now he found similar enjoyment in the humble work in which, according to custom, he was employed, like other novices, in the Roman College, taking the keenest relish in whatever implied a renunciation of all that could serve to confer honour and distinction. Similar instances to those recorded of St. Aloysius, who was animated with the same spirit of contempt of all human and worldly respects, are met with in the brief noviceship of Stanislas. One day, when he was helping in the kitchen, Cardinal Comendoni, who, as already stated, had been Nuncio and Apostolic Legate in Poland, and had subsequently held the same office at the court of the Emperor Maximilian, came unexpectedly to the College. We have seen how he had been the friend of the house of Kostka, and had exerted himself in favour of our saint with the Jesuit Fathers at Vienna, and now, upon his return to Rome, he had come to visit him. Stanislas was no sooner apprised of his arrival than he was hastening off in his scullion's dress, with his sleeves tucked up, to receive his Eminence, not merely disregarding his own appearance, but pleased at the opportunity of self-abasement thus afforded him. A prince of the Church had honoured him with a visit,

and if that honour were paid to him on account of the nobility of his family, he would make himself vile in the house of God, and exhibit by his mean appearance in what utter contempt he held all earthly greatness. His superiors, however, thought it proper to have more regard to the dignity of the Cardinal than to the humility of the novice, and commanded him to put on a more decorous attire. But at all times, and upon all occasions, he manifested the strongest preference for the worst clothes. Whatever was most worn and shabby in the house, he made the object of his earnest request; indeed, this was pretty nearly the only favour, if we except that of performing acts of mortification, which he ever asked. It was as if, having for years been debarred the means of satisfying this taste in the world, he would now, at least, make amends to himself for this long deprivation.

Hence may be gathered how distasteful to Stanislas was any reference to his secular rank and former condition. Not only did he never speak of his connections, or of any circumstance of his past life which might serve to remind his hearers of what he had been in the world, but, if it happened that some one in his presence made allusion to the subject, he dexterously contrived to divert the conversation; yet it was noticed that it was always in such wise as to appear to do so undesignedly, and as if what he said was naturally suggested by the observations of others, lest, while shunning notice and honour, he might be procuring praise to himself from that very circumstance. For Stanislas was far too humble to desire to be reckoned humble; what he desired was to be little in the eyes of men, as he was in his own. But

it was not always so easy to accomplish his object where seculars were concerned. Such little arts as were available with his own brethren, who respected his modesty, and, if not as far advanced in the science, were, like him, students in the school of humility, were quite insufficient to stop the mouths of men of the world, albeit good men. Far, no doubt, was it from their intention, filled as they were with a genuine admiration for the gifted and noble youth who had trampled under foot so generously all the pomp and glory of earth, to cause him the slightest pain; but how few there are, save those who are treading the more perfect way, who are able thoroughly to realise that praise, notice, commendation, or, at least, the manifestation of high appreciation, can ever be in themselves disagreeable, still less distressing, to the subject of them, if only properly administered! The spiritual sense is in them too dull, too obtuse, to render them sympathetically alive to the shrinkings of a saintly humility; so that, just as persons of coarser feelings often, from mere want of tact, wound the delicate sensibilities of the more refined, these individuals, unacquainted by experience with the higher spiritual organisation of the perfect, will, quite unconsciously, inflict pain where nothing is farther from their thoughts. We can well understand how worthy seculars of this description might express, in the presence of Stanislas, their admiration of the sacrifices he had made to enter religion, commending and applauding him for having given up advantages which in his eyes were only deserving of a Christian's contempt. Unable to stop them, he would in all simplicity recall certain verities to their minds. Greatness, he would say, consists not in being great where all things are little, as they are here below;

it is in Heaven only, for which we were born, that greatness will be real, because he who possesses it will possess it in God, who alone is great. And as to nobility of blood, true nobility is to be derived only from the Blood of the Son of God, of whom we are the brethren by adoption, and by whose merits we are constituted and declared heirs of the great Kingdom of Heaven ; and he is the most noble whose heart is fullest of the noble and generous sentiments which become this high extraction. So also he is rich whose riches are not external to himself ; for outward riches profit a man nothing in his utmost need, since he cannot carry aught away with him out of this life, whilst he who has his goods within him, treasures of virtue and of merit, will hereafter receive in exchange a corresponding treasure of glory and of blessedness. By these and similar observations Stanislas would attain the double advantage of diverting the conversation from himself and of edifying his hearers. And this edification was not impaired by any shade of vexation or annoyance which one less perfect than himself, less exercised, at least, in the due balance of every virtue, might have betrayed. Nothing save the blush on his face, which he could not control, revealed any painful emotion. He put aside the praise, it is true, but calmly and without disturbance, as a blessed spirit might have done. His charity was so delicate that he would not risk inflicting a wound when receiving praise any more than when enduring injuries, although the former was by far the most distressing to him and the hardest to bear. Accordingly, those secular visitors would depart enamoured with the virtues which in him bloomed so attractively, and some, it is related, were heard to say, when they returned to their own country, " We have seen Rome and Stanislas."

But not only did the holy youth desire to avoid commendation ; he did not wish to be in any way the subject of conversation. He rarely spoke of himself even in dispraise ; but if circumstances arose when he must needs make allusion to himself, it was invariably of a depreciating character ; so that it was a common saying in the noviciate that Stanislas was his own great calumniator. Indeed, those who lived with him have related that it was impossible to conceive all he did in order to being forgotten, despised, and accounted as nothing. In spirit, he placed himself under the feet of all, and, as one of his biographers has said, looked upon himself as the beast of burden of the house, so that he would have wished to take upon himself all the lowest and meanest offices, and relieve the other novices of their share. Nothing, perhaps, is a greater test of humility than the restraint of the tongue, that untamable member, that "unquiet evil."\* We can hardly imagine a talkative saint ; at any rate, all of whom we have acquired any knowledge have been remarkable for being sparing of their words. The fear of offending with the tongue is not, however, sufficient to account for this universal characteristic. The holy reserve which saints so constantly maintained cannot have been simply a precaution against evil ; we must regard it moreover as the manifestation of a virtue ; and if we are to select any virtue more particularly than another as its root and origin, that virtue, we think, would indisputably be humility. Silence, of course, may spring from various causes, and in evil men often even from pride itself ; but if pride is sometimes taciturn, humility is never loquacious. One of its direct results is a diminution of the flow of the tongue ; for, perhaps,

\* St. James iii. 8.

the greater part of most persons' conversation has its source in some form or other of self-love, at times so subtle as to elude all consciousness, and which nothing but a ray of divine grace would serve to discover and lay bare. Were the occasions of speaking reduced to those where the purest intentions are the sole animating motive, we should see men behaving in this respect very much as the saints have done. Stanislas, accordingly, did not talk much, yet his silence had nothing in it austere or even deliberate. Indeed, nothing in him ever wore the semblance of constraint, all was spontaneous and free, like the bearing of an innocent child. He was silent, because not drawn outward by self-love; his occupation was God, not self; and even at those recurring times when conversation is not only proper but in a sense required, such as are the hours of recreation in a religious house, he preferred, when the choice was left him, to be a listener, considering himself as the least of all, the lowest of all, a mere learner and beginner, to whom it was a great advantage to hearken to others and observe them, that he might gather something for his own edification and instruction.

But his companions well knew what profit they would derive from hearing him speak, and it was their object always to draw him into conversation. Stanislas had ever, as we have already noticed, been distinguished for his sound judgment, his powers of penetration and discrimination, and for prudence, tact, and reflection, which, even as natural qualities, contributed to give weight and solidity to all his utterances; while the exceeding simplicity and childlike frankness of his disposition lent them a familiar charm, such as is not always, nor, perhaps, often, allied with an early maturity



of character. What, then, may we imagine was the effect of this combination of precious qualities, all interpenetrated, illuminated, and elevated by the abundance of grace which dwelt in this elect soul! In addition to the unusual union of fervour, which is a quality more common in youth, with the most deliberate judgment and consummate prudence, which at that age are very rare,—a union which imparted so much worth to all that fell from the lips of Stanislas,—he possessed also a wonderful power of gaining an entrance into the minds and hearts of others, and creating a deep impression on them. This is a gift which, even in the natural order, is attendant in its measure on reality and genuineness. It constitutes half or three parts of the source of true eloquence; the intimate and earnest conviction of the speaker must precede and accompany what he says, or it will fall dead and powerless on the ear. It is the living truth in the mind of him who utters it which renders words, and often very simple words, effective. In a higher order—that is, where these words are accompanied by abundant grace—they derive therefrom a kind of divine life and energy which makes it true to say of such Christians in a lower, but a very real, sense what was said of their Divine Head, that their words are “with power.”\* Such power, then, attended the deep though simple words of the young novice; and although, as we have said, he was silent by preference, nevertheless it was not difficult to draw forth one so accessible, so ready to oblige, so full of brotherly love. He had a peculiar talent of narrating well and graphically; and his retentive memory was stored with anecdotes illustrative of every virtue, which he had read in the Lives of Saints, or had heard

\* St. Luke iv. 32.

recounted. These, when the occasion presented itself, he would retail, and his hearers would feel as if he must himself have seen what he related,—nay, as if they were themselves witnessing what he described with so much life and freshness.

But his most frequent topics of conversation, and those in which he took the greatest delight, as did others in hearing him discourse upon them, were the perfections and glories of the holy Mother of God, and the blessings he had received by joining the Company. Of the first we shall speak when we revert to the subject of Stanislas's love for Mary; here we shall notice only the second, upon which he was also most eloquent. We have seen what was the innocency and perfection of his life in the world, the splendour of which had made those who knew him compare him to an angel, and had attracted to him a veneration akin to that paid to saints. He came to the Company with this character already stamped upon him; nay, more: not only had the praise and honour of men waited on him and followed him, but he had received heavenly ministrations; twice had he been supernaturally communicated by angelic hands; glorified saints had visited him; the Queen of Angels and of Saints had stood by his bedside, and, smiling upon him, had addressed him as her dear son, and had placed her Divine Infant in his arms; the Infant Jesus Himself had caressed him, and suffered him to caress Him in turn, and to press Him to his bosom. What greater blessings, one might think, could any place or state of life bring to him? Nevertheless, when he compared the past with the present, he esteemed his life in the world so miserably inferior that, calling to mind how he had for six whole months delayed responding to the

call of God by not manifesting his vocation to the Fathers, and considering the risk to which he thereby exposed himself of God, as he said, growing weary of him, as of one who repaid His favours with ingratitude, and leaving him to live on in the world, and, perhaps—who knows?—as most men live in the world, he shuddered at the thought, and wept like one inconsolable. All good things, he would say, had come to him with the Company, adopting the words of the inspired writer when speaking of heavenly wisdom; and never could he discourse of these good things without becoming inwardly so inflamed with love as to shed tears of devout and holy joy. It was the thought of being so wholly and entirely God's which thus transported him,—the thought of having given himself to God by a perpetual and irrevocable donation, and, on the other hand, of God having thus become in a peculiar way his God and his all: to live thus on earth, what was it but to anticipate the blessedness of Heaven! Much, he said, we could give to God in the world, but to that much there lacked always the gift of self, so long as we retained the possession of ourselves by the free command of our own actions; and, by withholding this, we withhold the best we have to give. One consequence of this gift, and this placing of ourselves at the disposal of God's ministers and representatives, was the security we thereby enjoy of always fulfilling the will of God. If regard, therefore, was had only to self-interest, the consciousness of making certain and immense gain by every action, and thus daily accumulating treasures of merit and corresponding increment of glory, must be a source of lively consolation. Add to which the great pledge of predestination implied in a special call to God's service,

and the promise of special aids for advance in holiness and perseverance in grace; whereas so many good youths, living in the world, become bad men, and finish with a wicked and impenitent old age. What life, then, can be happier than life in religion, and what death so blessed and full of consolation as that which is to close it? Stanislas would never weary of thus dwelling on the felicity of the life of his election, nor did his companions ever weary of hearing him descant upon the theme.

Akin to the virtue of humility is the love of mortification, for which Stanislas had always exhibited the strongest attraction, we might rather say avidity. When permitted to take a repast of bread and water, kneeling or seated on the floor, or to perform any such-like acts of mortification as are usual in religious houses, it was easy to perceive the keen satisfaction he experienced. These might be called the festivals of his humility, which he celebrated with joy and exultation of spirit. Notwithstanding his ardent desire for those severe penitential exercises which we have seen him practise with so much unsparing rigour while in the world, he not only submitted himself with the most prompt obedience to any restriction which his superiors judged proper in this respect, but the least sign or hint on their part was sufficient instantaneously to check his ardour; and we have the testimony of his superior, Giulio Fazj, a great master of the spiritual life, that, in his wide experience, he had never seen obedience in all its forms and degrees practised with more consummate perfection than by Stanislas; indeed, he did not think it possible to carry it further. He was persuaded that no command could have been laid upon him, however strange or impossible of execution it might have appeared,

which he would not at once have addressed himself to perform, without experiencing so much as the slightest movement of disinclination; because in the voice of his superiors Stanislas believed that he heard the voice of God, and this rendered him, as Fazj expressed himself, omnipotent; for, if God has frequently rewarded the merit of perfect trustful obedience by miracles, none could have appeared more worthy of such a reward than Stanislas. His soul was in a perpetual state of preparation to go, come, run, walk, stand, according to the word of command. It could not be called indifference to whatever act might be required; rather it was a ready, universal zeal, such as animated the prophet when the seraph touched his lips with the live coal from the altar.\* That live coal was a spark of the pure love of God; and for God's pure love, which burned so brightly in his soul, Stanislas loved ardently, and embraced fervently by anticipation, whatever His will might signify to him. "If you were commanded to start immediately for the Indies, what provision would you make for the journey?" asked his superior of him one day. Without hesitation, Stanislas answered, "I would provide myself with a good cap of patience, a double mantle of charity to God and to my neighbour, and a strong pair of shoes of mortification, and then off at once—*andiam subito*:" an answer which may be said to be characteristic both of the saint's readiness of spirit and his promptness at reply.

But he was as reverentially careful to limit himself to what was enjoined, as he was ardent to fulfil it to the utmost. This is a very delicate point in obedience, and the more so because there is a natural temptation in those who are animated with the desire to maintain

\* Isaias vi. 8.

this virtue, to allow their zeal to carry them further than the command, partly from an admixture of natural eagerness with the more spiritual motive, and partly from other remaining imperfect or faulty motives, such as an over-anxious wish to please man, instead of regarding God only and man only for God, or some secret and subtle form of vanity. Perfect purity of motive cannot, therefore, be inferred with certainty from the greatest amount of zeal, but it may justly be concluded to exist where the obedience is at once fervent, punctual, and regulated. We need hardly recall the story of the monk of the desert, who made two baskets instead of one, and received a penance for his officiousness, where he expected only commendation for his diligence. One day when our saint and Claudio Acquaviva, who, though his senior by many years, was also, as we have seen, his brother novice, were employed together in the work of the kitchen, the cook bade them remove a pile of faggots, specifying the exact size of each load. But Claudio, thinking that the cook had been over-fearful of taxing their strength, and that they could without inconvenience carry a heavier burden, made a slight addition to the measure indicated. Not so Stanislas; he was not thus to be led away by his fervour, which, to say no more, was nowise inferior to that of Acquaviva. Looking at him, therefore, with a modest smile on his face, he said, "Ah! why should we deprive ourselves of the merit of obedience? The cook said so many pieces and no more." He regarded the cook in the light of his superior for the time being, since they had been deputed to assist him, and therefore he must be punctually obeyed. Claudio at once assented, esteeming his young companion to be in the right, and immediately rectified his error by laying aside the

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additional wood, inwardly condemning himself for having been about, though inadvertently, to rob obedience of its best quality, simplicity.\*

This little incident served to confirm in Acquaviva the high estimate which from the very first he had formed of the spirit of Stanislas, when (as related) he judged that, young as he was and only just entered as a disciple in the school of evangelic perfection, he was already fit to be a master therein. Years after, when General of the Order, Claudio Acquaviva was in the habit of relating this anecdote in his public exhortations to the practice of the virtue of obedience; indeed, it is by that means that we have obtained the knowledge of it. Forty-four years after it occurred, when Claudio, as General, had to grant a licence for the publication of a Life of St. Stanislas at Rome, he appended thereto this memorable testimony, wherein, amongst the other virtues which he had enjoyed the personal opportunity of admiring in this perfect model of novices, he records in particular this one, his consummate obedience:—“This licence,” he says, “we grant the more willingly, that we may render this homage and proof of devout remembrance to our holy brother and co-novice. For it pleased the Sovereign Goodness that we should be spectators of his most innocent life, and of his perfect exercise of every virtue, especially of obedience, prayer, union with God, and charity; that we should enjoy

\* In the noviciate house of the Jesuit Fathers at Angers there is, in one of the corridors, a series of paintings representing the principal recorded passages in the life of Stanislas. Each has its appropriate inscription. That which pours the incident mentioned above is peculiarly pleasing. The saint, depicted with his aureole, is carrying two or three little pieces of wood on his arm towards the kitchen, and underneath is written, “*Errabit si plura ferat*—(He will err if he carry more).”

for some time his most holy conversation with particular intimacy, and have a near view of those treasures of heavenly graces with which this blessed soul was filled."\* To this eulogium he further added his own testimony to the truth of all that was related in the work concerning the life led by this holy youth in religion, having himself been a personal witness of the greater portion.

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## CHAPTER V.

### STANISLAS'S FILLIAL DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED MOTHER OF GOD.

WE have seen with what fervour and eloquence Stanislas would descant on the happiness of being a member of the Company of Jesus. The Company was to him as his mother on earth, who had received him in her embrace when he fled from the cold wilderness of the world to her sheltering arms; but he had a Mother in Heaven, and of her he spoke yet more frequently, and with a delight still more exuberant. Her he had loved from his cradle, and never had he called her by any other name than his dearest Mother, while the very mention of her was at any time sufficient to send the

\* "Quod eo libentius concedimus, ut hoc obsequium et memoris devotique animi documentum sancto fratri ac tyrocinii nostri commilitoni reddamus. Placuit enim Summæ Bonitati, ut spectatores essemus vitæ ejus innocentissimæ, et exemplorum in omni virtute, ac præsertim in obedientia, ac oratione, conjunctioneque cum Deo, et charitate perfectissimorum; et aliquanto etiam interius usu ejus sanctissimo frueremur ac propius inspiceremus thesauros cœlestium gratiarum, quibus benedicta illa anima plena erat."



warm blood to his cheek and fill his eyes with tears of tenderness. With Stanislas to know what was worthy of love was at once to love it; no sooner, therefore, had he heard of Mary than he loved her. His heart had always followed his understanding. We know too well what a gap there often is between the two, even in simple childhood; and, alas! how much wider that gap becomes in later years, when we have long contracted the habit of knowing truths without producing their corresponding acts. Stanislas had never had experience of a state in which the soul sees and knows it ought to love, yet remains dead and cold, or, at least, loves, in no proportionate degree; as is exhibited in the case of those who confess, and even appreciate, in a way, the paramount claims which God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, has upon them, yet are so little affected by this conviction as to live almost as if they were strangers to it. True it is that God, according to His inscrutable predestinating love, gives more abundant light and more powerful movements of grace in infancy to souls which are the objects of His peculiar predilection and complacency, and amongst these that of the boy-saint, Stanislas, must pre-eminently be reckoned. So early and powerful in his case was the action of preventing grace, that the Holy Spirit seemed to have been preparing his understanding, even before the dawn of reason, with what resembled infused knowledge; so that, when the several mysteries of the faith were first propounded to his tender mind, he seemed rather to recognise than to learn them. They had not to be inculcated or urged upon him; he embraced them at once, as the proper occupation and food of his intellect and his affections, and he never relaxed his hold of them. But in this first act, as well as in the succes-

sion of acts with which it was habitually followed, his will freely co-operated with the grace which elicited them and made them meritorious ; and in this faithful and loving correspondence we behold the cause of the wonderful strides in sanctity which he made in so brief a time. It would, indeed, require a kind of divine arithmetic to calculate what may be the rate of advance in grace of a soul where such perfect correspondence of will exists. Anyhow, it could not be computed by the rule of addition, but, to pursue the simile, would resemble rather a geometrical progression. In Stanislas the old Adam seemed scarce to have been allowed space or opportunity to raise his head, move, or so much as breathe ; and this circumstance of his marvellous—and, may we not say, very exceptional?—spiritual life peculiarly assimilated him to his heavenly Mother, who alone enjoyed the privilege of immunity from all taint of fallen nature, but whose faithful correspondence with grace he so admirably copied. We cannot wonder, therefore, if one who so loved and imitated her was a most favourite child of the Immaculate Mother ; and when we recollect what miraculous testimonies of her love he had received, even to the giving of her Divine Son into his arms, neither can we feel surprised that her praises were a theme most dear to Stanislas, and constantly on his lips.

It was so charming to hear him talk of Mary, and such profit did his hearers, by their own testimony, derive therefrom, that not only would the novices, his companions, but even the oldest and most venerable amongst the Fathers, often use some innocent artifice to prompt him to speak of her, though, indeed, little art was needed, for (to adopt Bartoli's comparison) when the bed of the stream is full to the brim, nothing is

wanted but to give its waters a channel for exit, in order to make them flow into the fields. Not only was the heart of Stanislas brimful of love for the divine Mother, but his mind was stored with countless examples of her goodness and her benign power—miracles of healing wrought by her, graces bestowed, visions and revelations vouchsafed—which he had read or heard and had treasured up in his memory, and which he would retail with all that charm of manner which his own sweetness added to so sweet a theme. When he descanted on her transcendent merits and the ineffable glory to which God has exalted her, he had a language quite his own; he invented new names and epithets to render the ideas which were present to his mind; and, beautiful and expressive as these were, it was plain to those who listened that something fuller, deeper, more divine, was implied in them, which he felt himself unable to impart, and which, perhaps, it was not given to the tongue of man to utter. These sentiments and impressions which he was powerless to translate into words were sometimes too strong and vivid for him to bear without passing into a state of ecstasy. Thus Mary's banished child, still an exile, even in the fostering arms of the Company, his earthly paradise, so long as he could not sun himself in the presence and gaze on the countenance of his Mother, used, as heretofore at Vienna, to fall into rapture at the pathetic words of the *Salve Regina*.

Stanislas never began any action, never changed his employment, without seeking his Mother's blessing, and this he did by turning himself in the direction in which he knew there to be some famous image of her, a thing very easy to do in Rome, which possesses so many. Bartoli tells us that at Sant' Andrea the novices in his

day were still in the habit of imitating Stanislas by turning towards Santa Maria Maggiore the first thing on rising in the morning and the last thing before they lay down at night, and making an obeisance to the Mother of God, to beseech her blessing. Any one who looked at Stanislas while praying might almost have known with certainty if his mind were occupied with thoughts of Mary, from the peculiar sweetness and affectionate joyousness of his countenance. It was as though he were looking up into her face, and gazing at her with his bodily eyes. One day he was desired to accompany P. Emanuele de Sà, a learned theologian, on a visit to Santa Maria Maggiore. It was Mary's great festal day at that church, the feast of Our Lady ad Nives, and the Father, as the occasion naturally suggested, but in fact designedly, began to talk of her to his young companion, and asked him if he loved her much. For a moment the holy youth seemed scarcely able to frame a reply; then, with one of those pathetic glances of his so impossible to describe, he exclaimed, "What a question for your Reverence to ask me! It is enough to say she is my Mother." They were simple words; there was nothing remarkable in them; indeed, any good Catholic might have sincerely said as much—for do we not all call Mary our mother, and confess at least that we owe her the devoted affection of children?—but in the mouth of Stanislas these simple words had a far deeper significance, and carried with them such a supernatural sweetness and savour, that P. de Sà afterwards declared that they seemed to him as if uttered by a more than mortal tongue. He spoke of them to Borgia, who also was a devout servant of Mary, and who shared the spiritual consolation which he had himself derived from them. This was just ten days before the saint's blessed death.

Not only was Stanislas's exceeding love for the Mother of God well known in the college, but the filial confidence with which he asked and obtained all he desired from her was to all so familiar a fact, that the novices were in the habit of saying that if you wanted any grace from the Queen of Heaven, you must apply to Stanislas, for she never refused him anything. And Stanislas was himself very confident that he never would be denied any request by his Mother; not that he placed his reliance on his own favour with her, but that he had the most unbounded trust in her maternal love, of which he had such abundant experience. Indeed, the remembrance of all her goodness to him would at times so overcome him, that he could only exclaim with tears, "Ah, my dear Mother, I cannot explain myself; but you know what my heart feels for you." Intense love and fervour have not many words; when they find words at all, these assume the form rather of ejaculation than of petition, or they simply expose their wants, or the wants of those for whom they are pleading—like the divine Mother herself, when she said to Jesus at the marriage feast, "They have no wine." Thus Stanislas, when presenting a petition either for himself or for others who had requested his prayers, would only say, "My dear Mother, I have need of you in this matter." To state his need seemed enough to him; and it *was* enough. If Axa had only to sigh for her father Caleb at once to give her "the upper and nether watery ground,"\* much more was it sufficient for Stanislas but to have a wish and bring it to the feet of Mary for her to accord his desire, even before he had expressed it.

\* Judges i. 14, 15.

If Stanislas himself could not find words to declare his love for Mary, and his gratitude for all her benefits to him, it cannot be surprising that those who have written the history of his pure life are at a loss for language to describe it. Following in their traces, we can only add that, with his mind full of the sublimest conceptions of her exalted merits and greatness—conceptions suggested and fed by his continual meditations on a subject so sweet to his spiritual palate—and with his heart full of a love the fervour of which was proportioned to the inward vision of his intellect, the enraptured youth seemed sometimes unable to speak of anything else, and his language, all inadequate as it appeared to himself, had such force and power as to kindle in the breast of his auditors a longing desire to become, like him, worthy servants of so glorious a Queen. It is almost needless to say with what devotion he made preparation for her special festivals, as the year brought them round in succession. The ingenuity of his love was always suggesting to him some fresh act of homage to pay to her; and he invariably made fervent novenas on these occasions, and added (as P. Longaro expresses it) a larger dose of penance. And here we may observe, although the subject has already been alluded to, that the penitential spirit which Stanislas had always manifested, chastising his innocent flesh whilst in the world as unsparingly as if he had been the greatest of sinners, had a particular connection with his love of purity, that virtue of which Mary is the special protectress as well as model. To guard that virtue was his main object, not only in the austerities which he performed, but in his retired life, whereby he drew upon himself the cruel persecution of his brother. For Stanislas, as we have seen, was by

nature neither cold nor unimpassioned. Although, as he comes before us, we think of him with his affections all spiritualised, and his love all given to God or for God, and despising the world as utterly contemptible, yet, viewing him simply in his natural qualities, we must remember that he had a heart which could love most fervently, and a disposition and temperament full of ardour. Add to this his exceeding beauty, so often mentioned that we must believe there was something in it preternaturally charming, his manners so exquisitely sweet and winning, his refined tact, his remarkable talents, and all the other mental gifts with which he was richly dowered, and then, to crown all, his noble birth, no slight set-off in the eyes of men to all these personal merits, serving as it does to enhance their value, like some precious frame to a choice picture—when we have considered all these, what, may we think, the world would have been to Stanislas, and what influence might it have had upon him, powerfully attracted towards him as it would surely have been, and powerfully attracting in its turn! He shrank from it, as we before noticed, as by a kind of holy instinct.

More meritorious and more admirable, perhaps, than his fasts, and disciplines, and hair-shirts, and long watches, for these all came easy to him, was his being willing to make an enemy of his brother Paul, whom he tenderly loved, rather than consent to what he esteemed an offence against God, nay, more, consent to run the smallest risk of such offence. We have seen at what cost he persevered in this course for two years. During that space of time he endured what we may call a kind of prolonged martyrdom, and all this, not to combat those solicitations of evil which, by God's grace and Mary's patronage, he had never experienced, but to

shield his virginal purity from the danger of even so much as the slightest temptation. And the Virgin of virgins obtained for him in recompense, not only that immunity from temptations of the flesh which he so dearly prized, but also the gift of inspiring the love of purity in all who looked on his pure and virginal countenance. To look at Stanislas acted like a species of exorcism on those whom the spirit of evil was vexing with his temptations, and even his pictures had afterwards a like effect. Indeed, there was no kind of temptation from which his co-novices did not confidently expect deliverance, if Stanislas would but recommend them to God and to His Blessed Mother. One of them, Mario Franchi by name, has recorded his personal experience in the processes. He was exactly of the same age as Stanislas, and they were employed together at the same humble offices in the Roman College, to which allusion has already been made. He related how he would often, unobserved, fix his eyes upon him and consider him, and he declared that he used to think at the time that it was impossible to conceive anything, in appearance and in mind, so similar to an angel as was his blessed companion. He described his feelings while gazing at him as those of the highest veneration, his soul being at the same time excited to renewed devotion by contemplating that, so to say, visible splendour of purity which made the heart enamoured of Paradise. Once in particular he related (without, however, specifying what was the nature of his temptation) how, finding himself in the most distressing perturbation of mind, and meeting Stanislas, he recommended himself to his prayers, and how Stanislas addressed to him cheerful and gentle words, and, going with him into the



church of the College, prayed awhile before the Blessed Sacrament, when instantly the temptation vanished, and left his soul in a state of perfect peace and consolation.

In the little that remains to us to tell of this saint's too brief life, we shall meet at every step fresh proofs of his unutterable love of her whose perfections and claims on our love are, indeed, alike unutterable by mortal tongue. In conclusion, we would make only one observation. All the saints have loved Mary, and have loved purity; in this Stanislas was not singular. But these two united loves were certainly manifested in him with a singular lustre; in him they may be said to have been prominently attractive; and may we not believe that this was not without a special reason, and that God, who designed to make Stanislas the patron and model of youth, would in him invest with a peculiar visible charm those virtues which are at once their road to perfection and the sure safeguard of their innocency? If they would keep that priceless jewel which rendered this young saint so beautiful even in life, and now makes him shine so gloriously amidst the splendours of the saints, let them love Mary,—let them love her as Stanislas loved her,—let them, at least, love her as much as they can, for to love her too much is impossible, if we might not rather say that to love her as she fully deserves is beyond our poor ability; and not to youth only is the lesson addressed, but to all of us, to all who would make sure of their eternal predestination. When we contemplate Stanislas borne on the wings of grace, flying rather than running in the path of the just, let us remember his incomparable love for her whom we call *Mater divinæ gratiæ*. The Ever-Blessed Trinity elects all whom Mary with maternal affection commends, and she commends all who have

recourse to her. Nor let us marvel that the ministry of this great gift of final perseverance should be entrusted to the Mother of God; for what is too great to believe of her to whom God gave Himself, and who herself gave God to men?\*

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## CHAPTER VI

### STANISLAS'S BURNING CHARITY AND PERFECT UNION WITH GOD.

WE have now to speak of that which is first and which is last, the Alpha and the Omega of the Christian's life, that in which all else, whether it be virtue or devotion, must have its origin, to which it again tends, and which it finally centres,—that love in and for which are all other true and holy loves, the love of God. The human soul, being made to the image of its Creator, is made to know and to love. It was made to know God, the Supreme Good, who is therefore the Supreme Love; and if the children of the Church, whom God has called to His knowledge, do not all love Him as they are bound to love Him, it is because they turn away their eyes to creatures; and if, even while reserving the first place to God and not allowing creatures entirely to fill their heart, they do not give the whole to Him who claims it all, they so far love them to the detriment of the Supreme Love. As much as they

\* "Tota Increata Trias eliget, prædestinabit quosquos et quotquot materno affectu Maria commendaverit. Nec mirum quod Maria incomparabilis hujus doni administra sit; cum illi Deus donarit Seipsum, et illa hominibus donarit Deum."—*Philosophia Sacra, sive Vita D. Stanislai Kostka, S.J., cap. xxv.*

love creatures for their own sakes, so much do they love God less. The more, then, the heart can be emptied of creatures and of self, the more will the pure love of God pour in to fill the void made to receive Him. But how difficult it is to turn out enemies in possession no one need be reminded, although we are not a little apt to reverse the difficulty in our mode of parlance and in our habit of thought, and talk of the difficulty of acquiring the love of God, whereas the difficulty all lies in getting ourselves quit of these other loves.

Stanislas never had to eject these usurpers of the heart. When the light of reason dawned on his young soul, the sun of grace at the same time beamed brightly on it. In the splendour of its rays was revealed to his infant mind a spiritual world all fair and bright, before which the visible world paled and lost all its attractions. We have seen how he used often to say to his brother, "I was not born for temporal things, but for eternal:" this he had felt even from his babyhood, and so he had not to turn away from earthly things, on which he had never gazed; he had not to sweep from his heart the dross and dust of the world without, which he had never admitted, nor to banish its phantoms from his imagination, which had never found entrance there. How full of the love of God was this pure and holy soul may, therefore, be inferred from this one fact, that no other love had ever there set up its claim; and thus the Holy Spirit, as we have seen, was also his first Instructor, taking him by the hand, as it were, from childhood, and introducing him into close familiarity with the sublimest things of God. Who can tell to what heights the spirit of this young child was raised, or to what depths it was allowed

to penetrate, by Him who loves to reveal Himself to little ones? These are secrets inscrutable to us, but we may piously conjecture that the life of the child Stanislas was like one perpetual contemplative vision; for, when we recall to mind the hours which he used to spend on his knees hidden in some corner, where he would often be found as though alienated from all consciousness, or prostrate with his face on the floor in an ecstatic swoon, it is impossible to imagine that he had been introduced into this contemplative state by previous meditation and reflection upon divine mysteries, a process which at his tender age would have been beyond his powers. We are, therefore, led to the irresistible conclusion that his loving Father had, as we may say, taken him up into His bosom and fed him with the milk of divine charity, without the necessity on his part of that mental manducation of the verities of faith by which we are ordinarily compelled to prepare our minds in order to receive nourishment thereby, and to grow in grace.\*

Let us now cast a glance at what Stanislas had be-

\* St. Teresa, speaking of the different states of the soul in the prayer of contemplative union, says, in her *Road to Perfection*, when alluding to the suspension of the discursive faculties, "Our Lord put into my mind one day, when engaged in prayer, a comparison which, I think, explains this matter very clearly: the soul in this state resembles a sucking infant into whose mouth its mother, fondling it in her arms, causes the milk to distil without its even moving its lips. In like manner, in this sort of prayer, it happens that the will loves without the understanding having in any way contributed by its labour, because it is our Lord's pleasure that, without having reflected thereon, the soul should know that it is with Him, and be contented to suck the milk with which He fills its mouth, and taste its sweetness, without seeking to know in what manner it derives this enjoyment, nor what it is that it enjoys."

come, after fruitful years of correspondence with grace and accumulation of merits, in prayer, and in divine union, in thinking of God and in loving God, the twin homage of intellect and heart to Him who made them that He might fill them with Himself, who is the Ineffable and Eternal Joy and Love. And, first, we gather from the testimony of him who knew every secret of the soul of Stanislas, his Superior, P. Giulio Fazj, that, however long he might remain in meditation and prayer, he never suffered the slightest temporary distraction of mind, his thoughts never swerving aside from God, on whom his mental eye was riveted. P. Skarga, one of the Polish biographers of our saint, alluding to P. Fazj's testimony that the thoughts of Stanislas never diverged in prayer, never poured themselves forth on one side or the other, says, "Whither should the thoughts have diverged of one who was already, as it were, submerged in the ocean of God's love, from which he could not issue, whichever way he turned, his very body itself having become, as it were, fashioned to this mode of life?" How rare is this privilege of perfect freedom from importunate distractions need hardly be observed. It is recorded as a very exceptional grace in the lives of certain saints. Those who are familiar with the life of St. Aloysius Gonzaga will remember by what heroic efforts he attained to this blessed immunity, and arrived at being able to think, or not to think, of anything he pleased and just as he pleased. We do not hear of any laborious exertions on the part of Stanislas to obtain this privilege. Of course this is but negative evidence, still it is remarkable that in all that is written of him we never find any allusion to what may be called effort,—that is to say, such effort as implies the encounter of resistance or difficulty;

for we need scarcely observe that his whole course was an unintermitting pressing forward in the way of perfection. We may, therefore, reasonably infer that this was, like so many others of his glorious privileges, a pure gift of the liberality of his Heavenly Father, although we may at the same time regard it as the reward of his never having loved anything, thought of anything, looked to anything, but God only. God was to his soul as a mighty magnet, the operation of which, being not fitful or periodical, but continual and unabated, was also day and night producing its unceasing and abiding effects. For it was not in prayer only that Stanislas was attracted to God. The ancient monks used to say, "*Valde parum orat, qui orat tantum cum flectit genua*—He prays very little, who prays only when he bends his knees." But Stanislas's heart was at all moments and in all circumstances being drawn to God, so that—as his countryman Warscewiski, who enjoyed such close intimacy with him, averred—after deducting the temporary oblivion of sleep, Stanislas was always engaged in the act of thinking of God and of loving God; his outward occupations not interfering in any way with this inward application of his mind. The angels possess this power in virtue of the perfection of their nature, and the saints have possessed it, in a higher or a less degree, in proportion to their resemblance to these blessed spirits. Of Stanislas, a master in theology and his co-novice could depose on oath, as recorded in the processes, "He proceeded as one entirely absorbed, and quite alienated from human things; he never appeared to be thinking of anything but divine things."\*

\* "*Ita incedebat, ut omnino absorptus, et a rebus humanis plane alienus, nihilque nisi de rebus divinis cogitare videretur.*"

eyes always looked as though moist with a tear, but it was a radiant tear, as of one who had just received Communion, and had yet in his mouth the savour of its spiritual sweetness; moreover, they were almost always raised heavenward, whether it were from the impression left upon them from his spirit having recently been engaged in prayer, so that, like the Apostles on Mount Olivet, who continued gazing upwards even after the cloud had veiled their Lord from their sight, he, too, retained an attitude of contemplation even after its object was withdrawn, or that, as seems more likely, his heart being always in heaven with God, his eyes naturally and unconsciously followed it. As one who on the shore of some distant land loves to turn his eyes across the wide ocean which separates him from his home, and often instinctively gazes in the direction where his native country lies, although it is far beyond his ken, so Stanislas, all whose affections were in his heavenly Fatherland, looked upwards because habitually ready and longing to depart.

Such was our saint in appearance, even when not immediately engaged in the exercise of prayer, but he no sooner presented himself before God in a deliberate act of adoration than, as if overcome by tenderness and joy, he melted into tears, tears so abundant, that Cardinal Bellarmine was fain to describe them as streaming in floods from his eyes.\* His whole countenance at the same time was irradiated, as by a celestial light, and many even testified to having frequently seen his face retaining this brilliancy after communing with God, as the face of Moses was, unknown to him-

\* "Flumina lacymarum, præsertim in precibus, fundere videbatur."

self, surrounded with rays of light when he descended from the Mount "*ex consortio Domini*—from the conversation of the Lord." What wonder, then, that the novices, when performing some devout exercise in common, used every expedient to place themselves in his vicinity, or, at least, in some position where they could catch a glimpse of their saintly companion. Nor did this desire proceed from mere pious curiosity or natural admiration. Experience had told them that the very sight of Stanislas praying fanned the flame of devotion in their own bosoms. The ardour with which that fire burned in his own breast, where it had been gathering strength every day of his conscious existence, may be in some degree conceived from the effects which it produced upon his outward frame. His frequent raptures and swoons, and the inward burning heat in his heart, the effects of which made themselves sensibly felt and could not be concealed, gave palpable proof of its intensity. The Superior, surprised at finding him one bitter cold morning walking to and fro in the little garden of the noviciate, asked him why he was there, at such an unusual hour, exposed to so cold a wind. The question was one which confounded the humility of the holy youth, but it was a superior who asked it, and, with that perfect candour and simplicity which distinguished him, Stanislas replied that, as he finished his prayer a little while before, a heat so excessive had kindled in his heart that, unable to bear its fervour, he had been forced to seek some refreshment in the open air. These attacks were frequent with him, and more than once were considered to have imperilled his very life. Those about him, when they perceived their approach, fled in all haste to loosen his collar, and would find his chest in such a state of



burning heat as to make it needful to apply cloths, dipped in cold water, to allay the supernatural fever caused by divine love. St. Francis de Sales, in his *Treatise on the Love of God*, alludes to this circumstance as one well known to have been of frequent occurrence. "The blessed youth, Stanislas Kostka," he says, "was seized with such paroxysms of love of his Saviour, that many a time he fainted and swooned away, and they were obliged to apply to his chest linen, dipped in cold water, to moderate the violence of the ardour which he felt."\*

His superiors, alarmed for his life, charged three persons expressly to watch him, in order that when the paroxysms came on, some one should be at hand to administer the proper restoratives. One of these was P. Leglio Sanguigni, a noble Roman, assistant colleague of the master of the novices; another was P. Agostino Mazzini, who had previously practised medicine at Padua, and was now going through his noviciate; the third was P. Lionardo Magnani. Others also were directed to have a general care of him. It may be noticed, however, that the health of Stanislas was in other respects good. Though he cannot be said to have been of a robust constitution, his organisation being delicate rather than otherwise, he had no malady about him of the natural order, and other saints have experienced these supernatural ardours, and yet have lived to a good age,—for instance, St. Philip Neri. The superiors of Stanislas judged it a necessary precaution to abridge the length of his meditations, as furnishing fuel to this internal fever, and to break up his

\* Book vi., chapter xv., in which the saint is treating "Of the loving languor of a soul which has received the wound of love."

time by employing him in occupations calculated to furnish some little distraction to the mind, and thus from their nature less favourable to a state of continued contemplation. Stanislas meekly and cheerfully obeyed; it would be little to say that he offered no remonstrance and expressed no regret, for in his superiors he saw God only, and so perfectly loved His holy will alone that, whatever injunction they laid upon him, it was equally dear to him and equally sacred in his eyes. To obey God is better than to contemplate Him, when the two are incompatible; Stanislas, therefore, seconded the desire of his superiors, so far as the matter rested with him; but, in fact, it did not rest with him. God who, as a peaceable Conqueror, had long since entered the citadel of his soul, the spiritual Sion of his heart, and had taken possession of all his faculties of mind and body, was the Master, and He would do what He pleased in His own kingdom. If He inspired the directors of Stanislas to command him to pray less, and bade Stanislas obey His voice thus made audible to him, He rendered the command virtually inoperative, for at all times and in all places his soul, whether he would or no, was immersed in the ocean of divine love, and filled, as it were, with its fiery torrents. He had as little power to escape from it as we have to fly from the circumambient atmosphere, or as a vessel has to refuse the liquid which is poured into it. We may here add the solemn juridical testimony of P. Oborski, who was singularly dear to Stanislas. It will serve to remind us that, if God dealt thus liberally with Stanislas in the last years of his life, we have the less reason for surprise when we recall the marvellous union with God in prayer and the high state of contemplation in which we find him,

as already recorded in these pages, at every stage of his life. "I assert," says this Father, "that the love of the Blessed Stanislas for God was so ardent, and elicited in his holy and pure soul such acts of devotion, that he prayed assiduously day and night, without any distraction of mind, and was rapt in ecstasies, and rose at nights secretly to pray. Nothing used to excite greater admiration in men, particularly in religious, while he was yet living, than to behold him, in a manner surpassing his age and even nature itself, so fervent a lover of God and of the most holy Virgin, that he often fell into swoons, and experienced frequent ecstasies and raptures: the which was observed by many even in his tender years, and at the time that he frequented the school at Vienna."\*

We must here advert to two characteristics of this blessed saint, although we have already incidentally touched on the subject, because it seems incumbent upon us to draw into prominent relief whatever is in a marked degree the special virtue of this or that saint, or the special form in which his perfection has manifested itself; or, again, to note the distinguishing differences of God's dealings with their souls, and the peculiar

\* This testimony appears in one of the oldest processes, drawn up at Cracow:—"Assero amorem istum B. Stanislai in Deum, ita ardentem, elicuisse in sancta illa et purissima anima tales actus devotionis, ut et assidue, die ac nocte, et sine evagatione mentis oraret, et in ecstases raperetur, et nocte ad orandum secreto surgeret. Nilque magis in eo adhuc in vivis suspicere et admirari solitos homines, præcipue religiosos, quam quod adeo fervens fuerit, et supra naturam et ætatem, Dei et Virginis sanctissimæ amator, ut propterea deliquia animi, ecstases, et raptus frequentes pateretur. Quod in eo a plurimis, etiam ætate teneriore, et dum adhuc scholas Viennæ frequentaret, observatum fuit."

exhibition of the spiritual life in them. We shall thus have a clue to the saint's character as a saint—for we are not here alluding to his natural disposition—and in considering these specialties shall be considering his example in its purest manifestation, and extracting the very marrow of the lesson which he is designed to teach us ; so that, although in this or that action a saint may not be imitable, we may nevertheless be able to realise some profitable truth for our own guidance. One of the two peculiarities which forcibly strikes us in the saintliness of this blessed youth is the facility and sweetness, if we may so express it, with which he received the gifts of God ; and the other is the facility and sweetness with which they were displayed in him. And here, again, we seem to see God so ordering His dealings with this chosen soul as to hold out an allurements and encouragement to youth. In the person of Stanislas He seems to say to the lambs of the flock, Come to Me early, and you shall find how gracious I am, and how delightful are the paths of holiness to those who enter on them heartily betimes. Truly our God is gracious to all, and the ways of justice are to all the ways of peace. For the penitent sinner, indeed, He has incomparable graciousness ; He has for him the best robe, and the precious ring, and the fatted calf, and the music and jubilation of the heavenly mansions, where joy is more exultant over the returning prodigal than over the ninety-nine just who never strayed, and so never needed to return. Thus has penitence sometimes seemed even dearer to the heart of God than innocence,—nay, has *been* dearer, we may be bold to say, when it has loved more. “Many sins are forgiven to her because she hath loved much,” and we may remember that our Lord added, “But to whom less is

forgiven, he loveth less."\* Thus are the simply innocent who love with measure, and the penitent who love with fervour, contrasted one with the other to the advantage of the latter. When the grace of conversion leads to greater love, the penitent enters deeper into the joy of his Lord.

But Stanislas was not simply innocent at any period of his life. That he kept his baptismal innocency there can be no question: this has been true of other saints besides; and we may hope that not a few who yet never attained to the stature of the saints have been also thus specially preserved, particularly among those who have died comparatively young. But even among the saints who have kept their first grace Stanislas occupies a very remarkable position, by his fruitful acceptance of it at the very tenderest age. Thus we find him in his earliest years, in the very dawn of his life, manifesting a love surpassing that of the most fervent penitents; and, supposing the same degree of grace, with an equal correspondence and equal love, the innocent must necessarily take precedence of the penitent. That which in an inexpressibly higher sense and degree is asserted of the Blessed Mother of God, who, as she excelled all other saints in the singular privilege of her Immaculate Conception, so also did she surpass them all in her faithful and perfect correspondence with grace, may be said of souls who begin their race in the ways of holiness arrayed in the spotlessness of their young baptismal purity. Their foundations are on the holy hills; they start from a better 'vantage ground and a higher level.

And if Stanislas was not simply innocent, neither was he simply virtuous. From the first he seemed to

\* St. Luke vii. 47.

be in the enjoyment of those fruits of the Spirit which are ordinarily the reward of long exercise in the practice of virtue, when the soul has thereby acquired a marvellous facility in producing its acts, and especially of those fruits of charity, joy, and peace which, in a particular manner, appertain to Him. But even as a child he appeared also to possess in an eminent degree the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to have acted heroically almost from the cradle. A doctor of mystical theology\* has represented the Eternal and Personal Love of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, as dwelling in the centre of the just man's soul, and from thence pouring Himself forth upon it and upon all its faculties, like a fountain of life, by His seven gifts, as by seven streams, or like a bright sun which illuminates the soul by seven rays, or a blazing fire which warms and burns it by seven flames. It is by the exercise of these gifts, which are conferred as a habit on all the baptized, along with sanctifying grace and the infused virtues, that a soul is raised to the highest degrees of perfection. Excepting always the theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity, which directly regard God and unite us immediately with Him, these gifts, we know, surpass in dignity all the virtues. For the supernatural moral virtues dispose the soul only to the performance of ordinary good works, whereas the gifts dispose it to perform extraordinary actions.† Moreover, the virtues direct man by a reference to reason, but the gifts dispose the soul to be recipient of a higher influence—viz., the immediate movement and impulse of the Holy Spirit.‡

\* John Rusbrock, *Liber de Tabernaculo Moysis*, quoted by P. Saint-Jure, *L'Homme Spirituel*, part i., chap. iv.

† F. Lallemand, *Spiritual Doctrine*, iv. iii. 7.

‡ "The gifts of the Holy Spirit, by principles more exalted,

Thus, the motive power being far more sublime, we may conceive the comparative facility and sweetness with which a soul which has given itself up to its guidance elicits all its acts. There is all the difference between a boat laboriously pulled by oars, and one borne along by the breath of heaven filling its sails. Such a soul is—to adopt a comparison which fell from revered lips now silent in the grave, but whose memory is fresh and living amongst us—like to an instrument upon which the Holy Spirit plays, His seven gifts being the golden notes of the scale. No wonder, then, that He should have produced sweet music in all the actions of one who seems to have been so peculiarly under His direction from the moment he could have a conscious thought or perform a reasonable act. For Stanislas comes before us, as we have already said, as a finished saint from the beginning. We hear of no conflict, no strivings; it was as if none of the power of grace was expended in overcoming the resistance of an opposing

without reasoning, without perplexity, show us what is best, enabling us to discern it in the light of God with more or less of evidence, according to the degree in which we possess Him.”—*Ib.*, iv. iii. 2.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are so called—“*Quia per illa homo redditur bene mobilis a Spiritu Sancto per internos instinctus. Per virtutes homo movetur a ratione, tanquam a principio interno ad finem ultimum; per hæc dona vero movetur a Spiritu Sancto, tanquam a principio externo per internos instinctus ad operationes sublimiores. Omnes virtutes concurrunt ad actus supernaturales juxta dictamen rationis et ad arbitrium voluntatis; dona vero Spiritus Sancti concurrunt ad actus supernaturales præter rationem et præter leges communes: v.g., ad occidendum seipsum (ut fertur de S. Apollonia, quæ in ignem se conjecit), concurruntque ad internos instinctus ad arbitrium Spiritus Sancti.*”—*Viva, Cursus Theologicus*, v. i. 1, 7, 8.

current before it could propel the vessel of the soul; its whole amount told in the way of progress, and bore him easily and triumphantly along. And if we hear of no conflict, neither do we hear of clouds, obscurities, or shadows; Stanislas seemed to have lived and died in the midst of the meridian splendours of grace. Far from us be the attempt to scrutinise the ways of God, or to presume to assign reasons or lay down rules respecting His conduct of souls, but may we not be allowed to see in His dealings with this saint a sweet encouragement held out, not to early piety only, but to an entire consecration of the heart to God, and that at whatever age the Christian may give himself faithfully to His service? The example of Stanislas seems to say to such as can receive it, this is not the best and the highest way only; it is the easiest.

To the facility and sweetness which distinguished him as a recipient of God's gifts of grace, was added, as a correlative, the facility and sweetness with which they manifested themselves. Better than by any words of our own, may we view Stanislas as virtually described by a spiritual writer in the following passage, in which, treating of the gift of counsel,—a gift which shone pre-eminently in our saint,—he thus describes the effects upon a soul of the direction of the Holy Spirit:—"The Holy Spirit is continually calling the soul inwards, continually inducing recollection and the concentration of the thoughts, continually prompting it to act, both interiorly and exteriorly, with great peace, in a manner devoid of passion, yet not simply reasonable, but divine. Interiorly He prompts to a continual flowing of its memory and understanding into God, as a river tends to the ocean, a stone to its centre, and a flame to its sphere. Exteriorly He inclines it to a simple, inno-



cent, and pure application to created things; viewing them as the works of God, upon which He has engraven the lineaments of His perfections, and in which and by which He desires to be honoured, loved, and served; considering them also as subjects for the exercise of virtue with which His goodness supplies it, some of patience, others of humility, others of charity, of mercy, of meekness, justice, and other virtues, in order that it may practise them all after an excellent manner and acquire the perfection to which God has called it."\* This unity of all the faculties in one aim and object, this singleness of the mental eye, which sees God in all and all in God; this oneness of intention, admitting of no division, no distraction, no multiplicity, which is the result of the entire abandonment of the soul to the impression of the Divine Spirit, makes a man the most perfect image of God that can be beheld on earth. There is a divine harmony and oneness in it which images the Ineffable One. Union is love, union is beauty, truth, repose. Union with God transfigures a man. Its most salient and striking effect is not this or that virtue, this or that ray of the heavenly prism, but the pure white of simplicity—simplicity, the most loved and the most lovable of qualities, which has in it a majesty in its oneness which captivates and subjugates the heart. In Stanislas the natural simplicity of his character blended with that superior simplicity which was the product of the perfect union of his soul with God. The same, indeed, was the case with respect to his other rich natural endowments, the union of which with the corresponding higher spiritual gifts superinduced thereon produced in him an harmonious result which

\* P. Saint-Jure, *L'Homme Spirituel*, part i., chap. iv.

had no small share in creating the charm of his external impression.

No one certainly can be godly and escape persecution in this world, neither is it God's will that His favoured servants should be exempt. Stanislas, as we have seen, was not exempt. But, in addition to that offence which the Christian character must inevitably give to the world, there is a further offence very generally taken, which is, so to say, accidental. There are certain ruggednesses, asperities, inequalities, impetuosities, and apparent, though not, perhaps, real, unamiabilities to be met with in the best of men, which result, in great measure, from the struggle which a remaining multiplicity of affection and of motive serves to create. Their primary source is, however, to be sought in the absence of the more direct governing influence of the Holy Spirit, that Eternal Wisdom which "reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."\* For in how many cases do even the virtuous act simply by human reason; and, although their actions are rendered meritorious through the intention which they have to please God, nevertheless the imperfections which hence attach to them go far to make virtue less acceptable and its example less effective. What Christians would be and seem under the entire guidance of that same Divine Wisdom, "which being but one can do all things,"† may be seen, as in a lovely compendium, in Stanislas. "Her," might he truly have said, "have I loved, and have sought her out from my youth, and have desired to take her for my spouse, and I became a lover of her beauty. For her sake I shall have glory among the multitude, and honour with the ancients, though I be young."‡

\* Wisdom viii. 1. † vii. 27. ‡ viii. 2, 10.

If any one, then, desires to be an apostle without being sent, a teacher without preaching, a voice although silent, a light although hidden in the shade, a finger to point the way to God without raising a hand, he may learn from the example of Stanislas wherein lies the secret of this marvellous power.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### ILLNESS AND DEATH OF STANISLAS.

THE most beautiful part (says P. Bartoli) of the life of this angelic youth was his death. He lived so innocently that one might have thought he had never sinned in Adam, and he died so sweetly that death in him wore not the appearance of the penalty of Adam's transgression.

The public interests of the Church, and the private affairs of the Company, brought Father Peter Canisius to Rome in the summer of 1568. The Fathers profited by the opportunity to beg this saintly and gifted man to deliver a spiritual address to their novices, most of whom were collected at Sant' Andrea, and Stanislas amongst them. Canisius consented, but he was not to have the novices for his sole auditors. No sooner was it known that the Apostle of Germany, and one of the great lights of their Order, was about to preach at the noviciate, than the greater number of the Jesuit Fathers from five leagues round Rome (and there were above three hundred in the neighbourhood at that time) flocked to Sant' Andrea on the appointed day to hear

him. Canisius did not on that account make any change in the character or style of his instruction. It was designed for the profit of novices, and he kept them exclusively in view. It was simple and practical. Now the day happened to be the first of August, and there had been a custom in old Pagan Rome to observe it as a festival; a superstitious notion being entertained that when the first day of a month passed happily, all the rest of the month would be in like manner prosperous. As the month of August falls amidst the heats of summer, and is liable therefore to fever and other maladies, it was hoped thereby to provide against these evils. Such was the origin of a custom which had survived the introduction of Christianity; for it was traditionally kept up by the Roman people, and was still designated by its old name, *Ferrare Agosto*:\* so obstinately will the common people cling to a practice which has any festivity or merry-making attached to it. Hence we can understand the wisdom and prudence of the Church in having often, instead of abolishing annual festivities observed by the heathen with a superstitious intent, changed their object, and thus purified and sanctified them without running counter to the tastes and rooted habits of those whom she would win to God.

Canisius took occasion from this meaningless popular custom to introduce some profitable reflections suggested by it. He would indicate a Christian mode of celebrating the first day, not of August alone, but of each month in the year. It was certain that we must die, and it was certain also that we must die during the course of some one of the months of some one year.

\* This practice does not seem even yet to have died out in Rome.

We could never, therefore, be assured that the month upon which we were entering was not that particular month in that particular year: it behoved us, accordingly, so to enter on every single month, and so to persevere living throughout that month, as if it were to be the last of our lives, and thus we should sanctify the whole year. Did we believe that in the very month which we were commencing we were indeed to die, what value should we not set on each day, on each hour, on each minute, on each fraction of a minute! What care should we not bestow on having our conscience prepared for appearing before the tribunal of God, and rendering that final and decisive account which must decide our eternal destinies! The theme and the idea were extremely simple; but simple subjects in the mouths of those who feel deeply what they say, and how much more in the mouths of saints like the great Canisius, are very powerful to touch the heart. His audience, young and old, were all much moved and edified. The novices were conversing afterwards on the subject of the exhortation which they had just received, when Stanislas observed, "The maxim which the man of God has inculcated may be said to be a salutary monition for all; but for me, who am to die this month, it is the express word of God." This was the first time that the holy youth began to speak of his approaching death; and from the confidence with which he alluded to it, as well as from the verification of his prediction, we are led to believe that it had been either directly revealed to him, or interiorly communicated to his soul by a secret divine impression. Whether such supernatural manifestation had been previously received, and was only confirmed by Canisius's words, or that it came to him then for the first time, we know not. Little import-

ance was attached to his remark by his associates. He was there before their eyes young, and with the bloom of health upon his cheek; desires, like fears, will lead to presentiments; the glorious festival of his dear Mother was drawing nigh; and the strong impression upon the mind of Stanislas might be referred to his longing wish to be present at the coming feast of the Assumption in Heaven. His companions could not, and would not, think of losing him.

Four days later he again adverted to his approaching departure. It was upon the occasion already noticed, when he accompanied P. Emanuele de Sà to Santa Maria Maggiore, and when that Father was so much touched and edified by the filial love which his young companion manifested towards the Blessed Mother of God. He continued conversing on the same subject from the pleasure he took in hearing Stanislas speak of our Lady, and reminded him of the festival of her Assumption, which would be kept on the 15th of the month. No sooner had he alluded to it than the holy youth began to pour forth all the eloquence of his glowing heart upon the theme; he spoke of Mary's transcendent dignity and sublime gifts, and of her immense merits, in that inimitable manner peculiar to himself, and of that glorious day when she, the Mother of God, and his own Mother too, was triumphantly assumed into Heaven to be crowned Queen of the whole universe. "Paradise," he said, "then saw within its compass a new Paradise, which the Virgin brought with her when she entered; and as she ascended up to the throne prepared for her, so much higher above all the other thrones of Heaven as she herself was incomparably nearer to God—most near, near as a mother is to a son—there was no angel or

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blessed spirit so exalted but he came to prostrate and humble himself at her feet. "And if," he added, "as I hold for certain, this festival is renewed every year in Heaven, as it is on earth, I hope to witness the next, and be able to bless and praise my dearest Mother in company with the heavenly hierarchies." P. de Sà looked at his companion as he spoke these last words, his face all radiant with hope, joy, and love, and smiled without making any reply. He regarded them only as the expression of a pious desire, to be fulfilled, indeed, in a certain sense, since he doubted not but that Stanislas would be present in spirit, and enjoy in contemplation the sight of Mary's glory on the approaching festival of her Assumption.

Stanislas, it will be observed, had already spoken with certainty of his death during the month of August, but of his departure in time to witness the glorious festival of his dear Mother in Heaven he spoke only with hope, yet that hope had in it much of confidence. and was fortified by the knowledge that he had recently acquired a powerful intercessor to plead his cause. The holy General Borgia, while yet, as Duke of Gandia, living in the world, had adopted the custom of causing every member of his family and household to draw by lot the name of some saint, who was to be regarded for that year as a special patron ; his life and virtues were to be made the subject of particular study and imitation, his aid was to be sought in all necessities, and his feast celebrated with devout preparation and peculiar observance. Much spiritual profit had been found to result from this practice, which Borgia had accordingly introduced into the Company, with this difference, that a saint was drawn for each successive month instead of for the whole year. Now, at the beginning of this

month of August the martyr, St. Lawrence, fell to the lot of Stanislas, who was much rejoiced at what he reckoned to have occurred by a particular dispensation in his favour, for he was very devout to this great saint and martyr, whose burning love, which surmounted in its ardours the torturing flames of the material furnace, was so like to his own; and he had already been entreating him to interest himself in his behalf, in order to obtain his admission to the coming solemnity in Heaven. The apothegm, or motto, accompanying the name of the blessed martyr, which recommended to his intercession the virtue of patience for the dying, favoured also the aspirations of our saint; and now, with the great St. Lawrence pledged to be his special patron during the month, well might his hopes ripen into confidence. He at once began a novena to him, begging his superiors' leave to add to his penances, and to prolong his hours of prayer; and never were petitions for the extension of life's earthly span offered with more urgency and fervour than were those of Stanislas that he might hear promptly the welcome call to depart. He was not fainting under fatigues and suffering, he was not weary of trial, he shrank not from work for God. Were not toil and work for God sweet to him? was he not all zeal to do somewhat for his Lord, for whom as yet he esteemed he had done nothing, so as even to burn with the desire to be sent to heathen lands to labour and die for the God of his heart? Nevertheless this dear child of Mary, this favourite of the Infant Jesus, languished to go and be with Them. He must go to his Mother, he must run to his Mother's arms, those arms which he has beheld enfolding his God and his Brother. "Who shall give thee to me?" exclaims the Church, in the rapturous



familiarity of her love for the Infant Bridegroom. "Who shall give thee to me for my brother, sucking the breast of my mother, that I may find thee without and kiss thee!"\* The Company of Jesus was an earthly Paradise, it is true; Stanislas was very close to Jesus and His Blessed Mother there; but the closer he was the closer he longed to be. His very closeness made him only long the more. It was when the beloved heard the sound of her Spouse's voice at the door, and the touch of His hand in the key-hole, that the depths of her whole being were moved.† Distance has its languishings—oh, how sad and depressing!—and nearness, too, has its languishings—oh, how ardent and irrepressible! Stanislas's heart was pressed by the languishing of nearness. Some saints—many saints, it may be said—have expressed a holy indifference either to depart or to remain, willing only God's will, which was their Paradise; others, again, have even desired to abide longer in this vale of tears, if God's glory and the salvation of souls could thereby be advanced. This is most true; but all alike were divinely moved to these apparently conflicting desires, according to the impulse of the Holy Spirit dwelling and ruling in them, who makes supplication in the saints according to the will of God. Stanislas's course was ended. God did not intend that he should remain to do great things, and so, although He allowed him to add to his merits by entertaining zealous aspirations to labour for His glory, He moved him, in conformity with His own will, freely to prefer "to be dissolved and to be with Christ."‡

Everything tends to its end, as its beatitude and repose. We see this truth symbolised in nature. In

\* Canticle of Canticles, viii. 1.

† Ib. v. 2-4.

‡ Phil. i. 23.

the superior order of grace to which God has raised man, He Himself is his end and his repose ; but in the eternal designs each soul has its appointed, its prepared place, for not all shall have a like participation of the Divine glory. To lead the soul up to its allotted degree of perfection, the whole chain of graces and of providential events which affect it is ordered and conduces. And as that particular degree of perfection, with its corresponding mansion of bliss, is the end destined for that soul, and offered to its aims and acceptance, so also is it that which the soul, divinely enlightened, desires, and no other. It desires the place prepared for it, not because it is the highest or the brightest,—although in the case of the great saints of God that place is, indeed, high and bright, supereminently high and bright,—but because it is its ordained end and place, and, therefore, the place of its rest. And so, when the work is done, and the full predestined image is worked out in the child of grace, God calls him to his beatitude, and allows him to press with an intense gravitation to his ultimate repose. God, then, did not design that Stanislas should remain to do great things ; He designed him for a pattern, an exquisite and beautiful pattern ; and so He showed him in all the finished loveliness of his sanctity, and, having shown him, He took him ; and when He would take him, He drew him.

The child-like simplicity of Stanislas's disposition was manifested on this occasion in his devotion. He longed, as we have said, to behold his Mother, and be with her on her great festival-day in Heaven. Often had he told her so ; but now he was minded to write her a letter. He would write a letter to his Mother Mary ; he would tell her how much he wished for this boon, how consumed he was with the desire to see her ; and

he would commit his letter to the charge of his patron, St. Lawrence. There are those to whom this act will seem sheer folly, persons who have, perhaps, never even heard of such a pious practice; for Stanislas, we need scarcely say, was not singular in the act itself, although he was singular in his request and in the perfection of his simple faith and love; or if, perchance, they have heard of such a practice, it has been but to ridicule and sneer at it. For such we do not write. There may be others, however, who, without assuming the scoffer's tone, have no appreciation for such manifestations of devotion. Persons of this cold and critical temper are to be found even amongst sincere Catholics. In their eyes, acts of this kind are puerile, to say the least,—a sort of thing which may be tolerated in the young or the ignorant, but which could never enter into the thoughts of a mature, sensible, and educated man. But if this were so—which we do not grant—all we need say is, that the Kingdom of Heaven was promised, not to the sensible and the educated, but to such as have the spirit of little children. Puerilities, then, they may be, but they are the happy puerilities of Christ's little ones and Mary's darlings. Love, too, always abounds in what are puerilities and follies in the eyes of proud, sober reason. Who has not heard of the royal David stripping off his kingly apparel, and leaping and dancing with all his might before the ark of God; and how Saul's arrogant daughter, Michol, truly representing the spirit of the world, despised him in her heart, and taunted him with playing the buffoon; and how the man after God's heart replied that he would both play and make himself meaner than he had done, and would be little in his own eyes?\*

\* 2 Kings vi. 14-22.

to say, Why write a letter? For what purpose? Could not Stanislas speak to our Lady? Was he not every day speaking to her in prayer? Why write a letter? To which we will reply, Why *not* write a letter, if devotion prompts this form of written instead of spoken address? As for the objection drawn from the inutility of such a proceeding, every one must see that it is equally applicable to oral petition. For although language is needed between man and man for the mutual communication of thoughts and feelings, with God, who reads the thought of the heart and its yet unframed request, or with the saints, who in God read the prayers which we offer to them, it is, under this point of view, simply superfluous. If, then, a written letter, which, after all, is but one form of address, is not necessary to the making known a request, as undoubtedly it is not, so neither is oral petition. Yet we pray orally, and there is no one who believes that this practice needs justification; why, then, should it seem absurd to address the Mother of God and the saints in the one form rather than in the other? But, again, are we sure that, even in intercourse between man and man, the sole object of language, written or unwritten, is mutually to acquaint each other with what would otherwise remain unknown? Is every letter penned with this sole object, or, indeed, with this object at all? How many letters are inspired by quite other motives; and how often are persons prompted to write to those who are very near to them, and with whom communication is otherwise easy and frequent! Are there not even passionate and energetic phases of mind in us, when a letter seems the only adequate vehicle of what we feel and desire to express? If this be the case between human creatures, because they are living and breathing

realities to each other, why should not something parallel exist between us and those who, though withdrawn from our sight, are no shadowy or vague existences to us, but, all-glorified as is their state, are united to us in the closest communion ?

But enough, and more than enough, of this. Stanislas was a great saint, and he wrote a letter to his dearest Mother Mary, the Queen of Angels. It was just such a letter, we are told, as one would write with the full confidence that it was to be duly presented to the person addressed, and to be read by her. He told our Blessed Lady how he longed to be with her ; how lost he felt himself on earth at a distance from her ; how all he loved best was in Heaven ; and how his heart was drawn thither. He, moreover, humbly represented his desire to be allowed to be present at the coming commemoration in Heaven of the feast of her Assumption, and earnestly implored her to call him speedily, that he might enjoy the delight of beholding her whom he so loved on that day of her triumph, and of uniting with all the angelic hierarchies in celebrating her glories. It was the vigil of St. Lawrence when Stanislas wrote. He spent the whole day in the closest recollection and assiduous prayer, and in the evening he was permitted to join the Community in taking the discipline in the refectory. He drew therefrom new fire to his devotion. On the morrow, when going to receive his Lord in Holy Communion, he laid the letter to Mary on his bosom, commissioning his holy patron to present it, and to support his petition with his powerful influence. What became of the letter we do not know—whether angelic hands bore it to the heavenly court, or whether the Queen of Angels contented herself with casting those merciful eyes of hers upon the touching lines addressed

to her, where they lay pressed to the heart of her dear child ; one thing we know, that the prayer was promptly heard and answered, and that Stanislas knew that he had obtained his desire. Some secret divine assurance was, doubtless, conveyed to him, and, as he made his thanksgiving after receiving his Lord in Communion, his blessed soul seemed to be enjoying a foretaste of the joys of Paradise. He rose from it with peace inexpressible upon his countenance ; hope was now converted into certainty ; and from this moment he spoke of the day of his death as fixed and determined : he was to be in Heaven on the morning of the 15th.

Joy that has its source in God, enrapturing as it may be in its degree, is always serene. Stanislas, therefore, went as usual about his customary employments, only he made a particular request of his superiors to be sent into the kitchen, and it was thither accordingly he betook himself after Mass. The humblest avocations were always dear to him, but on this occasion, as he afterwards said, he particularly desired this employment, because it favoured his prolonged meditation on the sufferings of the martyr, St. Lawrence ; for, as he looked at the fire, he figured to himself that he beheld that invincible hero burning in soul with the love of God, and in the body for the love of God, a perfect holocaust, to which our saint in spirit fervently united himself. The day was beginning to decline when Stanislas felt the first touch of that mortal sickness which he had announced, but of which not the faintest symptom had hitherto indicated the approach. It was but a light touch, but it ran through his whole frame like a thrill of joy. It was his summons, it was the pledge of the approaching fulfilment of the promise he

had received. His superiors, however, observed that he was suffering, and desired him to go to bed. Not that there was anything at present to excite apprehension, but in that month of insalubrious and oppressive heats even slight feverish attacks call for care and precaution ; and, indeed, it was thought well to transfer Stanislas during his indisposition to a larger and more commodious room on a higher floor. With a smile of radiant joy on his countenance, Stanislas told the novices who were assisting him to remove, that he was going to die in a very few days. Then, before laying himself down, he raised his eyes to Heaven, with a supernatural expression of love and rapture, and, having made the sign of the cross over his pallet, he said, " Now, blessed be God ! I shall never rise alive from this bed." But after uttering these words in a tone of jubilant self-congratulation, which revealed the pleasure he derived from the reflection, he caught a sight of the distressed countenances of those around him, and his loving and compassionate heart, minded to spare them pain, or, at least, to soften their affliction, led him to add this modification : " That is, if it so pleases the Lord." But well he knew inwardly that such was his Lord's pleasure. He was going to die, and he told Claudio Acquaviva that he believed he owed this favour to the martyr, St. Lawrence, who had obtained from his dear Lady, the Queen of Angels, that he should be present in Heaven at her festival of the Assumption ; an assertion which he made in terms of still greater confidence to the master of the novices, P. Alfonso Ruiz. But neither the one nor the other gave credit to his declaration. They did not perceive in the nature of his malady any ground for serious alarm : it was but a mild tertian fever ; besides, he was young, and—apart from the afore-

mentioned swoons, which seemed, however, to be supernatural in their character—in the enjoyment of youthful health. Still less did it seem probable that so slight an illness, which at present gave no signs of increase, should rapidly gather sufficient strength to carry him off within the brief space of three days. In the absence of a distinct revelation, no grounds exist for a decision but such as reason affords; and, in fact, the judgment of Ruiz and of Acquaviva was fully warranted by reasonable probabilities, and they were, moreover, confirmed in their opinion by the physicians.

That Stanislas, however, had received an interior divine assurance that he should celebrate the coming festival of the Assumption in Heaven, can scarcely, as we have said, admit of a doubt, not only because his prediction concerning the day of his death was verified, but on account of the perfect confidence with which he repeatedly uttered it; a confidence not easily reconciled with any other supposition, for if he had only felt a strong presentiment, accompanied by an ardent hope, he would hardly have expressed himself in so unqualified a manner. But the fact of his having received a revelation finds, we think, strong, although indirect, confirmation from another consideration. Stanislas always spoke of going straight to Heaven; he never, so far as we know, made the least allusion to any apprehension of so much as a momentary delay between his departure from the body and his entry into the glories of Paradise. Now, although those who knew him might well be convinced that no further purification could be needed by one of his exalted perfection, incomparable purity, and marvellous innocency, nevertheless saints judge not themselves as others view them,



and when they have spoken with unhesitating confidence on their death-beds of immediate enjoyment of the beatific vision, such confidence, we have reason to think, has sprung from the secret whisperings of divine assurance to their souls. Such assurance in the last moments, or even hours, of life has not, we may well conceive, been unfrequent with the great servants of God, but we are here speaking of an inward assurance or promise preceding the last mortal struggle, nay, in the present case, preceding even its first approach. We find St. Aloysius Gonzaga, holy and innocent as Stanislas, inquiring, just before his blessed death, at the lips of Bellarmine, whether he believed that any one entered Heaven without so much as touching Purgatory. All saint as he was, in his humility he entertained some, at least, passing misgivings as to immediate admission to the vision of God. Yet we do not find that Stanislas evinced any similar solicitude, though, after all we have said on the subject, we need scarcely add that none ever manifested a more lowly self-estimation than did this great saint.

The morning of the 14th, the Vigil of the Assumption, dawned, and found Stanislas in very much the same condition. He was not better, but neither was he worse; his fever continued slight; no alarming symptom had manifested itself; nevertheless, he expressly told the Brother who attended upon him that he should die during the coming night. The Brother smiled, and replied in a tone of gentle ridicule, "It would require a greater miracle to die of such a trifling malady than to be cured; unless, indeed," he added, "the Blessed Virgin, with whom you are so great a favourite, should wish to have you present in Heaven at the celebration of her Assumption." He spoke true

words in jest. Stanislas said no more at the time, but, a few hours later, the change which took place gave too sure indications of the probable realisation of his prediction. For mid-day was not long past when suddenly he fainted away. It was no common fainting-fit, but resembled a death-swoon in its character. The tidings rapidly spread through the house, and caused a perfect panic. Affection, fortifying itself by apparent probabilities, had hitherto rendered all incredulous, but fear and anxiety could no longer be kept at bay. P. Giulio Fazj, who was at that time superior, hastened, with others of the Fathers, to the bed-side of the sufferer, and all the usual appliances were adopted to bring him to himself. At last he regained his consciousness and opened his eyes, when Fazj, assuming a cheerfulness which his inward alarm, no doubt, belied, endeavoured to revive him by a tone of gentle banter, and told him he must have very little courage to lose heart and succumb to so light a cause. Stanislas humbly accepted the accusation, but denied the inference. "It is very true," he said, with a faint smile, "that I have but little courage, but I cannot help myself, or make an effort, for I am to die of this illness."

The words of encouragement soon expired on the lips of those about him, when by and by they beheld him seized with a fit of general trembling; the cold drops, precursors of death, stood upon his brow, and burst forth over his whole frame. His strength also utterly abandoned him, and he could now with difficulty move. Consternation filled all hearts. Stanislas was all they had most precious, he was the jewel, the treasure, the joy of the whole house. Loved for his indescribable amiability, revered, not to say venerated, for the example of every Christian grace which, in .

its sweetest and most attractive form, he daily presented to their eyes, he was also valued beyond what words could tell for the hopes and anticipations founded on his future. What must be the fruit of so sweet a flower! What the meridian glory of a luminary so lustrous at its rising! What great things had not God in store for him to perform for the good of souls, for His own glory, and that of the Company! Novices and Fathers shared alike these sentiments, and all joined in besieging Heaven with petitions, with many tears imploring the Divine Mercy not to deprive them of this holy youth, whom they regarded as the tutelary angel of their house. As for Stanislas himself, he had no desire save to be loosed from the bonds which held him to earth, that he might fly to the bosom of God and of the divine Mother; and he begged P. Fazj to allow him to be laid on the bare floor, that he might, in this attitude of penitence, prepare himself for death during the few hours of life which remained to him. He was at first refused, and it was not until he had several times earnestly repeated his request that the Superior consented to accord him a favour reserved for those who are *in extremis*, and granted only at their desire. But Stanislas was now too surely dying; no plea of hope was available any longer to deny him this last consolation, and so a mattress was placed on the floor, and he was laid upon it. Tears broke forth afresh from the eyes of all present, as they contemplated him lying extended on the ground, his soul all absorbed in God, and Paradise reflected on his countenance.

As the day fell, he entreated that he might receive the Viaticum, and he made his confession. When the priest entered the room bearing the Blessed Sacrament,

a marvellous commotion seemed to agitate the whole frame of the dying youth. It was as if all the remaining embers of life about to be extinguished revived and blazed up again at the approach of the Lord of Life. Colour came to his pallid cheek, and his eyes shone with a supernatural brightness ; there was a trepidation, and, so to say, effervescence in every part, as if the very blood in his veins were boiling ; and, as he half raised himself on his couch, his whole heart and spirit seemed to go forth in desire to meet his Sacramental God. But, before receiving Him, he humbly besought the forgiveness of all for the faults of which he had been guilty, and thanked the Company with the warmest gratitude for having been so good a mother to him, and for having borne with him, though he had been so bad a son to her. He then implored the prayers of all to help him in the great passage he was about to make, assuring them, at the same time, that if God mercifully received him to His embrace, he would have them ever with him in his heart, and be mindful of them all. After receiving the Viaticum, amidst the tears of all who surrounded him, he remained for a long time in unbroken silence, and in one unbroken act of love, as his countenance bespoke. Extreme Unction was then administered to him, and to all the prayers he made the responses audibly, with the tenderest piety, and with the same unvarying serenity. His peace and joy seemed to be too profound, too complete, for the agonies of death to ruffle or to disturb even the surface of his soul. As Stanislas had been fair in life, so did it please God that he should be beautiful in death.

Being asked whether he felt his heart resigned to the Divine Will either to live or die, he replied, "*Paratum cor meum, Deus ; paratum cor meum*—(My heart is

ready, O God ; my heart is ready).” Nevertheless, to make his preparation the more sure, as also to gain the indulgences for the point of death, he confessed again two several times. He then lay in silence, with his eyes raised heavenward. Now and then one of those near him would make some spiritual suggestion, or recall some pious memory, or they would give him some commission in their behalf to execute in the court of Heaven ; and to all he responded with the same calm and angelic sweetness which he had manifested in his days of health ; but, after replying, his spirit seemed again to enter into a gentle ecstasy, and his eyes were once more raised towards the land whither he was hastening. From time to time, however, he would fix them on a little picture of our Lady which he had by him ; then he would take and kiss it with such fervour that it seemed as if his very heart was poured forth on his lips, while now and again he would lay the picture on his heart. A Father of the Company, who had come from the professed house to see him, observing that his fingers were entwined in his rosary, asked him why he thus held it, since he was now unable to use it. Stanislas replied, “ It is something which belongs to my dearest heavenly Mother, and so the mere seeing it and kissing it is a consolation to me.” To which the Father rejoined, “ Oh ! how much more, then, when you shall find yourself soon in her very presence, and shall behold her glory, and she shall call you to her, and give you her hand to kiss !” He could have said nothing more calculated to render Stanislas utterly forgetful of his dying state. Life appeared to revisit his whole frame, his face glowed with rapture, and, stretching out both his arms aloft, he seemed like one who said, “ I come, I come.”

Midnight now passed, and, the death-languor increasing, Stanislas said to the Superior, who was by him, "*Tempus breve est.*" P. Giulio, taking up the Apostle's words, proceeded, "*Reliquum est ;*" to which the dying saint added, "*ut præparemus nos.*" \* Then he took the crucifix in his hands, and begged that the prayers of the Church for the recommendation of a departing soul might be recited, requesting that they might be said slowly ; and to all he made the several responses with the greatest calmness and the most tender devotion. The whole, however, occupied in consequence so much time that the Superior asked him whether these lengthened prayers did not weary him ; to which he replied with warmth, " On the contrary, they are the greatest consolation to me." P. Fazj nevertheless, in order to afford him a little rest, would stop from time to time, and make a brief pause ; and then Stanislas would commence praying aloud by himself, holding most affectionate colloquies with his Lord, all in Latin, the Church's consecrated language of prayer, which has, so to say, an incommunicable savour of devotion. Sometimes he asked pardon for his sins, sometimes he gave thanks for all the benefits he had received, or implored help in the great passage ; then he would kiss the Redeemer's Wounds: he kissed His Hands, he kissed His Feet, and then he impressed a long, loving kiss on the Wound in His Heart. This he would do repeatedly many times, and then take to invoking all the saints to aid him, particularly those who had fallen to him by lot as patrons during his ten months' noviciate. He had written their names in a little book, that he might never forget them, and he

\* "The time is short—it remains—that we make ourselves ready." Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 29.

now caused the list to be read to him, lest any one of them should have escaped his memory, and made a fervent and affectionate appeal to each, as they were severally named. Then he turned to his dearest Mother, praying her to continue her loving care of him in this his extremity, and receive his soul into her blessed arms. Tears flowed in renewed abundance from all who witnessed the touching scene,—a scene rendered doubly affecting by the love and veneration which they felt for the dying youth.

All of a sudden he became silent, and his face assumed the expression of one in ecstasy. He remained motionless, save that his lips gently moved, and his brilliant eyes, in which Heaven's joys seemed mirrored, were directed first on one side and then on the other, as though beholding sights of unimaginable splendour and loveliness. The attention of all was riveted upon him, and they could not doubt—what his own lips presently attested—that Heaven indeed had descended to meet him and conduct him home. The august Mother of God had entered the room with a numerous train of bright virgins; she had come to give her child this last proof of her affection, and to carry him back with her to everlasting bliss. From amongst other testimonies recorded in the processes, we quote the words of Mario Franchi, to whom allusion has already been made. "I remember," he said, "hearing the same persons frequently relate how, at the hour of death, our Blessed Lady visibly appeared to him, with a band of other holy virgins; and how he, conversing with this blessed company, expired with an expression even of mirth on his features, remaining after death with a countenance so serene and smiling that all were moved to devotion by beholding it. I have also heard this

same vision often spoken of by priests, religious of the Company, who had learned it from the lips of P. Alfonso Ruiz, who was present at his death, being at that time master of novices ; the said Father adding that the holy youth, in the act of dying, told him, with marks of extraordinary joy, that he distinctly beheld the Blessed Virgin, with the said company of other virgins."

It was in this wise that Stanislas breathed forth his pure soul to Him who had given it, amidst the joys of Paradise rather than the agonies of death, a little more than three hours after midnight, which was about the hour of dawn, on the 15th of August ; thus accomplishing his own prediction that he should go to solemnise in Heaven the Assumption of the Queen of Angels, who, as is piously believed, went up to her throne in glory with the first ray of morning. He held in one hand her rosary, and in the other a lighted candle, in testimony that he died in the faith of the Holy Catholic and Roman Church. His face was illuminated with a smile so joyous as even to be described as laughter, and his eyes were raised up towards heaven. None, indeed, knew the precise moment at which his soul took its flight, for no change passed over the sweet angelic countenance ; the colour did not leave his cheek, nor did the brightness forsake his eye, but, when one of the bystanders, with the view of renewing the joy which he always manifested at the sight of his picture of Mary, held it before his eyes, he gave no sign and made no movement, and so they knew he was dead—or, rather, alive with a better life, and already gazing on the unveiled glory of the Incarnate God and of His Blessed Mother.





**PART III.**  
**THE THRONE OF GLORY.**



## CHAPTER I.

## STANISLAS HONOURED IN HIS DEATH.

THE blessed youth whose earthly course we have followed to its close, had not yet completed his eighteenth year when he departed to receive his heavenly crown. Such as had been his appearance living, such did it remain in death ; and, if his eyes had not been closed, no one beholding him but must have imagined that he was still alive. The personal beauty of no saint has ever, perhaps, been more frequently or more pointedly noticed than has the singular loveliness of Stanislas. That loveliness was, indeed, of so spiritual a character, that it seemed to be the very expression of his inward sanctity ; as if it had entered into the designs of God to exhibit in him, in a most striking manner, the surpassing beauty of holiness. Accordingly, following in the track of his biographers, we have ourselves often alluded to it, as any picture of this most attractive saint would otherwise have been incomplete. All who have described him represent him as of middle stature, with black hair, and an angelic face, the fairness of which was tinged with a virginal blush, seeming (to use Bartoli's words) "the hue as much of virtue as of nature. His eyes," he adds, "were most beautiful, and especially admirable for the devotion and purity which they expressed ; always were they either raised by love towards heaven, or cast down by modesty towards earth ; frequently

weeping, and constantly moist with tears, which (as one expressed it) flowed from sweetness of spirit." It would be superfluous here to remark that Stanislas had never forfeited his baptismal innocence ; moreover, it would be to assert but little, when compared with the truth, as testified by the master of novices, P. Alfonso Ruiz, who heard his general confession a few hours before death. For that Father solemnly gave his testimony, not only to the immunity of Stanislas from any stain of mortal sin, but to the exceeding rarity of those slight venial faults of which, taxing his memory strictly, he was able to accuse himself, such rarity as even amongst saints may be deemed remarkable ; while, as respected the period of his noviciate, we need only observe that it had been difficult ever to find sufficient matter for absolution. As an unusual homage paid to his spotless innocence and purity, flowers were strewed over him. Death had not robbed his young cheek of its bloom, nor dimmed the radiance of the smile with which he had, so to say, exhaled his soul to heaven ; and, as he lay there on his catafalque, he did not seem so much to be peacefully sleeping, as lying awake with closed eyes, and his usual smile of inward happiness on his face.

From the professed house, from the college, and from the two seminaries, the German and the Roman, all crowded to behold him, and to kiss his hand, an act of reverence habitually reserved for priests, but which, in this instance, as afterwards in that of St. Aloysius, was paid as a spontaneous mark of loving veneration. Some of the oldest Fathers, men who had been disciples of the great founder, St. Ignatius, were even seen kissing his feet, which had been left uncovered, some weeping for very consolation at the

thought of having called such a treasure their own, and others for grief at no longer possessing it amongst them on earth ; while all were desirous to secure for themselves, as a relic, a leaf or a spray of the flowers with which the holy body had been sprinkled. So great was the concourse of persons to venerate the mortal remains of Stanislas, and so deep the emotion manifested, that P. Francesco Toledo, afterwards Cardinal, turning to Stefano Augusti, with uplifted hands, exclaimed, "A marvel this ! a little Polish youth, being dead, draws the whole world to him, every one desires to see him, to kiss him ; and how will it be with us, when we come to die as old men ?" signifying that where more honour ought to be merited less would be deserved and less received, for merits are not measured by age nor virtues counted by years. Stanislas had lived more in his eighteen years than others, albeit holy religious, live in their eighty. Who, indeed, can estimate the value of eighteen years wholly and purely given to God !

All was marvellous, too, about this youth. His life had been marvellous for its sanctity, and for the familiarity in which he had lived with saints and angels, and with the Queen of Angels and her Divine Son ; and now his death was marvellous ; desired, asked for, promised, foretold to the very hour ; a death, not like other deaths, for here had been no struggle, no violent symptom to mark any adequate cause for the rapid extinction of life in one who was in the flower of his youth, and, but a week before, in the enjoyment of perfect health. Stanislas had seemed not so much to die, as to pass away ; and so his death appeared something miraculous rather than a natural event, incidental to all, young as well as old. When, too, his superiors

remembered the swoons of divine love to which he had of late been so subject, and which had excited their anxiety, swoons entirely disconnected with the state of his health, which, to all appearance, was unimpaired, fain were they to attribute the death of the holy novice, not to the trifling fever which preceded it, but to a paroxysm of that magnificent and glorious malady which both the tradition and the devout instinct of the Church pronounce to have been the immediate cause of the separation of soul and body, which we call death, in the Immaculate Mother of God herself,—excess of divine love, a privilege which her favour has obtained for some of her best-beloved children. So thought, and so reasoned, his brethren and fathers, when from the professed house a priest arrived who communicated to them a circumstance which confirmed them in their conviction, already so strong, that Stanislas had gone straight to glory. This priest had exceedingly loved the young saint, to whom, also, for his great merits he had been very dear. Hearing how ill he was the night before, he purposed visiting him in the early morning. Now, as he was lying between awake and sleep, near the time for rising, he imagined that he was already risen and on his way to the noviciate, when he met a Brother belonging to that house, who asked him whither he was going. “To Sant’ Andrea,” he replied. “For what purpose?” asked the Brother. “To visit my very dear Stanislas, who is sick,” he answered. “You will have your trouble for nothing,” said the Brother, “for Stanislas is already in Heaven.” “But how do you know this?” asked the astonished priest. “I know it, I know it,” rejoined the Brother; “and I know, moreover, that he has been in Heaven ever since a little after three o’clock.” With these words

the vision or dream, whichever it might be, faded away, and he awoke. It had left a vivid impression on his mind, and as soon as the hour permitted he hastened to Sant' Andrea, where, on finding his fears confirmed, and beholding Stanislas lying dead before his eyes, he burst into a flood of tears, and, casting himself on his knees, embraced and tenderly kissed the feet of the young novice, who, he was assured, was at that moment in the enjoyment of the beatific vision.

It was regarded as a special appointment of Providence that Stanislas should have been the first member of the Company who died and was buried in the noviciate at Rome; it was looked upon as a presage of the glorious fruit of holiness which it should henceforward yield, a presage which was amply fulfilled. The General of the Company gave orders that the holy body should be enclosed in a wooden coffin, an unusual distinction in those early days of the Company, so unusual, indeed, that it had been accorded only to St. Ignatius himself and to P. Laynez; even that holy man, Peter Favre, the associate of the Founder, having been buried like the rest.

When the soul of Stanislas had departed to glory, and his body had been laid by his brethren with honour in the tomb, he lived again amongst them a new life; tongues were unloosed, the seal of secrecy was removed, promises no longer held confidences imprisoned, and the virtues of Stanislas, together with the extraordinary graces of which he had been the recipient, became the universal theme. All had something to relate, and his intimates, as well as those who had the secrets of his conscience and a full knowledge of the purity of his interior and of the wonders of which it had been the theatre, had things to reveal



which they might not tell while he remained on earth. Brother Stefano could then speak of the visions of the divine Mother and her Son, and of those Communion received by angelic hands, concerning which he had bound himself to silence ; and P. Fazj and P. Ruiz could give their testimony to his spotless innocency, and to the marvels which grace had operated in his soul. But his praise and glory, and the precious treasure of his example, were not to be confined to the circle of his brethren and fathers in religion. Stanislas's life had been short, and all hidden with God. Its marvels had not taken place on the world's platform, but they must now be given to the world, and that without delay ; and so P. Fazj took up his pen at once, while the memory of all that he had heard in confidence from the saint, or witnessed in him, was present to his mind in all its freshness and fulness. None could be better fitted for the task than he, who had so intimate a knowledge of the heart of the young novice. His Life of Stanislas was written in Italian, but another pen was busy at the same task in Polish. Poland had a special interest in Stanislas ; and P. Warscewiski, himself also a Pole, felt an ardent desire that no time should be lost in making the history of all the miracles and graces with which God had favoured this blessed youth, a child of Poland, accessible to his countrymen in their own tongue. Warscewiski possessed a soul of much elevation, simplicity, and purity, which, more than their relationship as fellow-countrymen, had created a tie of strong friendship between the two novices, so far removed from each other in age. Stanislas also had treated him with especial confidence, and hence he was able to enter into interesting details, of which he had enjoyed exceptional knowledge ; for Stanislas, save to the directors of his

conscience, did not readily speak of himself. Warscewiski's grief at the death of his young compatriot was profound, not merely from personal regret, or from a sense of the loss which the Company had sustained, but on account of his beloved country. For, as he himself confessed, in the death of Stanislas he beheld the fall of a pillar upon which he had founded the loftiest and most confident hopes, as regarded, not only the increase of the Company, but the special benefit of Poland. But God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, and His designs are often entirely beyond our ken and comprehension, although in time we may come to realise something of their import. No benefit which Stanislas living might have effected for his country could have equalled what, when raised to glory, his intercession obtained for it; and Poland has not, perhaps, amongst all her many sons illustrious for their sanctity, who have served her on earth or in Heaven, numbered one who can be compared with Stanislas for the miracles he has wrought, whether for the profit, spiritual and temporal, of his clients, or for the public weal of the kingdom.

While the pens of these two Fathers were thus preparing the first simple biographies of the saint which were given to the public, artists were engaged in reproducing his likeness in painting and sculpture. Never in their most poetic conceptions had they figured to themselves an ideal of such pure loveliness as Stanislas had embodied, and the incidents of his life also singularly lent themselves to illustration. Soon all its marvellous circumstances were reproduced both in marble and on canvas, so that, before four months had elapsed, his life, thus related, pourtrayed, and imaged, became rapidly known throughout Italy, Poland, and France; and immediately might be noted the enthusiastic sym-

pathy which all Catholic hearts experienced for the saintly child who, so to say, had added fresh charms to virtue, candour, innocency, and the love of God and of the Mother of God, by his beautiful example. A prestige was about him such as we may conceive invested that sweet flower of martyrs, the young virgin Agnes, in the eyes of the early Christians, and he at once became dear to the hearts of the faithful, loved as soon as seen and heard of, before as yet Christendom was ringing with the prodigies and miracles which were to be the fruit of his powerful intercession. For when Stanislas's life seemed to be brought to a close, then only may we say that it began.

The room in which Stanislas died at Rome has been carefully preserved. It is reached by long staircases and corridors. On the floor is laid a bed admirably executed in marble of a pale yellow hue. On it lies the holy novice, his head resting on a pillow of white marble. In his right hand he holds a crucifix and a rosary, and in his left a picture of the Blessed Virgin, which he is contemplating with an expression of the tenderest love. The sculptor, Legros, who executed this work, has made the statue of Stanislas of the size of life. It is clothed in a soutane of black marble, allowing the front of the shirt in white marble to appear. The head, hands, and feet of the saint are also of white marble; and he lies a little inclined to the right, with one knee slightly bent. A picture on the wall represents our Lady surrounded by a choir of Christian virgins. Amongst them is seen St. Barbara, the saint's beloved patroness, as well as St. Agnes and St. Cecilia, for whom he had a special devotion. A number of little angels are dropping rose leaves out of

baskets which they carry. The artist, of course, designed to represent the vision which the dying saint beheld, and Stanislas accordingly has his eyes turned at once in its direction and in that of the picture which he holds. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved upon an altar in this apartment. Over the tabernacle is a beautiful copy of the portrait of our Lady which tradition attributes to St. Luke, and which is preserved in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Stanislas used to love to go and pray before it, and after his death St. Francis Borgia obtained the permission of Pope Pius V. to have it copied. It was thought that no better place could be selected for this copy than the room from which Mary's favourite passed to Heaven. Opposite is another altar dedicated to the saint, and over it the earliest known picture of him. It is also, perhaps, that which gives the best idea of the indescribable charm of his face. In an ante-chamber to this room are deposited the relics of many saints; and here also is preserved Canisius's letter to the General, Francis Borgia, concerning Stanislas, in which he penned those memorable words: "*Nos de illo præclara speramus—* (We hope splendid things of him)."



## CHAPTER II.

### STANISLAS OBTAINS GRACES FOR HIS KINDRED.

STANISLAS carried to Heaven the remembrance of his dearly loved brother and mother, and the first-fruits of his intercession were manifested in them. On the

death of her son, Margaret Kostka speedily felt an ardent love of God kindled in the depths of her soul. Never had she experienced so sweet an emotion. Yet she had always been remarkably pious, and, as will be remembered, had known what it was to taste a joy truly heavenly when she received a supernatural token of the future sanctity of her child; but now that he was borne to glory a very flood of happiness seemed to inundate her being. As he had received from her his earthly life, so now, in return, she obtained through him the grace of entering a new and heavenly life. She well knew whom she had to thank for the gift, and she religiously and faithfully profited by it. She became altogether a changed person; her whole application being now to mortify her own will and live for the life eternal. She submitted herself entirely to the directors of her soul, P. Pietro Fabricj and P. Giovanni Ponnacki, both Fathers of the Company, the latter of whom had held the office of Provincial of Poland, the other that of Rector of Jaroslav, and under their conduct became a shining example to Christian matrons. She was all rigour for herself, and all tender charity for the poor. Every day she gave one or two hours to continued meditation upon divine things, during which time she shut herself up in her room, allowing no one, under any pretext, not even her own waiting-women, to enter or disturb her when thus engaged. Alone with God, she would admit of no interruption or intrusion. Every day until the close of her life she went from Kostkow to Prasniz, a distance of two miles, to be present at the Adorable Sacrifice in the chapel which she had built, and to recommend to God the soul of her husband and that of her son Albert, who were interred there. She ate so sparingly that she

seemed like one who kept a perpetual fast, and during meal-time she always observed silence, commonly causing some spiritual book to be read aloud. Thus passed the remaining days of the mother of Stanislas; and we are assured that her dear son, not contented with obtaining for her these gifts of grace, never failed to aid her in all difficulties and console her in all troubles, and that he further evinced his filial affection by coming to assist her in the hour of death.

Margaret Kostka was a comparatively easy conquest of grace—the foundation was already laid; and, if she had not hitherto aspired to the more perfect way, she had lived, as we have observed, in the devout fear of God and the observance of His commandments. But it was far otherwise with Paul. His heart was wholly given to the world; it was, moreover, hardened by selfish indulgence; and, if anything could have moved him to leave his evil ways and return to God, the daily sight of his brother's virtues, recommended as those virtues were by all that could render them lovely and winning, must, one would have thought, have had this effect. Yet we have seen that not only did they exercise no softening power upon him, but they positively irritated and provoked him to acts of injustice and cruelty, which every day widened the breach in his miserable soul, and removed him to a greater distance from all holy and converting influences. But the triumph which Stanislas, living, could not achieve,—which all his angelic patience, his loving gentleness, and his persevering prayers could not obtain,—now that he was dead, or, rather, now that he had entered into life eternal, he was to accomplish without difficulty. The soul of his brother Paul! How had he longed and prayed for it on earth, often beneath the trampling feet

of his persecutor ; and now he carried with him this same longing desire to the throne of God. How touching it is to think of this as his first petition, and his first thought, when his own beatified soul was plunged into the ocean of God's joy, where all sorrow is forgotten, but where the ardour of charity only burns with the more intensity !

Scarcely had Stanislas drawn his last breath, when Paul was seized with an indefinable emotion and anxiety of mind. He had left Poland, and was at that time on his road to Rome, by his father's desire, to seek out Stanislas at the Jesuit noviciate, and bring him back at all costs. The news of his brother's death met him on his way. He wept ; and through his tears he seemed for the first time to discern the incomparable favours which God had vouchsafed to his holy brother. This perception was accompanied by a sense of sorrow and shame at the recollection of his own behaviour to him. There is no unveiler like death. To how many is it not the signal for the commencement of unavailing and life-long regrets ! With Paul Kostka those regrets were, indeed, to be life-long, but not unavailing ; for where grace comes to render sorrow fruitful, it is a sorrow only less blessed than would be the absence of its occasion, nay, often more blessed, for "the sorrow according to God," as the Apostle tells us, "worketh penance steadfast unto salvation." It works "indignation" against self, "fear," "desire," "zeal," "revenge ;" \* so that the penitent attains, through compunction, self-humiliation, and generosity of spirit, to a height to which, guiltless of any great offence and free from self-reproach and self-condemnation, he might, perhaps, have never so much as aspired. The tears of

\* 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

Paul flowed afresh at the sight of his brother's portrait. He could now no longer understand his cruel persecution of that angelic being; the thought was agony to him; and the remembrance of his inhumanity threw him at times into a state of depression bordering on despair. The perusal of Father Warscewiski's Life put the finishing stroke to his misery. Two full years had not elapsed since the day when he last beheld his brother, and cruelly beat him and trampled him under his feet, before he saw his name recorded in print, and published to the world, as that of one who had been the most instrumental in increasing the merits and glory of Stanislas. True, the Father, out of regard for the feelings of the living, had touched this circumstance with a tender hand, softening, as far as he could consistently with truth and regard to the honour of Stanislas, the recital of Paul's ill-treatment of his brother; nevertheless, he only, perhaps, felt the pang more deeply at his heart, which witnessed to the truth of every line that had been written, and of much more that had been omitted through compassion and consideration for himself. Until the day of his death the wound in Paul's heart never closed, although, as the work of grace advanced in his soul, the bitterness of his still inconsolable grief was mitigated.

He was to live to see the glorious title of Blessed awarded to his brother by the Holy See, and the annual commemoration by the faithful of his departure to Heaven enriched with a treasure of indulgences. He was to see his images and pictures honoured upon the altars, and surrounded with countless precious offerings, which the piety of the faithful had brought in gratitude for benefits miraculously obtained through his intercession. He was to live to see himself rever-



ently pointed out and spoken of as the most fortunate and honoured man in Poland, because he was the brother of a saint. Such distinction cut him to the quick. "What share or part have I," he would exclaim, "in the glory and sanctity of my brother, but such as executioners have in the crowns of martyrs!" So extreme was his sensitiveness on the subject that when pressed by the Jesuit Fathers to furnish them with details, known, perhaps, only to himself, of the life and virtues of his blessed brother, and of the extraordinary favours which God bestowed upon him, he could scarcely be brought to make any reply; he seemed to be suffering excruciating anguish, and would say, "Why do you forget the other saints, my fathers?" as one who would willingly speak of any other subject in preference. But that this was not from want of veneration for him of whom they spoke, was attested by the tears that streamed from his upraised eyes, his clasped hands, and the deeply murmured "*Oret pro nobis beatus*—(May the blessed one pray for us)." Such, also, was his habitual behaviour on occasion of the juridical inquiries; and, indeed, little could have been extracted from him but for the presence and remonstrances of Bilinski, who, although himself (as we have seen) extremely unjust in his treatment of Stanislas, and, albeit less cruel than Paul, yet in one sense even more culpable, as being the person who had the charge of the holy youth and bound therefore to afford him protection, was very forward, and even enthusiastic, in giving his testimony. For the particulars concerning the childhood of Stanislas and his life at Vienna we are, in fact, almost entirely indebted to Bilinski; but it must be observed, in order to obviate any conclusion which might hence be drawn to the detriment of Paul's

humility or contrition, that his reserve was in a large measure to be attributed to the very depth of his self-humiliation and the poignancy of his sorrow. Bilinski was not the near kinsman of the saint, and received no reflected honour from the miraculous graces and supereminent holiness of Stanislas ; Paul, on the other hand, could not but see that he did reap credit of this nature ; and, all guilty as he had been, now that he took part against himself, men naturally associated him with the glory of his brother, because the same blood flowed in their veins. Thus, while on all occasions confessing with sobs and tears his cruel behaviour to the saintly child, whose every act breathed as it were the charm and fragrance of Paradise, and to whom he declared he had nevertheless never given a good word, he shrank from entering into particulars, not only because to speak of them was like plunging a knife into his own heart, but because he observed that fresh honour accrued to himself thereby.

But, if silent before men with reference to the past, to God, and to Stanislas himself, he was ever speaking of it, and never ceased to the day of his death beseeching the God of Mercy and his dear brother to forgive his cruel behaviour to him. As he lay dying, although more than forty years had passed over his head since they two lived together in Kimberker's house, the last tears he shed, when he made his confession to P. Cielezki, were for the cruel outrages—the kicks and blows—which he had inflicted on his innocent and blessed brother. Nor was it with tears alone that through life he laboured to expiate the sin of his youth, as the following incident, which occurred when infirmities were beginning to creep upon him, may serve to prove. Being on a journey, in

1603, thirty-five years after his brother's death, he passed the night at a hostel, where a large apartment was provided for him. Hither after supper he retired, without perceiving that behind the stove, which in many continental inns, as all travellers know, is a considerable erection standing out into the room, there was a little bed occupied by a young boy. He was the son of the master of the house, who probably thought that the sleeping child would not disturb his noble guest, and might even remain unobserved, as, indeed, was the case. Paul, believing himself to be the sole tenant of the apartment, spent the greater part of the night in prayer; and, before lying down, having stripped off his clothes, he gave himself a most severe scourging with a discipline, groaning between the blows which he mercilessly inflicted upon his shoulders, and repeatedly exclaiming aloud, "Holy brother, holy brother, pray to God for me a sinner, and spare him who so continually struck and persecuted you." The child was terrified, and believed he shared his room with a murderer, who had imposed this penance on himself because he had killed a brother. When morning came he anxiously questioned Paul's servants, relating to them what he had heard and witnessed, when they told him that the brother of whom their lord spoke was the Blessed Stanislas, who had died young at Rome, in the Company of Jesus, and was now working so many miracles. This boy, Stanislas Luczka by name, afterwards confirmed his statement on oath. Many others testified to having frequently heard Paul contrast his own barbarous and insulting behaviour with the meekness and patience of Stanislas, who not only endured with the sweetest equanimity all that he made him suffer, but was continually rendering him lowly services in

return for the many injuries received at his hands. At such times he would sigh profoundly, and melt into tears, so that one who had frequent experience of what he stated could affirm that he never alluded to Stanislas in the presence of Paul without the latter manifesting the deepest emotion. More than this, he would prostrate himself daily, with his face to the earth and his arms extended, to implore forgiveness of Heaven and of his brother; and a gentleman of the neighbourhood afterwards recorded how he felt himself touched and moved to devotion at beholding Paul lying with his face in the dust of the pavement before the altar in the church of Prasnitz, where the image of his beloved brother was exposed to public veneration,—the more beloved because too late known, too late for him ever to allow himself to taste of peace or joy on earth. But his sorrow, bitter as it was, was not that mere natural sorrow which refuses all consolation, because incapable of any. In him natural sorrow was elevated and sweetened by the heavenly gift of compunction, which he knew that he owed to the intercession of Stanislas. Hence, great part of the time which he spent before his altar was employed in outpourings of gratitude for the grace of a changed life; a life, how changed, indeed, since he flaunted about Vienna, in gay worldly attire, doing the devil's work!

After his return to Poland, he was more than once on the point of making a suitable and advantageous marriage, but upon each several occasion when a match was proposed for him, the negotiation, for some reason or other, unexpectedly failed. Paul believed that he saw herein a signification of the will of God, who was calling him to a life more exclusively devoted to His service, and to the entire dedication of his whole heart,

mind, and thoughts to divine things, unhampered with earthly cares or the love of wife and children. He generously responded to the call, thereby not only making an oblation of himself, but sacrificing the hopes of his race, for the house of Kostka was to die with him. His brother Albert followed, or, rather, accompanied, their father to the grave. The Castellan John died in the depth of winter, a Polish winter, and his son Albert, having at every moment to leave the stove-heated atmosphere of his apartment, to go bare-headed to the door in order to receive, with due honour, the nobles who hastened from the neighbouring castles to offer their condolences, received a fatal chill, which, within a few hours, laid him on the bed of death, so that he was committed to the tomb along with his parent. John Kostka, the sole married son of the house, left only daughters.

Paul, freed now from all domestic cares and prospects, virtually made a donation of all he possessed to God, recognising Him as the owner and master of all he had, and himself only as its steward and administrator. His compassion and charity for the poor were unbounded, and he manifested as much tenderness as liberality in the relief of their necessities. His house was the refuge of destitute pilgrims, whom he lovingly received, washing their feet, waiting on them at table, and supplying them with money to prosecute their journey. He built a convent for the Franciscan Minor Observantines at Prasnitz, and also an hospital, adjoining which he caused a large house to be constructed, which he destined for the Jesuits. Upon the Company's declining to accept the offer, he appropriated it to the uses of the hospital. His love for all religious Orders was great, but his peculiar predilection for the

Company of Jesus may be well understood. Having heard, then, that the Jesuit Fathers were desirous of possessing a house in the country, to which the professors of the College of Pultowa could sometimes repair to recruit their strength, he gave them a rich domain of his own, worth about 12,000 florins. The disinterestedness of the Fathers would not suffer them to profit by his generosity, and an amicable dispute ensued, which terminated in a compromise, by which they were allowed to pay half its value, 6000 florins. But Paul repented of the agreement as soon as he had been brought to consent to it, and pressed them to take back, at least, 1500 florins, to be employed in the support of indigent scholars who frequented their classes.

He spent a large portion of his time at the hospital, ministering to the sick with his own hands; and in the neighbouring building he had a bed-room allotted to his own use, furnished in a manner suitable to his rank. But this was only an artifice of humility, in order to veil his penitential practices from the knowledge of the nobles who might visit him there; for he had a secret chamber to which he retired for the night, of which by far the greater part was spent in prayer. There he took such rest as he allowed himself on the bare floor, merely spreading a carpet underneath him when suffering much from fatigue. About two o'clock he rose and recited matins, for it was his custom to say office, and he then inflicted upon himself a terrible flagellation. That night in the inn, the secrets of which were disclosed by their concealed witness, was no exceptional one with Paul. It was in the hours of silence and darkness especially that the never-forgotten image of the past rose vividly before him. He remembered

that room in Kimberker's house, and the remembrance inflamed him with a holy anger against himself ; so that, wielding the discipline with unsparing rigour, he would lacerate himself with cruel wounds to expiate his inhuman treatment of the innocent Stanislas. After this he would remain in silent contemplation, during which his soul tasted the sweets of divine union ; and thus he would persevere until the morning.

From his continual kneeling, whether by night in his chamber or by day in the church, large callosities had formed themselves on his knees. He had a deep devotion to the Passion, in meditating upon which he sometimes passed whole nights ; and so great was his veneration for the Adorable Sacrifice that he usually heard several Masses each day, serving the priest at some and assisting at others. When he was travelling in unfrequented places, and was therefore unable to begin the day in this manner, at the very first town or village he reached, no matter what the hour, without giving himself a moment's repose, he would repair to the church, and, seeking out the priest, would humbly request him to open the door of the tabernacle sufficiently for him to catch a sight of the ciborium,—a favour which to one distinguished, not only by his noble birth and station, but by his near relationship to him who was the glory of Poland, was never denied. Then, as if Heaven had been disclosed to his view, and he beheld Christ visibly seated on His throne, he prostrated himself with his face on the ground to adore Him ; and, having prayed some time with tenderest devotion before his Sacramental God, and begged His blessing, he rose and departed. Stanislas's passionate love for the Divine Eucharist seemed, indeed, to have revived in

Paul. It was one of the most precious gifts which the saint had obtained for his much-loved brother. Accordingly, he might be continually seen kneeling motionless before the Blessed Sacrament, with tears streaming from his eyes. Whenever, as he travelled, he passed by any church, he would stop his carriage that he might enter and adore his Lord. The same he would do at any wayside chapel or image, especially if it represented some mystery of the Passion; where, after kneeling down and paying his devotions, he would kiss the ground several times before proceeding on his road.

Zeal for the Catholic faith, which was, as it were, hereditary in the noble house of Kostka, shone conspicuously in Paul. We have seen how his ancestors would not suffer the foot of a heretic to linger on the soil which they owned, and have had occasion to notice the indignation with which Paul denied having, even in the midst of his deepest estrangement from God, ever consented to superstitious practices condemned by the Holy Church; and now the jealousy for the faith which animated him, would not permit of his retaining any one in his service, no matter in how mean a capacity, who did not testify his fitness by professing his religion in some public and solemn act. And the open profession which he required from his dependents, he himself was forward to make in his own person. When he was on travel, he wore his rosary conspicuously round his neck, even in places frequented by heretics, so that no sooner should men see him than they should know that he was a Catholic. Nor must it be supposed that, great lord as he was, and the uncontrolled master of his own actions, he had nothing to bear even from his Catholic brethren, no obloquy to encounter on account



of his mode of life, so exclusively devoted to prayer, penance, and works of mercy. Those same scoffs with which in Vienna he had insulted his brother Stanislas, because he led a humble and devout life such as he then judged to be a mean dereliction of nobility, he had himself often to endure in his own country ; and many a time had he to fortify his patience by recalling to mind the meekness, the long-suffering, the persevering sweetness, with which Stanislas had endured from him, not scoffing words only, but injurious and cruel treatment. He bravely stood the trial through life ; and, accepting all in the spirit of penance, and with that generosity of soul which was an eminent feature in his conversion, he nobly disregarded and contemned the opinion of those worldly-wise persons who reckon as folly anything done for God which exceeds the ordinary level of tolerated piety.

But, not satisfied with this entire and uncompromising dedication of himself to God, he secretly nourished a desire of a more full and complete oblation of himself by admission into the Company of Jesus, which he so tenderly loved and honoured that he never named it without prefixing the epithet of holy. A sense of his own unworthiness alone held him back ; at last, trusting that the merits of his brother would cover and make amends for his own demerits, he took courage to ask the favour. He was at that time near sixty years of age, enfeebled and deteriorated in health through the rigorous penances he had so long practised ; nevertheless the Provincial, Decio Strivieri, made no difficulty in acceding to his request, subject to the approbation of the General, which was needed on account of his advanced years. Claudio Acquaviva, who, as we have seen, had been the co-novice of Stanislas and the

witness of his virtues, and who had ever retained the tenderest devotion to him, at once accepted Paul as a son of the Company, and welcomed him into the Order; while Stanislas, doubtless, from his throne in glory stretched forth his arms to embrace him, as now doubly his brother, united to him by the ties of religion, more close and endearing even than those of blood. Paul, having thus obtained his desire, the fruit of many prayers, was not, however, to enter a noviciate on earth, but to go (as we may well believe) to join the society of the blessed in Heaven. For, desiring previously to secure to the church of Prasnitz the rich donations which he had made to it, he repaired to Petricow for the purpose of presenting himself before the proper tribunal, in order to effect the legal transfer. Here he was attacked by fever, and, after making his confession, died in the arms of Father John Cielezki, bewailing to his last moments his cruel treatment of his brother. He expired on the 13th November 1607, the very day which was subsequently allotted by Pope Clement X. for the annual commemoration of the Blessed Stanislas; and, with P. Bartoli, we cannot but attribute this circumstance to a secret appointment of Divine Providence, designing to crown the saint with a double aureole of glory—both that which was due to his own merits, and that which was the reward of Paul's eminent virtues, the fruit of his intercession.

Paul's funeral was attended by all the nobility and distinguished persons of the neighbourhood, who came to testify the high honour in which they held him, and who gazed reverently at that face which retained in death the hues of life, with so heavenly an expression of devotion that they seemed to be contemplating, not a dead body, but a living saint; the limbs had also

preserved their flexibility. The report that God attested the sanctity of His servant by a miraculous splendour during the night preceding the obsequies obtained general circulation, and, whether or not it were founded in truth, is, at least, a proof of the estimation in which Paul Kostka was held. He was laid in the chapel which he had himself added to the church of Prasnitz, and in which he had prepared his tomb, with these words in capital letters graven upon the stone: "*Non erubescio Evangelium*—(I am not ashamed of the Gospel)." \* Those three words, indeed, may be said to sum up his life from his conversion to his death.

Although Bilinski was not allied to Stanislas by blood, yet his near connection with him for so many years gives him a title to be noticed along with the kindred of the saint who benefited by his intercession. The first touch of grace, as in the case of Paul, excited in his heart a poignant sorrow for having so long failed to recognise the virtues of the angelic child who had been committed to his charge; and to the day of his death, we are assured, he experienced the deepest self-abasement at having possessed such a privilege only to abuse it. For, although he never appears to have been himself personally guilty of any act of cruelty, yet he was continually assailing him with harsh and reproachful language; not to add, that he was virtually responsible for the tyranny of Paul, seeing that it was in his power to have restrained him, whereas he gave practical encouragement to his behaviour by sharing his worldly views and joining in his dissipation. Nevertheless, unlike Paul, his prevailing sentiment was that of joy, unbounded triumphant joy, at beholding the

\* Rom. i. 16.

honours paid to Stanislas, and the measures which were being taken to raise him to the altars of the Church. Much as Bilinski had wherewith to reproach himself, two circumstances which served to barb the arrow of self-accusation in Paul's conscience were wanting in his case. He had never laid a finger on the angelic child ; and, though provoked and irritated against him, he had not regarded him with that hatred and repugnance which had envenomed the brother's heart. Hence, perhaps, in a measure the difference of their feelings.

Bilinski continued through life to receive from Stanislas in glory many marks of kindness and favour ; and the saint even came to assist his former preceptor on his deathbed. As his last hour drew nigh, he beheld his beloved ward standing before him ; nor were his eyes alone to be rejoiced by the heavenly vision, for Stanislas spoke to him loving and gentle words of encouragement, which fortified his soul, and disposed him to make a beautiful and truly Christian death. To his last breath he kept his eyes fixed on a picture of the saint, ever and anon devoutly addressing it, and repeatedly kissing it with the tenderest affection. Thus consoled, supported, and gladdened by his heavenly protector, he passed away to his eternal companionship in the bosom of God. This visit to Bilinski was a grace flowing from a charity which returns good for evil, but it was also an act of gratitude : for, if no one had treated Stanislas living with greater injustice, no one had laboured more to establish his glory after death ; and when saints have passed to bliss, their glory is now so entirely merged in that of God, and become one with His, that they no longer refuse those honours which are their due. He remembered, too,

the seven days and seven nights that Bilinski had sat by his sick-bed, and repaid in benefits to the immortal soul of the dying man the solicitude with which he had tended his own perishable body. Such is the magnificent charity and gratitude of the saints of God.



### CHAPTER III.

#### THE SAINT'S RELICS AND TOMB.

To none, it may be supposed, was the memory of Stanislas more dear than to his companions, the novices of the Company. He was one of themselves, and was to be theirs for ever, since he never left the noviciate except for Heaven. Of his supereminent virtue they had been the daily witnesses; and now that the published Lives, and the declaration of those Fathers who had possessed an intimate knowledge of the secrets of his soul, had further proclaimed those marvels of grace and supernatural favours which his humility had concealed from them, the desire to have some considerable relic of him in their own chapel took possession of their minds; its vicinity would not only warm their hearts with the love of God, but act upon them as a constant incentive to the imitation of his pure life and admirable perfections. The subject had long been matter of conversation amongst themselves, but as yet they had not ventured to make known their desire to their superiors, when the death of one of their number, in the latter part of the year 1570, seemed to furnish a suitable occa-

sion for preferring their request. The common place of sepulchre must be opened, and thus a convenient opportunity would be afforded for extracting the desired relic from the grave of their departed brother. They accordingly deputed the saintly youth, Ridolfo Acquaviva, whom we have already mentioned and who was specially devout to Stanislas, to present their united petition. He pleaded their cause so successfully as to obtain a promise of the head of the saint for the oratory of their house.

At the opening of the grave, which had been closed for more than two years, the novices went, all vested in surplices, and each bearing a lighted torch, to receive with fitting respect the promised treasure. But no sooner was the coffin uncovered than a fragrance, more delicious than that of the sweetest flower, issued from it. So delicate, so pure, so exquisite was this scent, which, moreover, instead of only delighting the senses, seemed to penetrate to the souls of those present, that one and all felt that it was a perfume not of earth but of Paradise. The lid of the coffin was now raised, and every one pressed devoutly forward to venerate the holy remains which God had honoured by this signal grace, when, behold! Stanislas is again before them, not uncorrupted only, but even as he looked when they had taken their last sorrowful farewell of him before he was committed to the earth: the same smile on his lips, the same unstained fairness on his brow. It is needless to say that no one could think of dismembering the holy body which God had willed that death should not so much as disfigure or discolour; and so, after gazing at him a while, with full hearts and tearful eyes, they were fain to see the coffin reclosed, and to forego for the present the pious hope they had cher-

ished. It pleased God, after glorifying the saint on earth by the prodigy we have recorded, to allow his mortal remains to moulder into dust, in which state they were found when the grave was again opened a few years later. The bones were then enveloped in silk, and, being placed in a leaden coffin, were deposited in the noviciate church, near to the spot where afterwards they were to be exposed to public veneration.

Meanwhile increasing multitudes were experiencing the blessed fruits of his powerful intercession. Grateful offerings from the sick and the suffering, indebted to him for miraculous cures, were arriving every day at his sepulchre from all countries, and from Poland, in particular, in the richest abundance. Many of these *ex-votos* were most costly and beautiful, being enriched with diamonds and other precious stones of the highest value, but they disappeared as fast as they were laid upon the tomb. Dear as was Stanislas to the Jesuit Fathers, who were certainly behind none in the estimation in which they held his saintliness, their deference to the Church's rules did not permit them to suffer these public testimonies of veneration to adorn his tomb. As yet the Holy See had pronounced no judgment concerning Stanislas's claims to the veneration of the faithful; and at that epoch the degree of honour which may be permitted to be given to those who have died, as the expression is, in the odour of sanctity, had not been defined with any precision. But the enthusiastic Poles could not regard the matter from this point of view. Every day their angelic countryman was working the most amazing miracles; some fresh prodigy was perpetually occurring to stir every sentiment of love, gratitude, and admiration in their hearts; they knew that offerings of great value were

being continually sent to the saint's tomb, and they learned with the utmost grief that not one of them was permitted to remain; all were carried away and concealed. While every city in Poland was vying in demonstrations of love and honour to Stanislas, it seemed as if the Jesuits were striving to bury his tomb in oblivion; not so much as suffering a lamp to be lighted in honour of one whom God was glorifying with so many miracles. The Fathers were constantly receiving letters from Poland on this subject, couched, some in a tone of tender remonstrance, some in that of bitter complaint; but, however distressing to their feelings these appeals might be, they could not be induced to depart from a line which they believed to be imperative on them, as deferential sons of the Church. They endeavoured accordingly, as well as they might, to pacify their petitioners, and encourage them to wait patiently for the voice of the Vicar of Christ to give the signal for those public honours which, they might confidently hope, would one day be awarded to their holy countryman.

Two signal prodigies which occurred at the tomb of Stanislas came to renew alike the enthusiasm and the impatience of the Poles. Nicholas Oborski, a noble Polish youth, was in the habit of going frequently to spend some time in prayer at the tomb of Stanislas; but on the 28th of October, 1603, he remained longer than usual, on account of its being the anniversary of the day on which the saint entered the noviciate. Before retiring, having prostrated himself, as usual, to kiss the ground as near as he could to the grave, he perceived an indescribable fragrance, such as he had never before experienced, accompanied with a corresponding inward consolation of spirit. The longer he remained



kissing the ground and inhaling this exquisite scent, the more intense it became ; and the wonder was not limited to this single occasion, it happened repeatedly. Although he felt convinced that no earthly flower or composition of man's art could produce such a heavenly perfume, he used, nevertheless, every means in his power to investigate the matter. He immediately confided the circumstance to P. Lancisio, who had the care of the church, and found that he also had noticed the scent, and was alike persuaded that no natural cause could be assigned for it ; and none, indeed, could ever be discovered. Nor was this the first or only instance, for a similar prodigy had taken place in the year 1601, when the relics of Stanislas were removed from the coffin enclosing them, and, after being transferred to a leaden urn, were deposited in a new tomb. Shortly afterwards the Church of the Gesù was filled with the most delicious fragrance. From the church it gradually spread over the whole Jesuit house, but it was most powerful in the sacristy, from whence, indeed, it appeared to issue. Every search was made, and, no doubt remaining in the minds of any that the scent originated in the sacristy itself, the General Acquaviva called the sacristan, and questioned him closely. The poor man, thus interrogated, confessed that he had been guilty of a pious theft, for that, having assisted with others at the transfer of the relics, he had furtively appropriated to himself a joint of the spine-bone of the saint, and, carrying it off, had hid it in the sacristy of the Gesù, where it immediately began to betray itself by the supernatural perfume which it exhaled. By the General's desire the man confirmed his statement on oath, and the whole account may be seen in the processes. Acquaviva forthwith carried back the relic to

the church of the noviciate, and replaced it with the rest of the holy body. The miraculous scent then ceased to proceed from the sacristy, and soon died away altogether.

It cannot be matter of surprise that when these two prodigies came to be known in Poland the ill-appeased dissatisfaction of its people was renewed. God Himself and the blessed Stanislas, they said, were taking their part, and joining in their remonstrance at the neglect in which he was held. Such was the not unnatural interpretation which the Poles put upon the supernatural testimonies to his greatness in Heaven with which God was honouring his tomb on earth. Yet, pained and distressed as were the Fathers at having to refuse applications which had so much show of reasonableness, and which were prompted by wishes with which they themselves heartily sympathised, they still held firm. So solid were the arguments by which they supported their determination, that Cardinal Lorenzo Bianchetti was induced to forego a purpose which he had entertained. From his frequent visits to Poland he had become well known to the nobility of that country, and, yielding to the urgent solicitations of the Poles then in Rome, had consented to light with his own hand, and suspend at the tomb of Stanislas, a lamp of great value and exquisite workmanship, presented by the Bishop of Cracow, afterwards Cardinal Maciejowski, who, upon the discovery of a rich vein of silver in his diocese, ordered that the very first portion of the metal extracted should be thus dedicated to the honour of his heretofore much-loved and revered companion in the College of Vienna, now his holy patron and advocate in Heaven. Cardinal Bianchetti accordingly thought good to abandon his

design, to the great disappointment of Stanislas's ardent clients. It is impossible either to blame their pious impatience, or to withhold our commendation from the discreet firmness and prudent self-restraint of the Jesuit Fathers. Both were in the right, and acting each their own proper part; the former in earnestly pressing the cause of Stanislas, the latter in testifying their reverence for the Holy See.

Nor was their resistance in any way to prejudice or retard the glory of the saint; for it pleased God to move the heart of His Vicar, Pope Clement VIII.; after having fully informed himself of the holy life which Stanislas led on earth, and the numerous miracles by which God had manifested his glory in Heaven, to depart, in this case, from the ordinary practice, and to grant an extraordinary and special dispensation in his favour. Upon the request of his Cameriere, Fabian Konopaski, he first granted an indulgence of ten years and ten quarantines to all who, in his native country, should visit, upon Stanislas's anniversary, some chapel of our Lady. Thus was Stanislas most appropriately to receive, in a sanctuary of Mary, the first public homage decreed to him by the Church. This concession was shortly to be followed by an Apostolic Brief, addressed to the city of Pultowa on the 18th of February 1604, in which the Pope gave to Stanislas the glorious title of Blessed, according permission to that city to celebrate his yearly festival, and granting indulgences to all who should take part in the solemnity.

Clement VIII. died shortly after. His successor, Leo XI., elected April 1st, 1605, occupied the pontifical throne but twenty-seven days, when Paul V. was raised to fill the vacant chair of Peter. Cardinal Ales-

sandro Montalto, the protector of Poland, now lost no time in laying before the new Pontiff a petition expressing the long-cherished desire of the Poles, both sovereign and people, to see their young saint held in greater public veneration. At the same time he besought his Holiness to allow Stanislas's picture to be suspended over his tomb, a lamp lighted before it, and the numerous *ex-votos* which his devout clients had for so many years been offering, hung up around it. The answer of the Pope was such as is usual on similar occasions: that the matter must be subjected to examination, and be referred to the judgment of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

Grave inquiries of this character always occupy much time, and, while the affair was pending, the impatience of the Poles was again fast becoming uncontrollable. A prelate, Andrew Bnin Opalinski by name, Provost of Plock, who also held the situation of Chief Secretary of State in the kingdom of Poland, and was subsequently Bishop of Posen, at that time filled the office of ambassador from Sigismund III. to the Roman Court. He warmly shared the devout eagerness of his compatriots, and took upon him to second personally the request preferred by the Cardinal in their name. He went accordingly to the Pope, and entreated him to read the abridged account of the life and miracles of Stanislas which had been offered to him a few weeks previously. The Pope benignantly consented, and Opalinski then felt that his cause was gained. Paul V., it is said, experienced so much pleasure, and was so much touched and interested in the perusal, that he could not lay down the book till he had finished it. It left him with a deep feeling of admiration for the perfection manifested in this youthful saint, so tenderly loved of God

while on earth, and now so marvellously glorified by Him in Heaven. The ambassador of Poland became soon aware of the profound impression made upon the Pope's mind, and could assure his countrymen that little was now needed to obtain his consent to the speedy satisfaction of their desires.

Accordingly, on the 14th of August, Donna Leonora Orsini, the wife of the Duke Alessandro Sforza, accompanied by other Roman princesses and by the wife of the French ambassador, went to kiss the feet of his Holiness, and to supplicate him to permit that the same honour and *cultus* should be paid to the Blessed Stanislas Kostka as had already been conceded by the Holy See to the Blessed Aloysius Gonzaga. Paul benignantly accorded their petition as a grace which, he said, was due to the eminent merits of the holy youth, and which their own zeal and devotion in so good a cause had made them worthy to obtain; adding, almost after the manner of an annexed condition, that the novices should offer their communion for him on the morrow, which was the festival of the Assumption. The Holy Father well knew that the favour he was granting, if it would rejoice the whole heart of devout Christendom, would be prized inexpressibly at the Jesuit noviciate; and, in fact, the honour paid to Stanislas, their brother, was felt by the novices to be an honour done to themselves, thus laying upon them a debt of gratitude, which all the prayers and mortifications they could offer upon the occasion were insufficient adequately to discharge. The ambassador Opalinski was immediately apprised of the joyful news, and forthwith sent word to Sant' Andrea in order that the tomb of Stanislas might be adorned as well as the brief space of time remaining would allow. Then, accompanied by all the Polish and

Lithuanian nobles—and there were a number of the highest rank at that time present in Rome—he went in solemn state to the noviciate house at Monte Cavallo, and proceeded straight to the sacristy, whence he bore the picture of the *Beato*, and himself, ascending a ladder, hung it over his tomb. The tomb was no longer in the situation it had occupied for many years against the right wall of the principal chapel, but had been removed to a more prominent position, where, raised further from the ground than heretofore, it was also open to all. When the ambassador had with his own hands suspended the picture, he in like manner hung before it the beautiful lamp, the offering of the Bishop of Cracow. He would allow none but himself to light it, and was seen to shed tears of joy while engaged in these pious acts. The rich *ex-voto* offerings which for thirty-six years had been pouring in, and of which the Jesuit Fathers had been the depositaries and guardians, formed a truly gorgeous display ; but what, perhaps, presented a still more touching spectacle than the splendid gifts of the rich, all glittering with precious stones, were the grateful and simple offerings of the poor—the crutches sent by those who had nothing to give save these trophies and testimonies of their miraculous cure, or legs and arms of wax representing the limbs restored to use and health by the power of Stanislas. These votive offerings were all disposed, as a crown of glory, around and upon the tomb, while on the floor, and, indeed, wherever an available spot could be found, lighted candles were placed. This done, Opalinski and his countrymen, with all the inmates of the noviciate house, both novices and Fathers, prostrated themselves with profound veneration before the picture of the Blessed Stanislas, shedding tears of love and

spiritual joy, and thus they remained in prayer for a considerable space of time. By this initiatory and united act of homage, they might be said to be putting the saint in possession of the privilege and honour that day accorded him.

The tomb had now to be decorated and the church prepared for the morrow's festival, when the glory of the great Mother of God and that of her favoured child were most fittingly to be celebrated together. The walls were draped with silken and gold-embroidered hangings; vases of gold and silver, full of choice and fragrant flowers, were ranged, together with splendid candelabras, on and around the tomb, which, amidst its jewels, its flowers, and its lights, bore the semblance of a richly-adorned altar. The desire to display all that had been offered to honour the saint, and to give him his fullest glory, made the pious decorators fill every vacant spot and cover almost every inch of the chapel floor with some costly object, until there was literally no room for more. The next morning solemn Mass was sung by Opalinski, after which he and all present went to kneel before the picture and relics of the saint. During the whole day the Church of Sant' Andrea was filled with worshippers, and the street of the Quirinal crowded with prelates, cardinals, nobles, ambassadors, generals, and all that Rome contained of rank and high distinction, hastening to pay their homage to the Blessed Stanislas; while, as the day advanced and the glad news spread on all sides, the ever-swelling tide of the devout Roman people, always forward and enthusiastic where honour is to be paid and devotion manifested to God's saints, continued to stream towards the Jesuit noviciate house.

The very short time which had elapsed between the

concession of the privilege of public *cultus* by the Pope and the celebration of Mass on the morning of the Assumption, had not enabled the whole city to become acquainted with what had taken place. The Poles and Lithuanians had been speedily informed through Opalinski ; they were consequently all present, so that the first public homage paid to Stanislas was in a peculiar manner the act of the Polish nation. But he belonged to Rome also and to the whole Christian world ; the pious ambassador conceived, therefore, that another day of solemn honour was owing to him, and obtained the favour of renewing the celebration on the octave. This was accordingly done, with equal magnificence and with a still greater concourse of worshippers than on the Assumption. Among them was conspicuous the Duchess of Sforza, accompanied by a numerous band of Roman ladies. Radiant with the joy she felt at having been permitted to take so leading a part in obtaining for the saint the homage which was his due, she came to present her offering at his tomb, a wax candle of twelve pounds' weight, all covered with gold and miniatures of costly value ; and there she remained for a long time kneeling in prayer. All Rome, indeed, may be said that day to have knelt at the tomb of Stanislas, but none were more assiduous or came with hearts overflowing with greater fervour than the sons and daughters of Poland. The news flew to their native country as on the wings of the wind. The enthusiasm excited throughout the length and breadth of the land baffles description ; and its first manifestation was a very shower of fresh gifts to glorify the sepulchre of the saint, many of which for their splendour might, says Bartoli, have been deemed magnificent had they been offered by royal hands.



The present Church of Sant' Andrea was afterwards built by Camillo Panfilo, the nephew of Innocent X. The architect was Bernini. It is in the form of an oblong circle. On the left side of the high altar, dedicated to St. Andrew the Apostle, is the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, and next to it that of St. Stanislas; and on the right are the chapel of the Passion and that of St. Francis Xavier. These chapels, with their altars, are sumptuously adorned, but the altar of St. Stanislas, which also serves him as a tomb, surpasses them all in beauty. His relics are enclosed in an urn covered with lapis lazuli, the delicate blue of which admirably shows off the chasing of bronze and gold. It is simply inscribed with the saint's name, and in front of it is a crystal heart surrounded with flames in gold. The heart, which is of a reddish tinge, has a lighted lamp placed behind it, causing it to glow as if it were all on fire. The marble which decorates the altar contains, as in a frame, a picture of the saint at the moment when he receives in his arms the Infant Jesus, whom the Blessed Virgin has brought to console him. On the right and left of the altar are two other pictures of the saint, surrounded with marble wreaths; the one representing him receiving Communion from an angel, the other in one of his sublime swoons of love. On the vaulted ceiling of the chapel the saint's glory in Heaven is depicted in fresco.

When, in 1798, the Republic had been proclaimed by the French army in Rome, and the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI., had been forced into exile, fears of pillage and profanation of the churches being entertained, a Roman priest, named Luigi Emiliani, was commissioned secretly to remove from the city its most precious relics. He was despatched from Gratz,

where he held the office of secretary to Cardinal Herzan, then residing there, and accomplished his dangerous mission in June, 1798. He found everything at Rome in the most frightful disorder, and, understanding that the Church of Sant' Andrea was about to be used as a ball-room, he felt that there was not a moment to be lost in removing the relics of St. Stanislas. He effected his entrance by breaking a hole at night through the exterior wall of the church, at a spot where, fortunately, there was a garden attached to a private dwelling. When he had reached the tomb he prostrated himself awhile in prayer, beseeching the saint not to permit him to be discovered at his work. Finding that the relics were enclosed in a locked cyprus case, which was further secured by an iron grating fastened by two locks, he was obliged, after breaking the locks, to replace all as he had found it, because day was beginning to dawn. He returned, however, the next night, and, after again making his prayer, he extracted the relics in their silken covering, together with a little copper case containing a written authentication signed by Father Oliva of the Company of Jesus. He then reverently separated a shoulder-bone of the saint from the rest, in order that, if the church escaped profanation and the faithful returned, they might not be cheated by paying their devotions at an empty tomb. Leaving also a document in attestation of what he had effected, he bore away the body of the saint, taking care at the same time to efface all external traces of his own entrance. He had a magnificent reliquary of walnut wood constructed, lined with cotton, in order that no casual shock on the journey might injure the holy relics, and arrived with his precious freight at Gratz towards the close of August. The Cardinal

Herzan never parted with this sacred deposit during life, and at his death, caused by a stroke of apoplexy while engaged in catechising, he obtained, through the prayers of those about him offered to Stanislas, the favour of restored consciousness, enabling him to receive the Last Sacraments. The relics remained under the care of the pious secretary, Emiliani; and, after receiving on their way the highest public honours in Vienna, were, in 1804, restored to the Eternal City, and to their former resting-place in the tomb of Sant' Andrea, which had remained undisturbed during their absence, the church having been providentially guarded from profanation.



## CHAPTER IV.

### HONOURS PAID TO STANISLAS BY HIS COUNTRY.

THE Poles, while rejoicing to see at last the tomb of their young saint crowned with glory in the centre of Christendom, could not rest satisfied until they were at liberty to render to him in their own country that public homage which was at present restricted to Rome. No one was more solicitous for the extension of the privilege to Poland than their monarch, the pious Sigismund; and the cardinal protector of Poland and the ambassador Opalinski were commissioned by him to carry this desire of the whole Polish nation to the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff. Paul V. acceded to the request, and issued a Brief, permitting the festival of the Blessed Stanislas Kostka to be celebrated in all the Jesuit churches in Poland, and

granting large indulgences to all who should visit those churches and communicate upon that day. It would be impossible to give the faintest idea of the outburst of joy with which the news of this Papal concession was received in the saint's native country. No national triumph, no public deliverance, ever elicited such a universal frenzy, so to say, of joy, or called forth such a spontaneous and magnificent demonstration, as did this permission accorded to Poland to kneel at the feet of one of her glorified children. Never, perhaps, is the grand reality of God's Kingdom on earth, His Church, so conspicuously manifested as upon such occasions. The world would ignore and forget these exhibitions, or pass them by with a sneer. Secular history, which can interrupt its grave narrations to record the acclamations and applause which have greeted the return of some victorious general from the battle-field, which can pause to describe Roman triumphs and feudal tournaments, nay, can be minute about the pomp and ceremony of royal marriages and coronations, leaves these pages in a nation's annals unnoticed. It will not be amiss, therefore, to bestow a few words on the subject, particularly as the enthusiastic honour paid by a whole nation to a saint is not, like the popular homage rendered to greatness or heroism in the secular order, a demonstration in which national vanity, dignifying itself with the name of patriotism, has full as large a share as gratitude or genuine admiration, but may be viewed rather as a faithful mirror, reflecting the supernatural merits of him whose spiritual grandeur has elicited it, and an incontrovertible evidence of the miraculous and beneficent power which he has exercised. For what had Stanislas done for his people while living, that they should so honour him after death? The marvel-

lous perfections which we have described were, after all, confined to a narrow circle, and chiefly exhibited within the quiet seclusion of a religious noviciate. True, they were afterwards published to the world, together with the touching incidents of his short life; yet, had they been unaccompanied by the miraculous benefits which, with lavish hands, he began to pour down from his throne of glory upon all who invoked his aid, they never would have sufficed to account for the boundless love and reverence which Poland manifested for her young saint.

The permission for the public veneration of Stanislas was confined, as we have seen, in the first instance, to the churches of the Company. Of these churches, that of Jaroslav was distinguished by the splendour of its adornments. The Duchess of Ostrog, who was by birth related to the Kostkas, presented the Fathers, amongst other costly gifts, with the richest tapestry hangings for the walls of the sacred edifice, over the entrance of which this inscription had been engraved:—  
“The College of Jaroslav, directed by the Company of Jesus, to the Blessed Stanislas, religious of the same Company, son of the Castellan of Zacroczym, light of the heavenly court, star of Rome, glory of Poland, model of religion, of piety, and of purity, contemner of human things, triumph over self, in congratulation for the honour accorded to him by his Holiness, Pope Paul V., Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth.” The interior, magnificently decorated, was filled with emblems recalling, in multiplied forms, the virtues of the saint. All the arts, poetry, painting, and sculpture, had been called into requisition to show him honour. On either side of the high altar, two pictures in particular attracted the attention and moved the devotion of all. The one

represented our Blessed Lady, with St. Ignatius and St. Stanislas kneeling at her feet ; in the other, the blessed youth was depicted receiving Communion from the hands of an angel. This latter picture was literally blazing with diamonds ; and over both were raised gorgeous canopies, enriched with precious stones, and supported by pillars garlanded with flowers of purest gold. After solemn Mass had been sung, and a panegyric delivered in honour of Stanislas, the whole city congregated to witness a pageant which had been prepared in the open street, for the triumph of the saint was not to be confined to the church's walls. Four young children, arrayed as angels, were let down as from the sky, bringing presents for Stanislas, emblematic of the rewards which his different virtues were now receiving in Heaven. One of them bore a crown studded with rose diamonds ; the second, a wreath of emeralds ; the third, a lily ; and the fourth, a diadem covered with every kind of jewel ; symbolising respectively his mortification, his constancy, his purity, and all the virtues combined which had adorned his soul. The good, simple people wept tears of tenderness as these four cherubs, in explanation of their offerings, sang the praises of Stanislas ; but their enthusiasm reached its climax when, at the conclusion of the canticle, four other children, two of whom belonged to the family of Kostka, advanced to receive the emblematic gifts, that they might present them before the image of the saint.

We find in the contemporary chronicles a record of the manner in which the festival of St. Stanislas was annually observed by the Poles and Lithuanians in those days, and continued, indeed, for many years after to be observed. Their accounts prove both the extreme

popularity which this saint at once acquired in his native land, and also incidentally furnish an interesting picture of the manners of the time. In all the cities of Poland, after the conclusion of the first solemn vespers of the feast, every house put on its festal attire; nothing was spared in their adornment; the poorest did their utmost, and the rich displayed a costly splendour which could scarcely have been matched elsewhere, for the Poles are by nature most magnificent and liberal. Garlands of light, artistically arranged, surrounded the image of the saint, which occupied the centre of the decoration of each façade, so that every family seemed to have provided him with an altar. Then, when night fell, a new day seemed to dawn over the enchanted city. In the squares and public places the illumination was of a still more rich and elaborate character, the taste of this gifted people displaying itself in the graceful patterns formed by the disposition of the lamps. Nor were fireworks wanting to enhance the beauty and animation of the scene. From time to time there shot up heavenward flaming blades of wheat, glittering stars, or flowers of brightest hue; and so intense was the brilliancy which filled the atmosphere and was visible far and wide, that more than once it occurred that some city was supposed to be in flames, and the peasants hastened from a distance of many miles to aid in extinguishing the supposed conflagration.

But all this blaze of light was but a prelude to the grand display that was to follow. As the night advanced a procession of youths was formed, often numbering, in the larger cities, above six hundred couples. They were chosen from amongst the most virtuous and the most beautiful of the youthful popu-

lation ; and here we recognise a memorial of the personal beauty of the saint, which was as the visible flower of his virtue and his purity, and was never to be forgotten. These boys were magnificently attired, and carried lighted torches ; and any one who witnessed their modest and recollected air as they walked, exciting, by the very sight of them, sentiments of piety in the spectators, would have confessed that the ceremony of the day was not one of mere pomp and display, but instinct at once with love and devotion to the blessed youth who was the object of all these honours, and with admiration of the virtues and perfections which had exalted him to glory. Between the double ranks of the procession, at stated intervals, large images, representing the saint in various passages of his life, were borne along. Here Stanislas might be seen flying from Vienna in his pilgrim's dress ; there, receiving Communion from angelic hands in presence of St. Barbara. A third group represented him in company with the Divine Mother, and caressed by the Infant Jesus, whom she has placed in his arms ; in another, he might be seen fainting away from excess of the love of God, and supported by his companions. The procession closed with the saint lying on his deathbed, surrounded by holy virgins, who are come with the Queen of Heaven to conduct him to glory. These images were placed on solid platforms, raised on the shoulders of men, the figures being decked with such a profusion of gold and jewels that each group was a treasure of wealth in itself ; while the numerous torches with which they were accompanied lent them even greater splendour than the daylight could have imparted.

Immediately followed a dense multitude, but it was



no thrusting, pushing, noisy crowd ; it was no mob of eager sight-seers or curious gapers after amusement ; it was a whole Catholic people moving reverently and peacefully, with joy on their faces and hymns of praise on their lips, the sound of which rose and fell like the mighty surge of ocean. The hymns were the native product of the piety of this fervent people, and, composed in their own rich language, were often replete with beauty as well as devotion. In all the principal squares, trained choirs were stationed to salute the saint on his arrival with choice strains of music and song, and again with loud and festive salvoes, as, after making the tour of the whole space, the procession moved onward. The doors of every church were open, and, as each was passed in succession, a pause was made to allow devout worshippers to enter and adore, the hymns outside being continued, nevertheless, without intermission. And so sped quickly the first hours of night. At twelve o'clock the procession terminated on the threshold of the principal church, and all who could find room within its precincts crowded in to hear a sermon upon the virtues and miracles of the saint. The next morning saw the altars so thronged with communicants that, we are told, any one might have believed that Easter had come round again. Touching, too, it was to behold long files of peasantry trooping in from the country in the early morning, in their holiday attire, many of them having come from great distances on foot. The nobility, also, from thirty or forty miles around, flocked into the towns to keep a festival so dear to the hearts of great and small alike ; and it was beautiful to witness, mingled together with the populace in one common act of devotion, nobles, princes, magistrates, palatines, prostrate, with their

faces to the ground, before the altar of the Blessed Stanislas ; an act of homage which the whole court, with the King and Queen at their head, might be seen performing, with admirable fervour, at Warsaw, the capital, or in other cities at which they were wont to reside.

The celebration of the annual festival of Stanislas was limited (as we have said) by the terms of the Papal brief to the churches belonging to the Company, but he had altars dedicated and chapels appropriated to him in many cathedrals, parish churches, and religious houses. Nay, whole cities seemed to be converted into temples devoted to his honour ; for everywhere might be seen his image on the public places, where it was installed, by solemn decree of the magistracy, on towers and city gates, and façades of houses, and, indeed, in every conspicuous situation. If you entered the royal palaces, or the sumptuous mansions of the nobility, there again the picture of the holy youth would meet your eyes. Nor would it be easy to give an idea of the riches with which, not the altars only, but the images of Stanislas were laden ; some of these being clothed in vestments of pure beaten gold, with chains round their necks of the same precious metal and diadems on their heads, covered with gems of untold worth—strangely reversing that memorable threat of the youth's misguided father, when he told him that, instead of the chains of gold which he had prepared for him, he had now in readiness iron fetters wherewith to bind him. The Heavenly Father had repaired the injustice of the earthly parent. The chains of gold were his, and royal hands thought themselves honoured by suspending them round his neck. Thus did Poland publicly venerate her Stanis-

las for many and many years in the time of her national glory and independence.

But the exceptional honours decreed to Stanislas in Italy and in his native land were not sufficient to satisfy the hearts of the people. There was a general desire that the Vicar of Jesus Christ should place the crown of sanctity on his head, and hold him forth to the veneration of all Christendom. From all quarters, accordingly, petitions for his canonization kept pouring in, and never, perhaps, had the Holy See been besieged with such pressing and numerous applications. Nor must we suppose that the Fathers of the Company, to whom the honour of Stanislas was so peculiarly dear, were backward in representing the claims of their young saint. Their desire for his exaltation was further stimulated by the appeals which they were constantly receiving from their brethren in all quarters of the globe; and P. Skarga relates how he had before him letters from the several Provincials of Brazil, Mexico, and the West Indies, Goa and the East Indies, strongly representing to the General Acquaviva the ardent desire felt on those distant shores to see Stanislas raised to the altars of the Universal Church.

But from Poland especially the most earnest and touching solicitations were continually being addressed to the chair of Peter. The clergy, as might be expected, took the liveliest interest in the cause, and on several occasions, when assembled in synod, enthusiastically renewed their resolution to employ every means in their power to promote its success. To these instances on the part of clergy and people were added those of the Sovereign, who, notwithstanding the wars which must have absorbed a large portion of his solicitude, had always much at heart the canonization of

Stanislas. He himself wrote to the Pope on the subject, and his letter was accompanied by one from the Queen, and another from the heir to the throne, Ladislas, their son. Paul V. replied to each by a separate brief, in which he expressly gave to Stanislas the title of Blessed, already conferred upon him fourteen years previously in the brief addressed by Clement VIII. to the city of Pultowa. But, while expressing his pleasure and satisfaction at the interest taken in so worthy a cause by the royal family of Poland, and thanking God for having inspired them with the pious wish to see the Blessed Stanislas Kostka numbered amongst the saints, he declared himself unable to gratify it to its full extent, the time which had elapsed since his death being too short to admit of his immediate exaltation. The honours hitherto conceded had been a series of favours and privileges granted in consideration of the tender and devoted love of the people; but the practice of the Church in such cases, from which a certain derogation had already been permitted, did not allow of his proceeding as yet any farther in the matter.

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## CHAPTER V.

### STANISLAS THE PROTECTOR OF POLAND.

It was not merely the extraordinary number of miracles worked by his intercession in favour of individuals of every rank and class, from the king on his throne to the beggar in the streets, which kept alive the enthusiastic love of the Poles for Stanislas, but, as a nation,

they had received many public benefits from their bea-  
tified countrymen. The signal deliverances from plague,  
war, and other scourges, for which they were indebted  
to him, impelled this noble people to be continually  
making grateful attestations of the countless favours  
which they had received from him, accompanied with  
the most pressing applications to the Holy See for his  
canonization. Several cities placed themselves under  
his special protection. The language of a letter written  
in the name of all the magistrates of Lublin, in the  
month of April, 1661, and forwarded to several bishops,  
as well as to other persons of distinction who were in a  
position to advance the cause of Stanislas at Rome, may  
serve as a specimen of other and similar documents.  
“Steps being now in progress for obtaining from the  
Holy Roman See permission for an increase of honour  
and more public veneration to be paid to the Blessed  
Stanislas Kostka, of the Company of Jesus, we readily  
seize this opportunity to testify our devotion, love, and  
homage towards one whose singular patronage we have  
often experienced; and, in order to impart greater  
authenticity to the fact, we give in these letters, by  
common consent, a solemn and public memorial thereof.  
We possess a venerable picture of this blessed youth,  
which has been seen by many persons to sweat and to  
shed tears. We have had a child drowned in a well,  
and, by the power of God, raised to life again through  
his invocation. Again and again, in time of pestilence,  
has this our entire city implored his aid by prayers and  
supplications, and has as often been delivered from evil  
and peril. In like manner, when assailed by the Mus-  
covites, the rebellious Cossacks, the Swedes, and lastly  
by the Hungarians, it has found a ready defence in his  
merits and patronage, which has saved it from inevit-

able ruin. In grateful recognition of these benefits here recorded, and of the many others, too numerous to mention, which in years past we have received, we have chosen and adopted him for our protector, and, with the assent and authority of the whole city, have placed his image over the gates of the town and in the High Court of Justice, where it may still be seen ; and now so great and so general is the zeal and fervour of the people in paying him homage, that scarcely in all Lublin could there be found a single household which does not possess and venerate a picture of this our blessed patron." It would be tedious to detail what would also involve much repetition, or we might add the no less solemn attestations of other great Polish towns to the power and beneficent patronage of the Blessed Stanislas, whom, in like manner, they had chosen for their patron. Warsaw, Posen, Jarocin, Bug, have all the same story to tell : plague arrested, formidable hordes of invaders turned back in precipitate flight from their very gates, besides innumerable answers to prayer granted to individuals. "The Blessed Stanislas Kostka is our protector," says the city of Bug, "and the greater number of us owe to him life and health. There is a monument in our city which attests this fact ; it is the altar which has been raised to him, and to which all run as to an assured asylum in public and private calamities ; and such recourse is always attended with the most happy effects."

Europe seems to have forgotten, if ever it sufficiently appreciated, what she owed to Poland during several centuries, when invading hordes of Pagans and Mahometans came to break their strength against the invincible barrier presented by the courage and self-devotion of her sons. But Poland, we trust, has not forgotten, and

never will forget, what she owed to her Stanislas in the days when she made this glorious stand, and will invoke him with the same fervour now in this hour of her deep affliction and trial. Can she doubt that he will once more raise his pure hands to the Immaculate Mother and her Divine Son in behalf of his unhappy country? Any account of the glories of Stanislas, after he had gone to receive his crown of reward, would be incomplete without some allusion, however brief, to the miraculous assistance which Poland gratefully recognised as having received from her saint at various junctures, when all human aid seemed to have failed, and destruction and ruin to be impending.

The year 1621 is famous in Polish history for the most perilous crisis through which the nation, perhaps, had hitherto passed. The Ottoman power was then at its height, and a young and daring Sultan occupied the throne of Constantinople. Irritated at the support given to the Wallachians, who, desirous to return under Polish rule, had revolted from their Mahometan masters, and glad to avail himself of a pretext for invading Poland, Osman, at the head of an army of more than three hundred thousand Turks and double that number of Tartars and other barbarians, even more savage and ferocious than the Turks themselves, entered Wallachia and Moldavia, and drew up his formidable host along the banks of the river Niester, near Choczim, opposite Kaminietz, the frontier fortress of Poland. When he beheld the scanty forces encamped on the opposite bank, the proud infidel is said to have waxed wroth at the thought of the little glory he would reap from the easy triumph before him. King Sigismund was well aware of the inequality which subsisted between the two armies. In a Diet of the nation, which

he had previously assembled to consult upon the means of opposing so terrible an adversary, some of the nobles present, who were well acquainted with the enormous power of Turkey, and who looked upon their country as well-nigh lost, suggested the necessity of submitting to the terms proffered to them by the Sultan, of paying an annual tribute to the Porte. The emotion produced in an assembly in which beat so many heroic hearts was indescribable, and in one indignant burst of Christian patriotism the whole assembly exclaimed, "We will die, but we will not pay tribute to the Turks." The necessary sum for raising a hundred thousand men was immediately voted; but Poland could not furnish so large a force, and the army hastily gathered numbered but seventy thousand men.

Prince Ladislas, who, young as he was, had already reaped glory in the field of battle against the infidels, was to command the troops. Chodkievic, one of Poland's greatest men, was general-in-chief, and the brave Lubomirski his lieutenant. When Chodkievic, at the head of his forty thousand soldiers—for the reinforcement of thirty thousand which Ladislas was bringing had not yet arrived—was told that he would have to fight nine hundred thousand men, he replied, "We shall see if the number is truly stated; we will count them with our swords." Strong in his own heroic spirit, Chodkievic had also the utmost confidence in the aid of the Blessed Stanislas. We have already seen how devout to our saint was Poland's sovereign, who, in this his own and his country's need, turned to him for help with fervent supplications. He had deputed the Bishop Grockoroski to petition the Fathers of the Company at Rome, in his name and that of the Polish nation, to grant them the head of the saint, as a



sure protection in their present danger. The venerable General of the Company, P. Muzio Vitelleschi, felt it impossible to refuse the request of so great and pious a prince and of his afflicted and heroic people, fighting at once in their own defence and in the cause of Christendom ; and so the head of Stanislas was withdrawn from his tomb, and the treasure, with its verifying seals attached and enveloped in rich stuffs, was committed to the Polish bishop, who hastened to take the road to his own country. Sigismund meanwhile had caused an artificer to fabricate a head of pure gold to contain the precious relic, which was to be surmounted with a crown of diamonds and other precious stones.

On the 10th of October was fought and won the glorious battle of Choczim, when the proud Osman and his host were utterly discomfited. Besides the fearful discrepancy of numbers, other most disadvantageous circumstances combined to render the situation, to all appearance, desperate ; for, notwithstanding some previous successes, discouragement had begun to seize on the Poles. All human resources seemed to be failing. Their brave general, Chodkiewicz, had died, mourned by the whole army. Provisions were becoming scarce, the Cossacks murmuring for their arrears of pay, some of the troops beginning to disband, Ladislas himself prostrated by sickness. The heroic prince, nevertheless, insisted on being borne to the battle-field in his litter, and carried wherever his presence was most needed in order to animate the soldiers. The Turks displayed their accustomed valour ; but an invisible power fought against them, and, notwithstanding their courage and overwhelming numbers, they gave way before a comparative handful of men, fell into disorder, and finally

fled precipitately from the field, leaving it covered with heaps of their slain.

At the very time when the Ottoman host first began to yield, the holy relic was in the act of crossing the frontier of Poland. And that all might feel the stronger assurance that this wonderful victory was owed to the intercession of Stanislas, it pleased God, on the same day, to vouchsafe a vision to several of His servants. Father Nicholas Oborski, at Kalisz, distant more than a hundred leagues from Choczim, beheld in the air a starry chariot, drawn from west to east by two horses of dazzling whiteness along a luminous track. In the car was seated one whose beauty, majesty, and splendour proclaimed her at once to be the Queen of Heaven, the Blessed Virgin herself. The Divine Infant was in her arms, clinging to her neck. Sunlike rays of glory proceeded from the Mother and the Son. On the car also, and within the blaze of light, knelt before Them one like to an angel: it was Stanislas. He was looking up with those supplicating eyes of his at Jesus and Mary, and pointing with his hand towards two hosts on the earth below, about to join in mortal conflict. Oborski then saw the Divine Infant raise Himself from His Mother's neck, and stretch Himself forth towards Stanislas with open arms and a face of most loving acceptance. The prayer for his people was granted. Those were not days of electric telegraphs or railways, and the news of the deliverance of Poland did not reach Kalisz for several days; but Oborski had related the vision to the other Fathers, a few hours after he had seen it, on the night of the 10th of October, when the victory was gained.\*

\* The whole account was attested on oath by the Jesuit Fathers, and is recorded in the processes.

But Oborski's testimony does not stand alone ; other persons had similar visions on the same day. Of this mention is made by the Bishop of Wilna, George Tuszkievic, in a circular letter which he addressed, in 1652, to all the ecclesiastics and laity of his diocese, when, Poland being once more endangered, he exhorted them to implore the protection of the Blessed Stanislas, who, at the time of the battle of Choczim, had appeared, together with our Lady, to several priests of different religious Orders, in the act of asking and obtaining victory for his countrymen over the Turkish tyrant. A picture in memory of this great deliverance, representing the vision above described, was placed in the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul, in Cracow, and a yearly procession of all the religious Orders was made in commemoration of it to the sumptuous chapel of the Blessed Stanislas, over whose altar the painting was suspended. Other cities in Poland had similar pictures in their churches.

It is inspiring to read of the pious reverence with which Sigismund received the relic of the saint. He would allow no one to behold it before himself, but with his own hands unfolded its rich wrappings, and then reverently knelt down and did profound homage to it the moment it was exposed to sight, kissing it tenderly a thousand times ; after which, he called such among the company as were specially dear to him to enjoy a near view of the holy relic, and devoutly kiss it. Nor did the honours which he rendered to it cease with the day on which he received the sacred treasure, but they were annually renewed on the festival of the saint, which was at that time celebrated in Poland on the Sunday preceding the festival of St. Simon and St. Jude. On that day, arrayed in his royal robes, he used

to bear the head of gold, enclosing the skull of the saint, from the chapel in his palace at Warsaw along the secret passages leading thence to the Jesuit church, where the Fathers met him with lighted candles, and, receiving the precious relic from the King's hands, placed it on the altar, there to remain for public veneration till the evening. Mass being ended, the King, Queen, and the royal children, followed by the whole court, approached in succession, reverently to kiss the sacred head. And so, too, when about to go forth to battle, he never failed to have the relic exposed, and, with his face prostrate to the ground, would beg the priest to bless him with it. He would then buckle on his armour, and go forth confidently to victory. Those were days when kings were to be found whose piety was worthy to draw down a divine blessing on their people and on their arms.\*

The splendid vision recorded above, as seen by Father

\* The head of St. Stanislas now reposes at Gorheim, near Sigmaringen, in Prussia. Its first removal was from the royal chapel at Warsaw to the house of the Jesuit Fathers at Cracow. When the Order of the Jesuits was suppressed in 1773, the head of the saint, hitherto surrounded by the veneration of the Fathers, fell, like themselves, into temporary oblivion. A princess of Saxony, who was married to the Margrave of Baden, wishing to remove the holy relic from the danger of profanation, to which the troubles of Poland might expose it, transported it to her chapel at Manheim. But neither here was it in safety, and, but for the precautions of the chaplain, the very misfortune dreaded would have befallen it, when the chapel was pillaged of all its treasures. This good priest removed the relic in time, leaving to the greedy profaners of the sanctuary what alone they valued, the reliquary, with its precious ornaments. A noble lady begged for the possession of it, promising to have a rich new reliquary constructed to receive it, but died before she was able to execute her purpose. The head of Stanislas then passed into the care of the venerable director of the seminary at Heidel-

Nicholas Oborski at the time of the battle of Choczim, might be said to proclaim Stanislas Kostka as the divinely appointed protector of Poland. It seems, then, well, while speaking of the saint under this aspect, to allude here to another remarkable vision, also commemorated in painting, which exhibited him in the same character. It was witnessed in the year 1623, by a Polish noble, Daniel Bonikowski, then a religious of the Franciscan Order at Kulm, in Prussia. He was a man remarkable for innocency and simplicity of soul, joined to eminent virtue, and was in consequence much revered by his brethren. Being engaged in prayer, about midnight, he interiorly beheld the Eternal Father seated on a throne of awful majesty, and regarding Poland, which seemed to lie beneath, with anger. He then heard Him command His angels, who stood around prepared to execute the decrees of His avenging justice, to strike that kingdom with scourges for its many offences, and also heard those offences specifically recorded. But scarcely had this commission been given, when Bonikowski saw the Queen of Angels kneel before her Divine Son, and entreat Him to intercede with His Father, to exhibit to Him His Wounds, to represent His dolorous Passion, and, by His infinite merits, obtain pardon and mercy for Poland. The Son at once accorded to His Mother what she asked, and then she turned to the Blessed Stanislas. The religious described the saint as stand-berg, who died in the odour of sanctity in 1820, bequeathing the holy relic to the pious and noble family of Helmstadt, who bestowed it on the noviciate of Gorheim, where it is preserved with much love and reverence. Here also is kept an authentic act of recognition of the head of St. Stanislas, dated May 12, 1854, and signed by Mgr. Hermann, Archbishop of Friburg, in Brigau.

ing at that moment behind the throne of the Eternal Father, in the attitude of a page waiting on his sovereign—silent, and with his eyes bent down, as in an act of profoundest reverence. “And you,” said the Divine Mother to him, “servant of my Son, and my own dear one, wherefore do not you also come forward to make supplication for your Poland, for your brethren?” The religious then beheld angels advance and lead Stanislas in front of the throne, where he knelt before the Eternal Father. At once the countenance of the Father seemed to become serene, and His voice was heard declaring that for the sake of the merits of His Son, the intercession of the Divine Mother, and the prayers of Stanislas, the sentence against Poland was revoked. Then the angels, dividing themselves into two choirs, joined in celebrating with canticles of praise the mercy of God, and the vision disappeared.

In the year 1648, Russian Poland was visited by a terrible scourge. Bogdan Kmielniski, a soldier of fortune, had been raised for his valour to the post of general of the troops which the Ukraine was obliged to furnish for the service of Poland. Ambition led him to induce these barbarians to revolt. No suspicion being entertained of his design, the country was entirely unprepared, while the King himself was engrossed with preparations for a foreign war. The peril was also at first underrated; and a very slender body of troops, sent to repress the rebellion of the Cossacks, was crushed by their overwhelming force, now swelled to the number of a hundred and fifty thousand men, who poured into Russian Poland, committing the most frightful excesses wherever they passed. Towns were sacked, churches desecrated and pillaged, priests, nobles, and multitudes of the unarmed inhabitants cruelly put

to the sword. At length, flushed with victory, the Cossacks invested the city of Przemisl, which they already regarded as their certain prey, since fortresses of far greater strength had fallen into their hands. But the horrible barbarities and awful sacrileges which had everywhere marked their passage, and the little reliance which could be placed upon their engagements, after the gross violations of faith of which they had been guilty in the case of other cities which had surrendered under conditions, made the inhabitants resolve to die with arms in their hands, rather than yield themselves up helplessly to these ferocious savages.

That their efforts would be all unavailing, they were deeply convinced. The expression used afterwards, in a letter written by the governor of the city, was that the defence was "*præter spem et possibilitatem omnem*—beyond all hope and possibility." Nevertheless, their determination to die rather than surrender remained unshaken. Their cavalry made a sortie, but soon retreated on the town, persuaded that nothing could be effected against the countless swarms confronting them. About mid-day one of the bastions was assailed by the enemy, and, while the besieged were making a desperate defence, a courageous priest, named Hyacinth Bapcinski, undertook the venturous office of leaving the city to seek the assistance of a body of cavalry known to be in the neighbourhood. He could scarcely make his way to the gate for the dense crowds that obstructed his way, consisting of the helpless portion of the population—women, children, the aged and decrepit—who, unable to fight, had congregated in the streets, weeping, groaning, and uttering shrieks of despair. The priest stopped, and cried aloud to them, "Wherefore do you not turn those profitless tears and lamentations into

prayers to Heaven? Call on the holy Mother of God, and on the Blessed Stanislas Kostka, who has so often been propitious to you in your need." At these words the whole multitude, with one accord, fell on their knees, many prostrating themselves on the ground and kissing it, others spreading their hands aloft towards heaven; while from a thousand voices rose the simultaneous cry, "Our Lady and Blessed Stanislas, help us, save us, come to the rescue of our country." The commandant of the place, Raphael Kotecki, knew nothing of what had occurred; but in the night Stanislas appeared twice to him in a vision, and told him that he had come to encourage him, and to assure him of his aid and protection.

Accordingly, on the next morning, when the Cossacks were pressing forward to renew the assault in several quarters at once, he gave to the different bands as their word of recognition, "Blessed Stanislas Kostka;" and, as these brave men marched forth to the unequal struggle, the Fathers of the Company, vested in their sacerdotal habit, blessed each troop as it passed with the image of the saint, the Jews even joining with the multitude in invoking his aid with loud cries. Nor was Kotecki the only person to whom Stanislas graciously gave the assurance of victory; for he appeared to a matron of the city, who, for her rare virtue, was held in high reverence by all. While praying earnestly for succour in this great emergency, suddenly she saw before her the Blessed Virgin, with Stanislas kneeling at her feet and beseeching her with great affection to turn away the desolation of the city and the slaughter of its people. Thrice did the Cossacks rush furiously to the attack, and thrice were they beaten back with great carnage. The soldiers, feeling



that Stanislas was with them, continued invoking him aloud while they fought, and, in like manner, the Jews on the walls mingled their cries of encouragement to the combatants with repeated invocations of the Christian saint; \* and when the host of invaders fell back in utter confusion, and took to flight, there was not a human being within the compass of the city who did not acknowledge that they all owed life and safety to the Blessed Stanislas Kostka. The cavalry, whose assistance the priest had gone to seek, arrived in time to take a share in completing the rout, but not early enough to diminish the marvellousness of a victory which was already achieved.

The city of Leopold had a similar miraculous deliverance. Besieged by an immense horde of Cossacks and Tartars, it was reduced, after a few weeks' resistance, to the last extremity, pressed as it was by the foe without and by famine and its attendant pestilence within. Despair was seizing on all hearts, when God inspired some of the chief inhabitants with the thought of calling upon their fellow-citizens to have recourse to the Blessed Stanislas, whose festival day was approaching. All accordingly turned to him with fervent supplications, and the whole city bound itself by vow to testify

\* In the public testimony, given fifteen years later by all the chief persons of the city, in order to the canonization of Stanislas, we find the following statement:—"Dum civitas nostra in maximo a Kosacis Svecisque esset periculo, singularem favorem et protectionem B. Stanislai Kostkæ, specialis præfatæ civitatis Præmislensis patroni, experti sumus. Ad invocationem enim hujus Beati, dum imago ipsius versus portam deferetur, et symbolum datum esset, repente e summo civitas, intercedente Beato, evasit periculo, et hostes cum ignominia receserunt. In qua civitatis perturbatione, etiam perfidi Judæi, imminens videntes periculum, opem hujus implorabant."

its perpetual gratitude if he would deliver it from destruction. It was now the vigil of the saint, and no sooner had the vow been uttered than the enemy fled in precipitate flight from before the city. Such a flight of such a host was more marvellous than even their defeat would have been. Nor was any doubt left as to the immediate cause of this panic, for some of the enemy, being questioned as to their reason for abandoning the prey which was about to fall into their hands, replied that they had seen on the walls a youth in the Jesuit habit going to and fro, as if preparing them for defence, while from time to time he turned towards their camp with menacing gestures: at this sight they had all felt themselves struck with such unaccountable dismay that, urged by one and the same impulse, the whole army rose and fled, like men pursued by a triumphant foe.

We can but briefly allude to two other signal deliverances of Poland attributed to our saint's intercession. The first was the great victory won, in 1651, by John Casimir over well-nigh three hundred and fifty thousand Tartars and Cossacks. The pious king spent the whole night preceding the battle alone in prayer before the miraculous picture of Stanislas in the church of the Company at Lublin—that same picture which had been seen to shed tears and to sweat. Here, prostrate upon the bare ground, he gave himself and Poland, now placed in as imminent peril as any through which it had ever passed, into the guardianship and protection of the Blessed Stanislas, vowing that, if victory was granted to his army, he would cover the vesture of the saint with plates of gold.\* Full of hope and con-

\* This is not the first time that we find allusion made in Lives of St. Stanislas to the clothing and adorning of his pic-

fidence he rose in the morning from his long vigil, went forth to battle, and gained the splendid victory of Beresteczko, the memory of which was recorded, not in history only and in the grateful remembrance of a whole people, but in the vesture of pure gold with which, according to his vow, Casimir arrayed the figure of the saint. The second was the splendid triumph of Sobieski over the Turks, under the walls of Leopol, on August 24, 1676. The Queen, accompanied by great numbers of the devout population, spent the whole time of the battle prostrate before the altar of Stanislas in the Jesuit church. God once more hearkened to the prayers of Poland's saint, and a miraculous storm of snow and hail,—for miraculous at that season of the year we may well judge it to have been,—driving in the faces of the immense Mussulman host, caused great disorder in their ranks. Then to the thrice-repeated cry of "Live Jesus!" the Poles, headed by their heroic king, charged the Turks with a courage that was resistless. The victory was complete, and the next morning beheld the rapidly retreating enemy already eight leagues distant from the field of battle. This event occurred a little more than two years after the saint had been declared by the Holy See Patron of Poland.

In the year 1669, Michael Koribut Wisniowiezki,\*

tures with gold and jewels, giving the impression that images and not pictures were meant. Here, however, there can be no ambiguity. The practice seems to have been common in Poland, as also in Russia and throughout the Greek Church generally.

\* John Kostka, Palatine of Sandomir, to whom we have already alluded as having been competitor for the crown of Poland with Stephen Bathori, Prince of Transylvania, left a daughter, who married the Duke of Ostrog and Jaroslav. A daughter of theirs became the wife of Zamoski, Chancellor of

a prince allied by blood to the house of Kostka, was raised to the throne of Poland. His relationship to Stanislas naturally added ardour to his pious desire to see him numbered among the saints. But another powerful motive urged him to employ all his influence in promoting the glorification of this great protector of his country. Michael Koribut had accepted the crown in fear and trembling, and, when the nobles had presented it to him, had exclaimed, "Lord, suffer this chalice to pass from me." His weak health, and the persuasion he entertained of his own insufficiency, made him shrink from the unaided task of coping with the difficulties of his position. For these were times of peculiar peril, when a very deluge of Turks and Ruthenian schismatics was about to burst over the land, threatening the destruction at once of Poland and of the Catholic religion, of which the Polish nation had ever been the generous champion. But he felt a strong confidence that the Blessed Stanislas could accomplish that of which he was himself incapable. Accordingly, he made earnest suit to the Holy See, in conjunction with all the nobility of his kingdom, for his canonization, alleging as motives the present dangers menacing their nation and the faith, and their frequent experience of his miraculous assistance. Clement X., moved by these urgent petitions, in a Brief promulgated on the 16th of August, 1670, extended to Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the permission to have the Mass and Office of the Blessed Stanislas said in all their churches, and to the Company the same privilege throughout the world. His feast-day was the kingdom, whose daughter Griselda married Jeremias Koribut Wisniowiezki, a Palatine of Russia. It was their son Michael who was elected to occupy the throne of Poland.

fixed by the same Brief. It was not, of course, possible to celebrate it on the day of his glorious death, immersed as it was in the splendour of Mary's Assumption; but as, upon the 13th of November, his sacred body was to be transferred from its old resting-place to the new church of Sant' Andrea, the erection of which was due to the munificence of Prince Camillo Panfili, nephew of Pope Innocent X., the Pontiff judged that day most fitting for the future celebration of his festival.\*

Great as was the joy of the whole Polish nation at this long-desired boon, nevertheless it was felt to be incomplete unless the Holy See would also accord to Stanislas the title of Patron of Poland. Here, however, a difficulty stood in the way, for the Sacred Congregation of Rites had, on March 23, 1630, enacted a decree which reserved this honour to canonized saints. But the enthusiastic love and importunate prayers of the Poles were to prevail in obtaining a dispensation from this rule. On the 10th of January, 1674, Clement X., in condescension, as he declared, to the urgent and reiterated prayers addressed to him by the pious King Michael, and his venerable brethren the Archbishop and Bishops, accorded to the Blessed Stanislas the title of Patron of Poland and of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and, the Apostolic Constitutions and the decrees of the Congregation of Rites notwithstanding, placed him on an equal rank with the other chief patrons of the kingdom, such as St. Adalbert and St. Stanislas, martyr, on account of the innumerable blessings and graces obtained through his

\* He afterwards allowed its celebration to be transferred to the subsequent Sunday, for the greater convenience of attendance.

means. But, having accorded these high and exceptional honours to Stanislas, the Holy See thought well to adjourn as yet the time for his solemn canonization. Forty years were to elapse before anything more was to be done to promote the glory of this great servant of God.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### STANISLAS RAISES THE DEAD.

WE have not, as yet, noticed in detail any of the miracles of Stanislas. The ardent devotion which he excited, the richness and profusion of the *ex-voto* offerings sent to his tomb, the solemn declarations of whole cities, and the clamorous gratitude of an entire nation, have sufficiently evidenced how signal and abundant they were. Nor is it our intention to relate the particulars of any considerable number of them. For, while there are few things to which a more lively interest attaches than to these supernatural manifestations of the power of the saints with God, taken severally, nevertheless, the relation of a prolonged series of such wonders is apt—we might say, almost sure—to prove tedious to most readers; and in the present case we should feel that we had arrived at wearying them long before we had rendered the scantiest justice to the subject. P. Bartoli gives, as was fitting in an original biography, an ample catalogue of miracles, in which, however, he confines himself to those worked in Poland, because he preferred drawing on the juridical processes, to which he had access; yet

he is fain to confess that he has been obliged to content himself with a mere selection. We shall limit ourselves to some observations applicable to the saint's miracles in general, mentioning the particulars of a few simply by way of specimen. The subject is curious, or, we might more properly say, mysterious ; but, along with a general similarity, there is also certainly a speciality in the character and class of the miracles worked by the intercession of different saints, a speciality of which we can sometimes perceive the reason and sometimes not. The first thing which strikes us with respect to our saint's miracles is the very unusual proportion of dead persons restored to life by the power of his intercession. So numerous, indeed, and so remarkable were the instances, that Stanislas was popularly called "the saint who raises the dead." Another noticeable circumstance was that most of the persons thus restored to life had met their death by drowning ; and here our thoughts cannot but recur to the saint's own history, and recall how he trod in safety on the surface of a rushing stream, as if in anticipation of the power he was hereafter to exercise in rescuing others from the waters. Another peculiar feature in this class of miracles is that it was chiefly children whom the saint raised to life, although examples of grown persons are not wanting. Bartoli mentions two in particular : one of them a noble in the Palatinate of Lublin, the other a citizen of the metropolis of that name. In this frequent exertion of his power the saint displayed, not only his affectionate patronage of the young, but the tender compassion he felt for afflicted mothers : they never seemed to appeal in vain to his loving heart.

We have seen allusion made in the declaration of

the city of Lublin to the restoration to life of a child drowned in a well. It occurred in the year 1630. The wife of a poor bricklayer, living close to Lublin, sent her little boy, Stanislas, aged seven years, to draw some water, needed for their evening meal, at a well distant little more than a furlong from her cottage. The child, in stretching over, lost his balance, and fell into the well; and, from the quantity of mud found adhering to and literally plastering his face and head, when he was drawn out, he seems to have gone at once head foremost to the bottom. The mother, after expecting his return for about half-an-hour, went in quest of him; not, however, from any feeling of alarm as to his safety, for he had been in the constant habit of drawing water for her, and it was not until she had been for some time engaged in a fruitless search that the terrible thought flashed across her mind that her child had fallen into the well. She hurried to its brink, and, looking down, beheld too truly the lifeless body of her boy floating on the surface of the water. Her screams soon drew all the neighbours to the spot. When the child was taken out, his body, which was fearfully swollen, had become livid almost to blackness; the eyes were open and staring, and the jaws so firmly clenched that it was found impossible to open them; the limbs, also, were stiff and rigid. Nevertheless, every known means was used to restore life. The body was turned head downwards,—which, by the way, was one of the very worst measures which could have been adopted, being sufficient in itself to insure suffocation; it was then rubbed and pressed in order to expel the water with which it was inflated; but all in vain. Life was extinct. Hot applications, and every other imaginable expedient for



recalling warmth and animation, were also tried for a full hour with similar ill success. It was a corpse they were dealing with, and it was plainly useless to do more; even the mother of the boy—and mothers will long hope against hope—had now abandoned herself to despair, and was weeping bitterly over her child as irretrievably lost to her, when a young student of the name of Augustine, who, in casually passing by, had been attracted to the spot by the sight of the crowd, compassionating the dead boy and the mother's distress, turned to her, and said, "Why do you not offer this your Stanislas to the Blessed Stanislas Kostka, who has such power with God, and does so much for those who invoke him with confidence?" Some of the bystanders were moved to smile at this credulous schoolboy, as they considered him, who could venture to promise so stupendous a miracle. But to the mother his words came as a voice from Heaven, and a pledge that her son would be restored to her if only she asked in faith. Full, therefore, of the firmest trust (as she afterwards testified) she cast herself on her knees, and, with tears streaming from her eyes, cried with a loud voice, "Help, Blessed Stanislas, help an unhappy mother." No sooner had the words passed her lips than the boy was seen to move; his eyes, which up to that moment had been fixed and staring, resumed their natural appearance, with all the expression of life; he began to speak, and rose at once in perfect possession of all his faculties, without passing through any of the stages of revival and recovery. The next day he accompanied his mother to Lublin, and was by her presented to the Blessed Stanislas at his altar in the Jesuit church of that city.

A peculiarly solemn examination into this miracle

took place, for Lublin was the seat of the chief courts of judicature in the kingdom. The highest ecclesiastics and nobles sat in it, or sent as their representatives men eminently qualified for the office. A fortnight after the miraculous occurrence twenty-nine examiners were selected from this body. Eight witnesses were one after the other closely questioned on oath as to the facts, and then three physicians were called in to give their several opinions on the subject. All three declared that life had been undoubtedly extinct: the child was dead, and had been raised to life again. Two of them were Lutherans, and there was only this difference in the opinions which they respectively pronounced,—a difference in no way affecting the judgment itself,—that, whereas Falenki, the Catholic, declared that a miracle had been wrought by the power of God through the intercession of the Blessed Stanislas, the other two, who, as Lutherans, rejected the intercession of the saints, omitted all mention of Stanislas, limiting themselves to the affirmation that God had miraculously raised the child to life. Each of them gave in writing his reasons in detail for being assured that the boy was dead when drawn out of the water, and one of the Lutherans, Makorosi, stated that he had professional experience of upwards of forty deaths through drowning. After all the evidence had been collected, each of the examining judges was called upon to give his opinion separately, and all solemnly declared their conviction that a signal and undoubted miracle had been wrought by the Divine power through the intercession of the Blessed Stanislas Kostka.

Another Stanislas, a child ten years of age, being in like manner offered to the saint, was also raised to life by him; but in this case the boy was a Lutheran, a circumstance which added a peculiar interest to the miracle.

In January, 1821, a group of children were playing on the frozen surface of the Warta, upon whose banks the city of Posen is situated, and among them was the son of one Martin, a surgeon of the place. One of his playmates giving him a push—whether in anger or in sport does not appear—caused him to slip to the edge of a hole which had been broken in the ice for the purpose of drawing water. He fell in, and was immediately drawn underneath by the current. The screams of the children brought assistance to the spot, and search was made at every opening down the course of the stream, the ice being at the same time broken in fresh places, all necessarily at random. A long time was thus consumed,—according to one of the witnesses as much as three hours; and, if it were but half that period, it was amply sufficient to extinguish all hope of finding the boy still alive. Further endeavours seemed useless, when, at this juncture, two young Fathers of the Company, masters in the college at Posen, who chanced to be passing, being informed of what had happened, and learning, moreover, that the child was a Lutheran, of an age to have possibly sinned grievously, were seized with a double compassion. A sudden inspiration came into the mind of one of them, Christopher Chrzastoroski. He knelt down, inviting the bystanders to do so likewise, and begging them to unite with him in offering the unhappy boy to the Blessed Stanislas Kostka, and imploring his aid. Scarcely had he concluded his solemn act when the body of the child was discerned beneath the water, which seemed to have become transparent in order to make it visible. It was completely entangled in weeds and brambles, and moreover lay in a position which could have left no hope, had any existed after so long a space of time, of recovering anything but a

corpse. It had been drifted by the current to a place where the stream had been dammed up for the purpose of supplying the two wheels of a mill with a greater flow of water. The child's body had actually passed under one of these wheels, which, however, although it was turning, had, as was afterwards found, inflicted no injury except a slight one on the face. A piece of wood had arrested its course just in front of the second wheel. The child, when laid upon the bank, was plainly dead. Of this, indeed, no one could entertain a doubt; nevertheless, a doctor was summoned, who, after making a strict examination, went away, saying that what the dead wanted was a priest to bury them, not a physician to bring them back to life. Still, the confidence of the Father who had commended the child to Stanislas was in no wise shaken. Heaven, he believed, was not used to send half answers to petitions. The child had been found immediately in answer to prayer; what remained was to renew their supplications that he might be restored to life. Accordingly, he again threw himself on his knees, begging all present to join with him in fervently beseeching God to grant this soul to the Blessed Stanislas, to whom they had offered it. While they were yet praying the child moved sufficiently to prove that he was alive, and was soon restored to perfect consciousness. A few hours afterwards he was running about in his usual health. Martin, the father, in the face of so undeniable a miracle, could not oppose his son's desire to embrace the Catholic faith. Two of his sisters were at the same time received into the Church; and, if the father did not follow his children's example, it was currently believed that it was only through fear of incurring the ill-will of his co-religionists, and consequent injury to his practice, which found its main

support among them. Nevertheless, he publicly acknowledged that he owed his son's life to the Blessed Stanislas, and in gratitude offered a little silver tablet for the saint's image in the Jesuit church at Posen. Paintings representing this miracle were hung up in various chapels in the kingdom. The sight of one in the Jesuit church at Jarocin was the occasion of another similar prodigy in the case of an infant of eighteen months old, who had also been drowned. The father, remembering the picture which represented the son of the Lutheran raised from the dead, was excited to a firm trust that the saint would not do less for the innocent babe of Catholic parents. Nor was he disappointed in his hope; for no sooner had he and his wife addressed themselves to Stanislas, offering to him their child, if only he would restore him to them alive, than he awoke from his sleep of death.

We must content ourselves with but one more example of the numerous recorded cases of drowned children raised to life by Stanislas. A poor child of the name of Andrew Zacrodka, belonging to the village of Wictozonica, was suffocated in a ditch. Thirty peasants, attracted by the mother's cries, ran to the spot, and saw him drawn out quite black in the face, and with his jaws so firmly set that it was found impossible to separate them even by the aid of instruments. His lip was cut in the attempt, and not a drop of blood came from the wound. It was clear to all that the child was dead, and some began speaking to the mother about arrangements for his burial; but she, with her hands and eyes raised to heaven, gave no heed to them, but exclaimed, "Blessed Stanislas, give me back this soul, and I will be grateful to you; and, in the name of this poor child, I promise you a candle

out of the first earnings he shall gain by the labour of his hands." The words had scarcely passed her lips when the child opened his eyes, as though he were simply awaking out of sleep, and, turning to his mother, began to comfort her, and begged her not to cry about him. So manifest and unquestionable was this miracle, and so notorious to the whole village, that people used to point to him as the child that the Blessed Stanislas had raised from the dead. When he was old enough to work, the first small sum he made at his trade of shoemaker his mother laid out in buying the candle she had promised in his name, and they went together and offered it to the saint in the Jesuit church at Jaroslav.

If Stanislas was compassionate in responding to the appeals of distressed parents, working repeatedly in their behalf the highest miracle of which our mortal frame can be the subject, his pitifulness to the poor was no less strongly marked, to whose requests, whatever they might be, he ever lent the most gracious and willing ear. We have a touching instance on record in which he condescended to exert his power, not to raise a child from the dead, but even to restore to life the withered rosemary plants of a poor woman who cast herself upon his compassion with undoubting trust. She dwelt near Lublin, the scene of so many of the saint's miracles, and made a comfortable livelihood by the sale of these plants ; for she had above a hundred of them in a very flourishing state, and rosemary seems to have been in great request in those parts. But one day the plague reached Lublin, and, as Anna used to say afterwards, attacked her rosemary as well ; in other words, people used to come and break down her hedge for the purpose of carrying off some of this plant for

medicinal use. But her loss arose, not so much from what they stole, as from the destruction of what they left; for, as these thieves were either themselves infected with the disease, or came from houses stricken with the plague, the poor woman feared to enter her garden or to touch her flowers, lest she should herself contract the terrible malady. And so, for lack of her care, they all withered and died, and that year's produce was lost to her. The loss was a heavy one, but her simple devotion inspired her with the hopes of repairing it. It was the custom of the good people of Lublin to offer wreaths of flowers, and all manner of odoriferous plants and herbs, before the miraculous picture of St. Stanislas, which were afterwards taken away to be applied, with invocation of the saint, in every kind of complaint. Stanislas was, in short, the universal physician of the town, and so successful a one, that Bartoli tells us he might have filled many pages with only a selection of the most striking amongst the miraculous cures and graces obtained by this means. Now, the pious Anna, who was most devout to the saint, had scarcely ever come into Lublin but she had taken a little offering of her rosemary to lay upon his altar, leaving it there for the benefit of the public. Remembering this her practice, a thought suggested itself to her mind. She plucked up all her withered plants, and carried them into her dwelling; this done, she hastened to Lublin, and repaired to the Jesuit church. This time she had no offering to make; but she begged the Father who had the care of the miraculous flowers, to give her a sprig of rosemary which had lain upon the altar of the saint. Then, returning to her house, she approached the dried-up and now blackened refuse of her once flourishing garden, and

said, "Blessed Stanislas, remember how large a share I used to give you of my rosemary, as long as I had any to give; and as soon as I have any again, I will give you much more than I ever gave before. I entreat you to have pity on my poverty, and restore these dried plants of mine to life again; it will cost you nothing, and will be a great help to me." Having thus addressed the saint, she began to touch the dead and decaying rosemary with the sprig she had brought, when instantaneously, and under her very eyes, it flourished anew, the sprays becoming green and pliable, so that she could now make wreaths of them as heretofore: nay, the dried sprig she had brought with her also recovered perfect freshness, as if newly gathered.

We have related this miracle although the subject matter of it may appear trifling,—too trifling, perhaps, in the eyes of some, for the exertion of miraculous power,—or, rather, we may say that we have selected it on this very account, because it exhibits, in all the more striking and touching a manner, the readiness of this amiable saint to hearken to the smallest and humblest request. Something further, indeed, do such miracles tell us; for they speak, not only of the tender and loving heart of the saint through whose intercession these requests have obtained their satisfaction, but of the ineffable tenderness and goodness of the Heart of our God, of which all the tenderness and sweetness which charms us in His saints is but an effluence and a participation. We seem to catch a glimpse of the exceeding graciousness of God to the simple, truthful, and loving soul. The simple and confiding can have almost what they will; perhaps, indeed, this is why the poor have always enjoyed so large a share of these miraculous favours.



## CHAPTER VII.

## STANISLAS HEALS THE SICK.

IF the number of persons restored to life by Stanislas was very great, far more numerous was the class of those who were recalled, as we may say, from the very gates of death, or instantaneously delivered from afflicting and incurable disorders. Not a chapel, not an altar, dedicated to the saint, throughout Poland, but bore witness to the prodigality with which miraculous aid had been vouchsafed in every sorrow and every sickness which can assail our suffering humanity, full as they all were of the splendid testimonies of gratitude bestowed by the rich, and of the humble and modest, but, perhaps, all the more touching, offerings of the poor. These cures were wrought, some by a simple invocation on the part either of the sufferer himself, or of friends or relatives who offered him to the saint, and placed him under his protection; others by the application of one of his relics; others, again, by praying before his images or pictures; while many were due to the miraculous flowers which had lain on his altar, or touched his holy body. We must content ourselves with a few instances of each kind, selected, of necessity, almost arbitrarily, where nearly all on record have each their own peculiar feature of interest.

The instantaneous and perfect character of the cures effected through the intercession of Stanislas is exhibited in the following cases. Albert Serafinowicz, a youth nineteen years of age, was studying in the Jesuit College

of Sandomir, when, in the year 1621, he fell ill, and, all remedies proving utterly powerless, he was soon reduced to the point of death. Having received Extreme Unction, he had already entered on his agony, the recommendation of a departing soul had been made, and his companions were gathered round, assisting him by their prayers in his last passage, when God put it into the heart of Father Stanislas Witwinaski to offer him to the Blessed Stanislas. Accordingly, in union with all present, he besought him to take the sick youth under his care, and, drawing from his vest a small relic of the saint, laid it on Albert's bosom. The effect which instantaneously followed is thus described in the juridical testimony recorded in the processes :—" *In instanti, ex tunc, tanquam e somno experrectus, surrexit*—(On the very instant, like one roused from sleep, he arose) ;" and the account proceeds to state how, being acquainted with music, the youth immediately asked for an instrument, and intoned a *Te Deum* in thanksgiving, to which all his young companions joined their voices, mingled with tears of gratitude and joy. The life which Stanislas had thus miraculously preserved to him, Albert dedicated to God's service in the Company of Jesus.

In the year 1618, Father Stanislas Bronowski, Professor of Poetry in the college at Leopold, having overtaxed his strength in preparing some compositions which were to be recited in honour of the Blessed Stanislas, was seized with a burning fever, which after a while terminated in a stroke of apoplexy, leaving him in a mental lethargy, from which it was found impossible to rouse him by the application of the most violent remedies ; such as punctures, incisions, cauterizings, and the like, of which the doctors were very liberal in every part of his body. But he never stirred

or gave any more sign of feeling than if he had been a dead man. Extreme Unction having been administered, and the recommendation of a departing soul made, while all were still on their knees praying around him, the Rector, Father Rudniski, had an inspiration similar to that recorded in the former case; he made a vow to the Blessed Stanislas for the recovery of the dying man, and sent for a relic of the saint. As the Father who bore it entered the chamber, a ray of light, bright and penetrating like a sunbeam, as he afterwards described it, struck the eyes of the sick, and, to all appearance, insensible man. He made a movement, as if affected with sudden pain, and opened his eyes; then, looking round him, like one who has been awakened from a light sleep, he asked whence came that piercing light. He afterwards told them how he had seemed to be shut up in a deep, dark dungeon, from which he had no power to emerge. Being told that a relic of the Blessed Stanislas Kostka had been brought to him, he took it in his hands, tenderly kissed it, and pressed it to his bosom. From that moment, lethargy, fever, and every trace of his late malady were gone, utterly gone, all but the wounds and sores which the doctors had made with fire and steel, and which Stanislas had not removed. It was this alone which hindered him from resuming his professional duties on the following day.

The next miracle we shall instance is one of the three afterwards approved by the Sacred Congregation in order to the canonization of the saint. Father Andrew Faustus Uniciowski, Abbot of the Order of St. Benedict, was a native of Masovia, his birth-place being but a mile and a half distant from Rostkow, which was that of Stanislas, to whom he was most devout. In July, 1640, he was attacked by a malignant fever, and at the

end of six weeks was reduced to extremity. He was so weak, as he himself testified in his sworn deposition, that he could not stir hand or foot. On the 28th of August, the physicians, who, as he said, after trying all which their art could suggest, had profited him nothing, pronounced his case to be desperate. He now prepared for immediate death; he caused himself to be laid on the floor upon a carpet, and there received the Last Sacraments. The usual prayers for a departing soul had already been offered, when, about midnight, the dying man called one of his community, Father Lampartowicz, to him, and begged him, if God was pleased to prolong his life until the morning, to go to Kalisz and offer Mass for him at the altar of the Blessed Stanislas in the church of the Company, assigning as his companion one of the brethren not yet ordained priest. Meanwhile, as the night advanced, the Abbot, who had purposed to await death on the bare ground, finding that his last moments were still delayed, and being seized with a violent fit of shivering, had himself replaced in his bed, at the head of which hung a picture of his dear saint. It was now five o'clock in the morning, and the two religious had already repaired to Kalisz. Father Andrew closed his eyes for a few moments, but not from any inclination to sleep, when he was startled by imagining that he saw, or by having an impression on his mind that there really was, some one by his bed on the side towards which he was lying. This caused him abruptly to turn to the other, and, in making the movement, he raised his arm. Instantly the thought struck him that he had done so without pain or difficulty, a thing which had been for some time impossible to him. Whereupon he tried whether he could move the other arm also, which he found he was able to do with equal

facility. He then sat up, and discovered that he had regained the full use of all his limbs, and was, in fact, quite well. He immediately called to his attendants, and asked for his clothes, that he might get up; but they, supposing him to be raving, went and informed the Prior and some of the other religious, who hastened to the Abbot's room, and laboured to persuade him that the strength he imagined he possessed was but a last struggle of nature. But he knew better, and told them that God and the Blessed Stanislas, at whose altar Mass was being then offered for him, had restored him to health. He accordingly rose, and walked to the Jesuit church, distant about a quarter of a mile. As he entered the cemetery, the very first persons he met were his two doctors, Sebastian Slerzkowski and Thomas Borzclowicz. They stared at him with astonishment, crossed themselves, and asked if it really was himself they saw. "Yes," he replied, "it is myself, and in perfect health; thanks not to you, however, but to the Lord and the Blessed Stanislas Kostka;" and so he took them both with him into the church to assist at a Mass of thanksgiving. On returning home, he ate a hearty dinner, and drank wine just as usual. Three days afterwards, he took a silver tablet, which he had caused to be made, and hung it up as a testimony of gratitude at the altar of his benefactor at Kalisz.

It never seemed possible to ask too much of this most kind and benignant saint. We will give an instance of three persons cured at once, a mother and two children. Christiana, the wife of a citizen of Warsaw, herself borne down with illness and expecting soon to give birth to a third child, had the affliction of beholding her two little boys, Paul and James, lying in the most pitiable state; the one reduced to ex-

tremity by fever, the other, who was but three years of age, a perfect cripple, and, from whatever cause it might proceed, completely tongue-tied. Her neighbours exhorted her to give Paul into the care of the doctors, or the fever that was consuming him would soon bring him to the grave. "Paul is not the only sick one," replied the poor mother; "there are three of us, one worse than the other in different ways. Now, can you tell me of any doctor who can cure us all three, and that only for the willing it? You cannot find such a one in all Warsaw; no, nor in the whole world. But I know well where to find one in Heaven—my Blessed Stanislas Kostka;" and so, all sick and feeble as she was, she dragged herself to his chapel in the Jesuit church, and, kneeling before his image, represented to him all her necessities with the same fervour and confidence as if she visibly beheld him. She told him that it was as easy for him to obtain from God the cure of three as of one. Let him, then, come to the aid of a poor mother and her two children, who would all, as long as they lived, testify their gratitude by their devotion to him. She had no sooner finished her prayer than she knew that it was granted, so far as she herself was concerned, for she felt her strength already perfectly restored; and herein she saw a pledge of the restoration of her dear children also. Of this she was assured ere she crossed the threshold of her house; for, hastening home, she was met on her way by James, the dumb cripple, now running and speaking, and on entering her dwelling she found Paul getting out of bed, not only free from fever, but in vigorous health.

If Stanislas restored speech to the dumb and feet to the lame, he also opened the eyes of the blind. Many

miracles of this character are recorded. Justina Geldzin, a widow woman of above seventy years of age, after continued severe pains in her head, had, in the year 1628, become totally blind. Six mournful months had elapsed since this heavy calamity had overtaken her, when she resolved to have recourse to her dear patron, the Blessed Stanislas Kostka, and had herself led before his miraculous picture in the church of Bug, where she dwelt. Here she remained while Mass was being celebrated, at which she communicated, offering to the saint the tears which flowed from her sightless eyes and vowing a candle in his honour. Suddenly, as if a black veil fell from before her face, she saw the picture, the altar, and everything upon it with perfect distinctness. Her tears now fell in renewed abundance, but they were tears of joy and gratitude. She returned to her home without any need of a guide to lead her. But another miracle of the same nature will, perhaps, seem still more wonderful, because the subject of it had been stone-blind for seven years. Reina was fifty years old, and the people of Posen were familiar with the sight of her being led about in the streets by the hand. Great miracles had been worked by Stanislas in Posen in the year 1663, and Reina, having heard some of them related, conceived the firmest hopes of participating in his bountiful compassion. She accordingly had herself taken to his altar, and recovered her eyesight while hearing Mass, in the same manner as the widow whose cure we have just detailed.

Our next shall be an instance of a restoration, not of sight only, but of the eye itself. In the year 1651, Simon, a baker in Cracow, falling from a height, struck against a sharp pointed stone, which penetrated the eye, utterly destroying the eyeball. The agony he

suffered was excruciating, and all that the best surgeons in Cracow could do for him was to apply a palliative to soothe and relieve the pain; but as for restoring the lost organ, that was a work beyond the reach of human skill. A religious now advised the poor sufferer to recommend himself to the Blessed Stanislas, but, the baker having replied that he knew nothing about this saint, the religious proceeded to tell him of his marvellous sanctity, and of the great and continued miracles wrought through his intercession, thereby exciting in the poor man strong sentiments of confidence and devotion. After that, he gave him some flowers which had touched a rib of the saint, which the Fathers of the Company in Cracow possessed. This occurred on the Saturday preceding the Sunday on which his annual festival was kept, and Simon, affectionately and devoutly invoking him, laid some leaves of the flowers in the cavity of his lost eye, and placed a bandage over them. The next morning he went to seek the religious, and showed him his eye perfectly restored, along with the sight of it; no trace of the accident remaining except a slight redness round the eye, as if left for a memorial of the injury received and of its miraculous cure.

We can but allude to one other miraculous cure of blindness, rendered the more remarkable from the fact that the sufferer was simultaneously delivered from the plague. It is that of a poor blind woman, named Anna Floriana, who, in the year 1625, was attacked by this dreadful disease, which was then devastating the city of Lublin. Her son, Ignatius, was also struck down by the pestilence. As is ever the case during such fearful visitations, the utmost panic prevailed, and the houses and persons of the infected became objects of



universal terror: no one would approach her or administer to her needs. What was this poor creature to do, blind and helpless, with the dread contagion in her house? In her dire extremity she commended herself and all hers to the protection of the Blessed Stanislas; immediately both she and her child were freed from the pestilence, and her sight was entirely restored.

It would be too long to tell, even in the most cursory manner, of all the wonders that Stanislas wrought in delivering persons afflicted with the plague, and in the very last stages of that frightful malady. Whole families were instantaneously rescued from death—sometimes by a vow made to the saint, sometimes by a simple invocation, and, again, by the leaves or flowers which had lain on his altar, or had been blessed with one of his relics. The processes abound with instances of deliverance from plague. To specify only one:—In the process instituted at Piaski, in the year 1630, out of the ninety-nine sworn miracles and graces by far the larger number belonged to this category; and in this list were not included twenty-nine persons who had together presented themselves to testify to their having been delivered from the plague solely by calling on this wonder-working physician. The inhabitants of the town and lordship of Piaski, which is situated four miles from Lublin, having heard of the numerous miracles performed by Stanislas in that city, had been induced, although for the most part Arians, when visited by the plague in 1629, to petition the Fathers of the Company to grant them the favour of possessing, for a short time amongst them, his image,\* which

\* It is not always easy, owing to the ambiguity of the Latin and Italian terms *imago* and *immagine*, to ascertain whether a picture or an image is meant. Clearly this *immagine*, which we

they had in their church. They would place it in the church belonging to the Catholics of their own town, and would pay it every honour. Their request being granted, the population, to the number of six thousand, Arians and Catholics mingled together, for all were of one mind and heart with regard to the saint, went forth to meet the holy image, and, when they had received it, all alike testified their reverence, and returned singing hymns of praise to God and to the Blessed Stanislas. When the procession entered Piaski, immediately the pestilence ceased; and so striking was the miraculous deliverance, that it was the means also of freeing many from a worse plague, the heresy which infected them; in particular, a blind girl, who, coming to profess the faith in which the Blessed Stanislas lived and died, received the sight of her eyes along with the illuminating light of faith in her soul.

But, besides the sworn testimony of hundreds of individuals, we have on record the collective testimony of entire cities, given in the name, not only of all the authorities, the clergy, and chief people of the respective places, but of every class and every corporate body within their walls, to the miraculous protection afforded them by Stanislas, and the marvellous deliverances they had experienced through his intercession. Posen, Warsaw, Lublin—all chief cities of Poland—made solemn declarations of this nature, not to speak of similar testimonies rendered by smaller places, and, in particular, by various castles which had large peasant populations clustered round them. Many of these de-

have here rendered *image*, was not, at any rate, the miraculous picture of Lublin which shed tears, as that prodigy did not take place until the year 1632, when it was removed in consequence to the Jesuit church.

liverances were preceded by public processions, in which the image or picture of the saint was carried, followed by devout, weeping crowds—such a gathering, in short, as, according to mere human probabilities, ought to have had the direct effect of spreading the infection, but which, through the mercy of an all-powerful God, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and who loves to reward the faith and piety of His children, became the means of staying the plague, and causing the avenging angel to sheath his sword. Such was the result in Posen in the year 1660, when their bishop, Albert Tolibowski, invited his desolated flock to make a vow to Stanislas, and choose him for their patron. The vow was unanimously made, and the image of the saint was borne in solemn procession from the cathedral church round the city; and scarcely had this pious act been accomplished, when the pestilence utterly disappeared from within the circuit of its walls, although other neighbouring towns still remained infected.

— We have another instance of a like confidence in the saint meeting with a like reward, in the year 1622, when the Castle of Grodizko, the property of the Duchess of Ostrog and Jaroslav, and the whole adjoining country, were visited by the awful pestilence. Well-nigh every house was stricken, and death seemed to stare the whole population in the face, when some Fathers of the Company, who had come to minister to the spiritual needs of the people, advised them to cast themselves on the protection of the Blessed Stanislas by vowing to fast on his vigil, and to carry his picture to Jaroslav to be placed over his altar in the Church of St. John. All readily made the vow, and soon had proof of its acceptance, for the scourge was immediately with-

drawn, and, although crowds of the plague-stricken from adjoining districts resorted to Grodizko, some to be reconciled to God, others to seek relief or medical aid, the devout inhabitants, confiding in the protection of Stanislas, contracted no infection from ministering to their necessities or from being intermingled with them ; while, on the other hand, certain timid and incredulous persons, dwelling near Jeroslav, who, making more account of human precautions than of heavenly aid, had constructed for themselves wooden houses on the bed of the river San, and thus completely isolated themselves from all intercourse with their neighbours, were attacked by the dreadful malady, and perished miserably, one and all, far away from both temporal and spiritual consolation. Amongst the many who were miraculously healed at that time was a Franciscan religious of the name of Melchior, who, accompanied by a brother of his Order, had come to render spiritual assistance to the nuns of St. Clare at Grodizko. This brother died of the plague, and communicated the contagion to F. Melchior, who, after passing through all the terrible phases of the malady, was about to follow his companion, when he bethought himself of having recourse to the Blessed Stanislas, whom a few days previously, upon hearing of the many wonders he was working, he had chosen for his peculiar patron. Consumed by burning fever, with all its delirious accompaniments, he now besought the saint, at least, to preserve to him the use of his faculties until he could make a full confession of his sins before dying. After thus praying he fell into a transient slumber, when he heard a voice, probably that of his good angel, say to him, " Rise up ; you are well ; and thank the Blessed Stanislas, who has taken you under his protection, for

your recovery." At the same moment he felt as if a heavy and oppressive weight had been removed from off him, and that his whole frame was restored to perfect vigour. On the following morning he celebrated his Mass of thanksgiving at the altar of Stanislas, in which he not only experienced an extraordinary consolation of spirit, but received a great increment of strength to resume his labours. We subjoin the valuable testimony given on oath by Martin Nicanor Anzowski, physician to the King :—"I had cases of sick persons," he says, "whom I could not cure by the ordinary medicines, but who, on my recommending them to the Blessed Stanislas, were every one of them restored to health."

Nor was this readiness to hearken to the prayers of those who had recourse to him limited to deliverance from death or from incurable diseases ; whatever might be their sorrow or affliction, none seemed to call upon him in vain. We may instance a miracle wrought in favour of a poor servant, whose disfigured appearance and impeded utterance, the result of an illness from which he had in other respects recovered, not only rendered him a repulsive object, but prevented him from earning his livelihood, as no one would engage his services. His eyes were distorted, his mouth drawn on one side, the under lip, moreover, hanging down over the chin, which was the cause of his indistinct articulation. After making trial of every remedy in vain, he turned his hopes from earth to Heaven, chose the Blessed Stanislas for his patron, and made a vow to him, the vow of a poor man who has little but his prayers to offer. Of these acts of devotion he came to acquit himself before the picture of the saint at Lublin. As he was concluding the prayers which he had pro-

mised to say, an entire change came over his countenance. The eyes and mouth returned to their proper form and condition, and the use of his tongue was at the same time perfectly restored to him.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### APPARITIONS OF THE SAINT.

ST. STANISLAS, like St. Aloysius, has been most gracious in often manifesting himself to his devout clients, either to their bodily eyes, or to the inward vision of their soul. But he has also shown himself at times to many persons at once ; and of these public apparitions we will give a brief notice before passing on to record a few examples of his appearing to individuals. We have already alluded to his apparition in the Jesuit habit (and he never appeared in any other garb) on the walls of the beleagured fortress of Przemisl, to the discomfiture of the whole besieging host. He appeared in like manner on the walls of Leopold when, in the year 1623, it was menaced with a general conflagration. The fire burst out at night just outside the city wall, in some houses contiguous to it ; and, favoured by a high wind, it spread so rapidly from one quarter to another of the surrounding suburbs, the flames at the same time rising to a terrific height, that the city was, as it were, enclosed within a blazing furnace. Its destruction seemed to be inevitable, for the walls were no sufficient barrier to the progress of the devouring element, as the driving wind continued to carry burning fragments of wood over them into the city, which, like other Polish

towns, was chiefly constructed of that material. The wretched inhabitants—men, women, and children—all congregated in the open streets, joined in crying aloud to the Blessed Stanislas, their customary refuge in both public and private calamities. Nor did they appeal in vain: suddenly Stanislas appeared on the walls of the town, manifesting himself successively on different parts of the ramparts. He was also visible from the villages round Leopold. To observers at that distance he had the appearance of being raised in the air above the city, in the midst of a most brilliant halo of light. By others, in the more immediate neighbourhood, he was seen, as by those within the city, upon the ramparts, chiefly taking his stand over the Cracow gate, as it was called, for it was in that quarter that the town was exposed to the greatest peril, because of the closely adjoining suburb of Cracow, which was all in a blaze. His hands were extended towards heaven, as though in the act of supplication. Within Leopold itself, to most of those (and they were multitudes) who beheld him, he appeared as if using his cloak as a shield and defence against the flames, in whatever direction the wind drove them towards the city; upon which they would instantly retire or subside; and this he continued to do until the fire was entirely extinguished. Processes were drawn up after the event, with declarations on oath of a great number of witnesses; but had they amounted (as Bartoli observes) to a thousand, the value of their testimony could not have equalled that of the consentient voice of a whole city.

Stanislas also appeared in Piaski when the place was in flames. The greater part of the population (as we before observed), as well as the lord who owned the township, were Arians; and, if the place was not

utterly reduced to ashes, it was indebted for its preservation to a church there in which Stanislas was held in high veneration, and where he had an altar and an image. The wind was high, and the flames were fast spreading, when, upon the top of this church, the saint appeared in the act of repelling them: instantly the fury of the fire was seen to abate, it sank rapidly, and was soon utterly extinct. Not Catholics only, but Arians and Jews, testified to the truth of this apparition, and even the lord of the place consented to appear amongst the witnesses, on condition that no mention should be made of the sect to which he belonged, and that he should simply be entered as of another religion. The pictures and images of Stanislas, it may here be observed, were, upon more than one occasion, miraculously preserved from being consumed; and in these marvels we seem to see a memorial of his own preservation from death, when, surrounded by flames in his bed in Kimberker's house, he issued from them, like the three children out of the burning furnace, with not a hair of his head singed by the fire.

We will now instance a few of his apparitions to individuals.

Anna Eleczynska, a pious and noble lady of Przemisl, was seized with a violent fever after giving birth to a child. It was of a most malignant character, and the physicians had given up all hope of her life. She was in a state of almost constant delirium, but, having recovered her consciousness for a short interval, she affectionately invoked the Blessed Stanislas, for whom she had a tender devotion; after which she fell into a tranquil sleep, when she beheld the saint, whom she instantly recognised, from his resemblance in dress and countenance to the picture of him in the church of that



city. He seemed to come from above, descending very slowly till he stood at her bed-side. Then, raising her in his arms, he gently shook her, and said, "Why do you lie here? sit up, for you are cured." Immediately she sat up in bed, and related to her mother and family, who were gathered round, how she had seen the saint, and what he had said and done. The result was visible to every one present; all fever, and every trace of it, had left her, and, but for her recent confinement, she could at once have risen from her sick-bed.

In a small village, in the neighbourhood of the same place, dwelt a tailor named Stanislas. In 1661 this village was visited by the plague; and, out of fifty persons who were carried off by the malady, five had belonged to his own household. The poor man had ministered to them all, and then buried them; after which, having recommended himself to the protection of the holy Mother of God, and of the Blessed Stanislas, and vowed to perform certain good works in their honour if he escaped with his life, he left his infected and now desolate abode, and built himself a hut in an open piece of ground. But having imprudently returned to fetch something he needed, he was struck by the pestilence. It assumed in him one of its most malignant forms, and, after running its usual course, had brought him to the point of death. He had not, however, lost the use of his faculties, at least he retained enough consciousness to enable him to renew the recommendation of himself to the Virgin Mother and the Blessed Stanislas. He then fell asleep, and so remained, as it appeared to him, for about a quarter of an hour, when he beheld before him the Queen of Angels, accompanied by Stanislas, who, advancing towards him, laid his hand familiarly on his shoulder,

and said, "Get up, and fear nothing, and remember the promise you have made to the Mother of God." He awoke, and found himself not only perfectly recovered, but entirely freed from the livid marks and tumours which are invariably attendant on the disease, and with which he had been covered.

The saint appeared, not in sleep, but to the open and waking eyes of Anna Teresa, an inhabitant of Cracow, who, being attacked with fever and lying in imminent danger of death, had invoked him with humility and confidence. He comforted her, and bade her discard all solicitude about herself, for that he would offer his prayers for her, and procure her restoration to health; nor had she long to wait for the fulfilment of his promise, for her faith was rewarded by an immediate and perfect recovery. She described the saint as he is always represented, with a countenance of a full oval, and beyond imagination beautiful. Indeed, almost every one to whom he appeared—and his apparitions have been very numerous—makes mention of his surpassing beauty.

He appeared visibly also, in the year 1657, to a drowning peasant of Krosna, who had plunged into the river Wislok, to escape from a band of pillaging Cossacks who were pursuing him. Carried away by the impetuous current, for the stream was greatly swollen, he speedily sank, having only time to raise with his heart a cry to the Blessed Stanislas for aid. The saint was ready at his call, drew him out of the water, and, depositing him on the bank, bade him repair to his altar at Krosna, and there return thanks to God for the life which had been preserved to him.

We will give yet another instance of the saint's visible appearance, and this time in the very words

of the individual so favoured, as taken down by the Apostolic notary, and recorded in the process of Kalisz. "Five years ago," said Stanislas Trapezinski, a noble Pole, "towards the close of the month of July, I fell ill, and, from the serious nature of the disorder, combined with its long continuance, became utterly exhausted, and reduced to such a state of weakness that I received the Last Sacraments in preparation for death. Lying in this state, but awake and perfectly conscious, I suddenly beheld a phantom advancing towards me at the foot of my bed—a demon of a most frightful aspect. He had no sooner appeared than the bed began to rock and shake under me; and he said to me, 'You will die, and I shall have you in hell.' Struck with horror at such a sight, and at such words, I hastened to make the sign of the cross on my forehead, and to invoke aloud my protectors, the most Blessed Virgin, the holy martyr Stanislas, and the Blessed Stanislas Kostka. And behold! on the instant, I saw the Blessed Stanislas standing by me, in the habit of the Company, about midway on the right side of the bed. I was wide awake at the time, and saw him distinctly, and heard him address me with these consoling words: 'Fear not, you will recover; in the meantime, call on the Blessed Trinity to succour you, and on the Virgin Mother.' Having said these words, he vanished; and I, having done as he bade me, related the whole to my wife, to the parish priest, and to many other persons, and found myself to be recovering so rapidly, that in the course of an hour I was able to get up in as good health as I am in to-day."

These might suffice as examples of the frequent apparitions of this saint, in which no practical distinction can be made between those of which the senses were ,

cognisant and those which were seen in dreams, not only because the event in both cases equally proved the truth of the vision, but because such dreams have peculiar marks of their own, distinguishing them from those common ramblings of the mind, and phantoms of the imagination, which visit us while the senses slumber, and to which, as we know, no attention is due. We cannot, however, refrain from relating one further instance, on account of a circumstance connected with it, which recalls a passage in the saint's own life. In the year 1621, the Provost of Chozko, Matthew Zudziowski, when fifty years of age, was attacked by paralysis. One-half of his body remained paralysed, and he continued in this state for a couple of months, under the care of a Lutheran doctor, in whose house, in order to enjoy the full benefit of his attendance, he had hired an apartment. Seeing that he got no better, he called in the aid of another physician from a distant part of the country. After considering the case, this new doctor pronounced it to be hopeless, adding that the sick man had but a few days to live. Unwilling to waste his skill and time on an incurable complaint, he forthwith returned whence he came, leaving the patient to his former doctor's care and his own reflections; and these reflections, with God's blessing, which had not rested on the Lutheran physician's treatment, were to lead to his recovery. For this priest had a great devotion to the Blessed Stanislas, whose tomb he had often visited when at Rome in his early youth. He had also brought away with him a little picture of the saint, which he still kept in his Breviary. He now recalled this circumstance to mind, and, taking out the picture, recommended himself, with many tears, and prayers, and promises of life-long gratitude, to the saint. Thus

engaged, he passed nearly the whole remainder of the day. When night came, Stanislas appeared to him in sleep, and said, "Delay not to leave this house ; for, if you stay here any longer, you will assuredly die." The priest awoke on the instant, and interpreted the words of the saint as an implied promise, that if he left the Lutheran's house he should live. He accordingly lost no time in having himself removed as soon as morning came. The very moment he was out of the doors he began to feel life returning into the palsied limbs, and in a few days all traces of his late malady had left him.

The examples we have given, few as they are in comparison with those detailed by his chief biographer, Bartoli, which again, as he says, are scanty as compared with those recorded in the processes, are sufficient for our purpose, which is simply to inspire confidence in the power of this saint with God, and his readiness to hearken to our petitions. One further remark, however, we are bound to make. We have limited ourselves to citing those miracles which, from their external character, admit of juridical proof ; but it would be a great injustice to the saint, and an unpardonable omission, were we to fail to observe that the miraculous assistance which Stanislas has rendered in the order of grace has far surpassed in abundance even his temporal interventions. P. Bartoli, who wrote ninety-seven years after the saint's death, asserts that instances were daily occurring—and, doubtless, many more existed, known only to the individuals themselves—of relief from every species of horrible and afflicting temptation ; from scruples, aridity, desolation of spirit ; from inability to excite contrition in the heart, and even to offer a single prayer ; from danger of despair ; in short, from

every peril and internal suffering which can menace or oppress the soul—all through the effectual intercession of Stanislas. As benefits of the spiritual order infinitely excel those of the temporal, so also, without doubt, we are indebted to the intercession of the saints for a far more abundant harvest of the former than of the latter ; and, if it is on these that we have almost exclusively dwelt in the case of Stanislas, it is because they admit of proof which recommends itself to all minds alike, while they must also act as a direct encouragement to seek the better gifts through the interest of our heavenly friends and patrons. It may enter into the Divine scheme to glorify a saint at one time by more open miracles than at another, but their favour with God never wanes ; and we may rest assured that to those who apply to them with faith and devotion they will be as rich as ever in benefactions.



## CHAPTER IX.

### MIRACULOUS PICTURES OF STANISLAS.

WE have already spoken of the numerous miraculous favours obtained by praying before the pictures and images of Stanislas ; we must now record the striking prodigy which occurred in the case of two pictures of the saint, and which rendered them especially famous. The miraculous picture of Lublin has been mentioned more than once. This picture had not always hung over the altar of Stanislas, in the Jesuit church of that city, nor was it distinguished for any artistic merit, as

may readily be conceived when we say that it originally adorned the walls of a cottage. This poor tenement, consisting at most of two small rooms, stood upon a grassy knoll in the meadows, outside the walls of Lublin, overlooking the whole town. Its owner, John Kuclarz, a tailor by trade, was an honest man, who loved God and was devout to the saints, as might be gathered, indeed, from the pictures with which the walls were hung—humble productions, purchased as they had been out of the scanty earnings of a life of toil, but satisfying the devotion of their possessor. The Blessed Stanislas, Poland's dear saint, was, of course, not absent from the good man's collection. The picture, which was on canvas, represented only the upper part of the saint's figure, who had his hands joined, and his eyes fixed with devotion upon the Holy Name of Jesus, surrounded with rays.

On Saturday, the 31st of July, in the year 1632, when the family, consisting of the tailor, his wife, and their little girl Reina, were at dinner, the table standing near the wall where the picture hung, Reina, who was sitting opposite, having accidentally raised her eyes to it, exclaimed, "Oh, see! our saint is weeping; and his face is all wet." The father and mother paid no attention, thinking that the child was only talking nonsense, and did not even take the trouble to look round at the picture. When night came, and John Kuclarz had gone to bed, his wife, who was finishing her evening devotions, on raising her eyes to the Blessed Stanislas, to recommend herself to him before lying down to rest, observed that his face was all covered with drops. Amazed at the sight, she called out to her husband, who was already asleep, to come and see the miracle, for it was all quite true that Reina had told

them. But the good man was incredulous, and had no mind to leave his bed ; so he laughed at her, and said she was half-asleep and dreaming, and did not know what she saw ; and he would be twice as great a goose as she was if, by minding her, he lost his sleep. After this he held his tongue, and would not stir. But his wife continued entreating him to get up, and come and see ; so at last, chiefly to free himself from her importunity, he rose, and beheld with his own eyes that it was even as his wife had assured him. However, to ascertain the truth with the greater certainty, he mounted on the table to examine the picture more closely ; and when, passing his hand over the face, he felt it all bathed with the moisture, he could not refrain from uttering an exclamation of terror. What to think he knew not ; but, having wiped the picture dry, he supposed that the wonder had ceased.

On the following day, the 1st of August, being the ninth Sunday after Pentecost, on which day the Gospel is read which relates how, when our Lord beheld the city, He wept over it, the family were again seated at their mid-day meal, the parents, as before, with their backs to the wall, their seats, as it would seem, almost touching it, when John felt some drops of water fall upon the back of his neck ; he looked up at the picture above his head, and this time he clearly saw tears streaming from the eyes. We must observe that the picture hung by a cord from a beam in the roof—the whole cottage was built of wood—and was fixed to the wall only at the lower part, which caused it to incline forwards. Hence the larger drops, instead of running down the face, had fallen as described. After once more examining the picture with astonishment, John repaired to the college of the Company at Lublin, and



related the prodigy, with much emotion, to P. Francesco Fenicio, who happened to be the first he met. The Father immediately accompanied the tailor to his house, where he, too, saw the big drops issuing from the eyes of the saint and falling to the ground. The marvel continued during the remainder of the day, and, news of the prodigy getting abroad, hundreds of persons came to the cottage to behold it, including the principal inhabitants of Lublin. All were witnesses to this miraculous flow of water, not from the eyes only, but from the whole face, from the hands, and from the glory which surrounded the head; now gushing from this part, now from another, and now from different parts at once. In the evening, P. Fenicio returned with the notary of what was termed the public consistory, and several of the principal magistrates of the town, to make a formal deposition; but, to his great disappointment, he found that the picture had suddenly become perfectly dry. The Father then threw himself on his knees, affectionately and devoutly calling on Stanislas, reminding him that, albeit unworthy to be his servant, nevertheless he was his brother, and entreating the saint not to deny him a sight with which strangers had been so liberally favoured. The prayer was instantly granted, and the tears once more began to start from the eyes; the first, which issued from the right eye, being as big as a cherry-stone, and shining like a crystal star; other persons had also previously noticed this same lustre in the tears. The notary was now able to make his formal written deposition, after which the whole company recited the litanies.

Every precaution was taken on this, as on similar occasions, to ascertain whether any natural cause might possibly have given rise to the phenomenon. It is the

fashion with the sceptical to rule, as an indisputable fact, that where faith is strong—and especially in former times, to which it is easy to impute anything whatever without danger of contradiction—there the most blind and unreasoning credulity necessarily exists. It is true that Catholics admit *a priori* the possibility of these supernatural manifestations of Divine power; and that their minds are accordingly not blocked against the force of evidence, as too often is the case with their opponents. It is also true that they set a great value on such manifestations, and are proportionately grateful for them. But this very esteem, instead of leading to an unreasoning and blind acceptance of the marvellous, acts as a motive for accurately testing the worth of whatever presents itself that bears a miraculous appearance. Any one who should be disposed to think otherwise has only to note the care which, for instance, was taken, in the case of this picture, to test the origin of the wonder. Nineteen witnesses were publicly examined on oath, and, from their evidence, entered in the process, we gather that the greatest pains were taken to ascertain whether there was any sign of damp either in the roof or in any other part of Kuclarz's cottage, and that not merely by the legal authorities, but by the casual lookers-on. A minute description is given of the picture itself, and of its mode of hanging, as above described; also of the state of the wall behind it, which was found to be very dusty and covered with cob-webs. "The day upon which I saw it weep and sweat," says Father Albert Buskow, a Premonstratensian, who was one of the witnesses whose testimony was recorded, "there was no rain; the day was cloudless and free from mist, indeed quite clear and bright, nor was there a sign of damp in any part of the house. I

speak thus, because I carefully examined into and noted all these particulars; and not I only, but the multitudes who had come to see, to the number of some hundreds. Having heard of the miracle, I went with some of my religious to witness it, and I found on the spot gentlemen, judges, deputies, and nobles. I saw tears proceeding from the eyes of the Blessed Stanislas as big as the rain-drops in a heavy shower, and his whole face streaming with them. Many offered their handkerchiefs to wipe away the water; I myself gave mine to P. Fenicio, of the Company of Jesus; and I observed that as soon as the tears of the Blessed Stanislas had been dried, fresh ones immediately flowed; the same thing invariably occurring whenever they were wiped away. The people present lifted up their voices together, exclaiming, '*Sancte Stanislae, ora pro nobis.*' I remained observing, and looking on, for about two hours, more or less. Others saw the same before and after me, for the weeping lasted three days, until the picture was removed to the College of the Company of Jesus. There were other pictures in the room, but nothing unusual was to be seen in any one of them." During the following day, Monday, although the miracle still continued, the moisture was not nearly so abundant, and in the evening it altogether ceased.

Forty days later, this prodigy was repeated in a picture of Stanislas which hung in the common room of the professed house at Cracow between those of St. Ignatius and Cardinal Osius. This picture had originally been sent from Rome by Thomas Oborski, who was Suffragan Bishop of Cracow at the time the marvel we are relating took place. The appearances closely resembled those recorded in the former case, but with some additional circumstances. The prodigy was first noticed

on a Thursday, the 9th of September; the drops being numerous and very large. The picture was taken down, laid on a table, and wiped with linen cloths; the first that were used being soiled, owing to the dust that had previously accumulated on the surface; but, notwithstanding that the picture was repeatedly wiped, the water still continued to burst forth, and this although it was carried into different rooms, during all kinds of weather, for the space of two or three weeks. The phenomenon was not continuous, it took place only from time to time, nor did it always manifest itself in the same part. Sometimes it was the face, sometimes it was the hands, sometimes the habit of the saint, from which the drops started forth; sometimes it was from all parts at once, and occasionally in such abundance that they might be seen uniting so as to form three or four distinct rivulets at the centre of the figure, and thence descending to the bottom of the picture. But this was not all; the face, as has been more recently witnessed in pictures of our Lady, changed its expression frequently, but never wore a joyous aspect. Sometimes it would appear simply thoughtful and melancholy; at other times it would turn pale, and wear a look of deep sadness; then it would light up and assume an affectionately imploring expression, as of one who is praying earnestly and with vehemence of spirit. All these particulars, we need scarcely add, after what we have already said, were subjected to the strictest examination, and juridically deposed on oath. These two miraculous pictures were placed respectively in the churches of the Company of Lublin and of Cracow, where God continued to honour His servant by the numerous cures and graces obtained by those who came to pray before them.

Prodigies of this character have been generally supposed to be warnings of the approach of some great public calamity ; and accordingly P. Bartoli, arguing, not only from the tears and the sweat, significant the one of grief, the other of extreme anguish and perturbation of mind, but from the melancholy and sorrowing expression depicted in the countenance of the saint in the Cracow picture, conjectures that Poland was menaced at that time by some terrible scourge, and that God, by these miraculous signs, would indicate that, if mercifully withdrawn, it was due to the intercession of Stanislas, whose prayers had availed for the deliverance of His people. May we not also conjecture that it entered into the Divine purpose of mercy to prompt those who beheld or heard of this touching marvel, to apply with renewed earnestness to the saint whose intercession for his country was so powerful with God? God, if He so willed, could, we know, freely pardon us without any supplication on our part or on that of His saints in our behalf, yet He does not so will ; and, doubtless, there is some law, the reflex of His Eternal Mind, which prevails in the distribution of His graces and favours ; some eternal fitness which regulates their dispensation. The saints, we may be sure, perfected as they are in charity, pray for us whether we ask their prayers or not. The Blessed Mother of God, out of her all-embracing compassion, lifts up her hands unsolicited for all her children ; but, by some mysterious law which we cannot fathom, we fetter and restrict the ability of our heavenly friends, and of the Divine Mother herself, effectually to aid us when we fail to apply trustfully to them. They cannot, it would seem, come before the Throne armed with

the same prevailing plea.\* For, as God wills that we should pay Him the homage of prayer for His forgiveness, so likewise He wills that we should in their measure honour also His saints by soliciting their intercession with Him; an intercession which enables Him, with a divine suitability, to show mercy and favour to those who are all-unworthy, through their own demerits and the poverty of their prayers, to obtain their requests.

Thus the whole scheme of redemption from beginning to end, from the Incarnation down to the last petition which shall ascend from the golden censer for the Church, militant or suffering, before the day of doom, may be regarded as an unutterably marvellous contrivance (if we may use such an expression) of Ineffable Wisdom and Love, by which He may reconcile His attributes of justice and mercy; or, rather, by which He may make His mercy, so to say, prevail over His

\* Since the above was written, the author's eye has been attracted to the following remarks, which admirably illustrate this deeply interesting subject under another of its aspects:—“Grace, as well as nature, has its laws; far more mysterious, indeed, than those of nature, and far beyond our conjecture and calculation; still it has them, and they must reflect the unity and order of the Giver. Grace is a ‘dispensation,’ a ‘kingdom,’ a ‘divine husbandry.’ No one can read the Gospels and Epistles without being struck with the truth, that if the beginning and the end of salvation are grace, yet, without taking certain definite and plainly-taught measures, we shall find ourselves utterly barren of the fruits of grace. ‘What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap,’ is only one out of the numberless maxims that, like some grand axioms in natural science, mirror to us the existence and reign of law in the kingdom of grace. ‘Thou hast ordered *all* things in measure, and number and weight’ (Wisdom xi. 21).”—Garside's *Discourses on some Parables of the New Testament*, pp. 202, 203.

justice without detriment thereto—a thing impossible with Him, otherwise God would cease to be God—so that He may at once be Just and the Justifier of His elect.\* Even as unbelievers, blind to these truths, reproach Christians with making the First Person in the Adorable Trinity less merciful than the Second, so also do aliens from the fold wildly fling against the Church the accusation of representing the Mother of God as more compassionate than her Divine Son, and the saints as more full of charity than their Creator, not perceiving that the fathomless love and mercy of our God are displayed in those very things which, in their folly, they conceive to obscure and impair them. To the true believer all the features of this magnificent scheme are divinely harmonious; and where, through its very grandeur, its height, its depth, its breadth, it exceeds our limited comprehension and escapes our feeble perceptions, he does but recognise a fresh call to adore and to love his Infinite and Eternal Lover, and to exclaim with the Apostle, after his gaze into the profundities of the Divine decrees, “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!” †

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE CANONIZATION OF STANISLAS—CONCLUSION.

FOR sixty years the miracles of Stanislas had been exciting the most lively emotion and admiration amongst the faithful in Poland and in Italy, when Rome directed

\* Rom. iii. 26.

† *Ib.* xi. 33.

a solemn inquiry to be made into the recent miracles of the servant of God, with the view of furnishing materials to be laid before the head of the Church in order to his canonization. Immediately, under the authority of the bishops, tribunals were constituted, composed of men most competent by their character and ability to pronounce judgment in such matters; and thousands of persons appeared before them to give evidence. For several years these judges were occupied in many of the principal towns of Poland, where the inquests were opened, in receiving the depositions made upon oath before them. To some of these processes we have incidentally alluded, and in particular to that of Kalisz, when relating an apparition of the saint to Trapezinski. A fact which occurred in connection with this process will serve to illustrate the interest which Heaven was taking in the exaltation of the Blessed Stanislas.

The illness of Martin Kobuski, the Apostolic notary, whose services were required for holding the inquest, which was considered to be one of much importance, threatened seriously to delay the prosecution of the cause. The judges and Apostolic commissaries, who had made a long and expensive journey to reach Kalisz, were anxious to despatch their business and depart, for the plague was approaching the neighbourhood, and, in the event of the town becoming infected, they might find themselves detained within its walls by quarantine regulations. Added to which was the fear that the pestilence might carry off many of the persons whose evidence was indispensable for establishing the truth of the miracles which were to be submitted to examination. All these motives for expedition were urged upon the poor notary, and he was entreated to make an effort to discharge the duties of his office in spite of his enfeebled



condition. On his part there was no lack of will ; it was the ability that was wanting, as was evident when, on leaving his bed, he would have fallen had he not been supported ; and, unfortunately, his hands were as powerless as his feet. Nevertheless, Father Jeroski, the Procurator of the cause, encouraged him to place his confidence in the Blessed Stanislas, who was most sensible of the least service rendered to him ; and he succeeded at last in persuading Kobuski, who was himself very devout to the saint, at least to attempt what he knew it was impossible for him to perform without assistance from above. On reaching the hall of inquest, which was at a considerable distance from his dwelling, he presented the appearance rather of a dead than of a living man, so emaciated was he by his late illness. The little strength he had was completely exhausted by the effort he had made, and, ready to faint, he declared that he was quite unable even to hold his pen. The judges, however, exhorted him to try, and caused a pen to be placed in his hand ; but when they witnessed his attempt to write the usual initiatory words, "*In nomine Domini*," and saw the trembling of his arm, which rendered him unable to form a letter, they, too, began to despair. "You see," he said, "I cannot do it,"—when, lo ! upon making a fresh attempt, the more clearly to prove his inability, he found that he was not only able to write, but capable of doing so with the utmost facility ; new life seemed to be flowing into his arm, and reinvigorating his whole frame, while the longer he wrote the stronger he became. He finished his work, and returned to his house perfectly restored, and full of gratitude to the saint who had so liberally rewarded his efforts in his service.

Nor was this the only supernatural incident evi-

dencing how agreeable to God was honour rendered to Stanislas, and how displeasing to Him was any backwardness in his cause. Barbara Dedynska, a young woman of Jaroslav, had been afflicted with a cankerous disease in her mouth, which was gradually drying up her tongue. By the advice of the two daughters of the pious Duchess of Ostrog, who was connected (as we have said) with the house of Kostka, she had recourse to the intercession of the saint, and was immediately healed. This miracle was considered worthy to appear in the processes, but, whether from bashfulness or other cause, Barbara, when summoned to give her evidence, flatly refused to appear before the commissioners at Przemisl. Her tongue had scarcely uttered the ungrateful refusal when it was again attacked with the disease from which it had been freed. This judgment brought her speedily to a better state of feeling; humbling herself before God, and entreating His forgiveness and that of His saint, she promised to amend her fault. Whereupon she was again compassionately healed, and hastened at once, without a moment's delay, to present herself before the judges, and attest to both the miracles of which she had been the subject.

Another instance of the Divine solicitude (so to say) to promote the cause of Stanislas occurred at Kalisz. A few years previous to the inquest in question, a boy, thirteen years of age, named John Brechfa, belonging to a distinguished family of the city, was attacked by a malignant fever, attended with symptoms similar to those of the plague. He was given over by the doctors, and his agony had begun; objects had become indiscernible to his eyes, darkened by the shades of death, and he had lost the use of speech, when a Father of the Company, who had come to see him, took his hand,

and called aloud in his ear, "Recommend yourself as well as you can to the Blessed Stanislas, and press my hand in token of your doing so." The dying boy, who had not quite lost consciousness, heard him, and faintly returned the pressure of his hand. Immediately he felt as if something broke or snapped within him, and he beheld our Lady, with her Divine Infant in her arms, standing at his bedside, and with her the Blessed Stanislas in an attitude of prayer. The saint turned to him, and said, "Do you wish for health?" John replied, "Yes." This word, the first he had been able to utter, he spoke aloud. He then related his vision to those about him, and, finding he had no further need of doctors or of medicine, but was in perfect health, he rose from bed, with not a vestige of his malady about him. Unhappily he was guilty of a fault into which older persons than himself have not seldom fallen. Time went on, and the man forgot the benefit which the boy had received; at least it was put by in his mind as a thing forgotten, so that when the process was being held in Kalisz, in the year 1629, Brechfa did not come forward to give his grateful testimony. The process was drawing to its close, when one night he saw by his bedside a majestic old man, attired in a long white robe, who regarded him with grave displeasure, and after a short pause, during which the youth lay trembling with fear, thus addressed him: "You have forgotten, then, that you are indebted for your life to the kindness of the Blessed Stanislas; and now that your voice is needed, you are silent concerning him. You remain like one who is unacquainted with him, and who owes him nothing!" Then, assuming a more benignant air, he gave him directions as to the steps he was to take in order to

acquit himself of his debt,—which directions the youth did not fail punctually to obey as soon as morning came. Other examples might be adduced of persons who, like Barbara Dedynska, received practical reproofs for not coming forward to render their personal testimony to Stanislas's miraculous power, as well as cases in which blasphemies against the saint incurred some immediate and remarkable chastisement; but the facts we have given are sufficient to show how jealous was the Almighty of His servant's honour.

Nevertheless, a century was to elapse from the epoch to which we have been referring before the crowning honour was to be awarded to Stanislas. But during this period his glory was to be progressively on the increase; and we have seen how, in 1674, he was numbered by Clement X. amongst the principal patrons of Poland, although the wisdom and discretion which reside in the august person of the Vicar of Christ did not permit him to proceed at once to his canonization. This delay, however trying to the pious impatience of the faithful, may be regarded as forming part of God's dispensation for the greater honour of the saint. For, not to speak of the prudence of the Church, as exhibited in the apparent slowness of her proceedings,—a slowness which imparts to her judgments, even from a natural point of view, a solidity and maturity which belongs only to decisions preceded by long and calm deliberation,—we may note that by this means the grandeur of the saint is often much more fully manifested, since time is given for men to form some adequate idea of his eminent rank in Heaven, from the accumulated wonders whereby God gives testimony thereto on earth. Had Stanislas been canonized a century sooner, many a bright gem in his crown would

have been wanting. So numerous were the miracles of the saint in the years that followed Clement's decree—miracles not limited to the land of his birth and that of his adoption, but occurring wherever the story of his sanctity had been told, and his fair example had been held up to devout veneration—that the moment seemed at length to be arrived when the ardent desire of the Catholic world was to be accomplished. From all quarters of the globe attestations to the miraculous power of this child of Poland were continually reaching the Holy See: it was as if all Christendom were raising one united cry of love and enthusiasm, and calling upon the Sovereign Pontiff to enrol Stanislas among the number of the Saints. Accordingly, Clement XI. commanded the Congregation of Rites to proceed to the examination of the miracles of the holy youth. This examination being concluded, and more than a sufficient number than was needful for canonization having been approved, the Pope repaired, on the 12th of November 1714, to the Church of Sant' Andrea, there to venerate the relics of Stanislas on the vigil of his feast. The Pontiff prayed long and fervently, and then, returning full of holy joy, issued a preparatory decree, declaring that proceedings might be taken in order to the canonization. To none was the declaration a source of greater delight than to the Fathers of the Company which claimed Stanislas as its son, and of which he was the peculiar joy and glory. But another delay of twelve years was to intervene. God had raised up a second protector and pattern to youth. When Stanislas was called to his throne of glory, Aloysius Gonzaga was in the arms of his nurse, giving, even in his mute infancy, a prescience of his future sanctity.\*

\* St. Aloysius Gonzaga was born in March 1568. His nurse

Twenty-two years later he was to join Stanislas in the realms of bliss, and henceforth to remain for ever associated with him in the memory of the faithful. Inseparably united, indeed, must these two saints ever be in our minds, on account of the close analogy and resemblance which subsists between their characters and their lives, as well as of the office which they jointly hold in reference to youth ; and on this association the Church herself seems to have set her seal by canonizing them both on one and the same day ; for, the cause of Aloysius not being so far advanced as that of his angelic brother, Stanislas was to wait for him yet twelve years, that together they might receive their crowning honour on earth.

Important and pressing affairs hindered Clement from proceeding at once with the canonization of Stanislas, and in 1721 he died. He was succeeded by Innocent XIII., who occupied the chair of Peter only for three years ; and on the 29th of May, 1724, Cardinal Orsini was elected Pope, and took the name of Benedict XIII. To him was reserved the honour of canonizing Stanislas Kostka and Aloysius Gonzaga. Urgent addresses had been presented to him after his accession in behalf of each of these two saints, to which he had given most favourable replies. From the petition of the illustrious Lambertini, the Promoter of the Faith, afterwards raised to the Papacy under the name of Benedict XIV., requesting the exaltation of Stanislas to the altars of the Universal Church, we quote the concluding sentence :—  
“I think, then, that this hero of few years and great virtues ought to be proposed to the veneration of the faithful, in order that a child of eighteen may bring

said that she felt a thrill of devotion whenever she took him in her arms, as if he were an angel of heaven, not a child of earth.

to shame the children of a hundred years ;\* that the departed just may reprove the impious living ; youth's harvest, early garnered, condemn the long life of the sinner ; and that the family of the saints may also have its youthful Benjamin." To this formal request the Sovereign Pontiff responded by placing, on the 13th of December 1726, Stanislas in the catalogue of the Saints. By so doing, says the pious Longaro, the Pope "doubled, I believe, the joy of the saint by giving him as his companion in so high an honour St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who, like him, belonged to the Company of Jesus, who most closely resembled him in baptismal innocence, in angelic purity, in the love of God and of Mary, as in every other virtue, and who, dying when only twenty-three years of age, emulated the greatest saints in sanctity of life." The Bull of Canonization bears the date of the 31st of January 1726.

Great was the joy of universal Christendom. Everywhere festivals were held in thanksgiving for the attainment of the long-desired and long-sought boon. Vienna especially, to which Stanislas Kostka and Aloysius Gonzaga were equally dear, distinguished itself in the splendour with which it celebrated the glorification of these "twin sons" of the great Ignatius, for so were they designated in letters of gold on the embroidered banner borne in the gorgeous procession which, on the first Sunday of August, 1727, defiled through the streets of the Imperial city. So magnificent, so majestic, and withal so full of devout solemnity, was the triumphal celebration of these two saints, that men were heard to declare that no one could hope ever to witness its like on earth, and that from its beauty and its grandeur the world might learn how exceeding

\* Isaias lxx. 20.

great, beyond all comprehension, must be the glory with which the Most High had crowned His faithful servants in the courts of Heaven.

Germany continued to preserve a devout remembrance of St. Stanislas, and he is still specially honoured in those places which were sanctified by his presence. But if any one desires to see him the object of peculiarly affectionate veneration, it is to Naples he must go. In these days, when the very foundations of Christian education are assailed, it is consoling to note how the love of this saint flourishes there in all its pristine freshness. Everywhere is he held up to the love and imitation of youth, who are encouraged to place their innocence under his sure protection. Numerous confraternities exist in his honour and under his patronage, and in all houses of education under Catholic influence he is assiduously invoked.\* Next to Naples, the diocese of Sessa is said to hold the first rank in devotion to Stanislas, and its inhabitants still testify to the constant aid received at his hands whenever they have solemnly invoked him in times of calamity and distress. But throughout Italy Stanislas is affectionately honoured; and Rome, in particular, celebrates his annual festival with great enthusiasm. We may, indeed, say that the festival of this saint is pre-eminently a domestic festival, and it is touching to behold the crowd of children who, on the 13th of November, approach to receive the Bread of Life, whole families kneeling at the altar, the father with his sons, the mother with

\* We make this statement respecting the veneration still paid to Stanislas in Naples, and elsewhere, on the authority of the Abbé Gaveau, whose biography of the saint was published in 1867.



her daughters. Nor is it possible to witness without emotion all the youth who are receiving their education in the different institutions of the city, children of all nations and climes, visiting the Church of Sant' Andrea on the vigil of the festival to venerate the tomb of their patron, and, again, kneeling in clusters round his image lying on the marble bed in the room wherein he died. All Christendom, indeed, may be said to be represented at Sant' Andrea on that day, for Rome is the rendezvous of the entire world, and on that day men of every nation under the face of heaven may be seen pressing forward to honour Poland's saint, and to kiss the feet of the angelic youth.

We need scarcely say that wherever a Jesuit house is to be found, there he whom P. Roothan, the late General of the Order, called "the jewel of the Company," is the object of a tender piety; and this is as true of France as of Italy, England, or any other country. But it is with regret we learn that devotion to Stanislas is not as extensively popular among the French as we should naturally have expected; a circumstance, however, attributable, it would seem, not to want of sympathy, but to the absence of sufficient acquaintance with the saint. A movement, however, in his favour has begun, and devotion to him is on the increase, particularly in the seminaries and in religious communities. The late Cardinal de Rohan, Archbishop of Besançon, was instrumental in largely promoting the honour of Stanislas in his country. He had no sooner dedicated himself to the service of God, than a lively devotion to this young saint sprang up within him; and before he was archbishop, he used frequently to repair to the Jesuit noviciate at Montrouge, for the purpose of conversing with the novices about

his beloved Stanislas. His successor in the archiepiscopal see, the late Cardinal Mathieu, has testified to Cardinal de Rohan's exceeding affection for this saint, from whose picture he could not bear to be separated when travelling, and which he therefore took about with him, along with the furniture of his portable altar, that he might always have it before his eyes when celebrating Mass. The same prelate affirms that the Cardinal, not only laboured to instil the devotion which animated his own soul for St. Stanislas into all the ecclesiastical establishments of his diocese, but even entertained the hope of obtaining for him from the Holy See the formal title of "Patron of Youth," of which St. Aloysius Gonzaga is already in possession ; but death intervened before he could execute his purpose.

And now it will naturally occur to our readers to ask, What of Poland, the land of this blessed saint, his dearly-loved country, for which he so often pleaded, and not in vain ? that land which once saw his image glittering on tower, and palace, and city gate, and unnumbered altars raised to his honour, enriched with all the magnificence with which a grateful people could surround them ? How is Stanislas remembered and honoured in Poland now ? Our reply must be given in the sad words of the Abbé Gaveau, who, when engaged in writing his biography of St. Stanislas, was anxious to obtain an answer to this very question. "Poland is no more ! During the sorrowful agony of that unhappy people, we humbly requested several of their bishops to furnish us with some details as to the homage paid at the present time to St. Stanislas in that noble country ; and these illustrious prelates, worthy of the first ages of Christianity, who shortly were either

to be laden with fetters or to be led away into exile, were graciously pleased to reply, that soon, perhaps, it might be vain to seek for any traces of devotion to St. Stanislas in Poland, unless it were in the hearts of her people. This precious devotion, formerly so flourishing, was on the eve of being swept away, along with the Catholic faith, in the ruin of their country." Alas for Poland! Alas for the dear native land of our saint! We, too, like this good French priest, are pained at having to conclude the Life of a saint, so specially characterised by sweetness and holy joy with so mournful a reflection; but we shall deem this no matter of regret should it be the means of rousing a charitable compassion for suffering Poland in the heart of even one of our readers. Let us pray for the land of Stanislas; he will be grateful to us, and will repay us with blessings on ourselves and our own country. Let us pray, too, that devotion to their great patron may revive in all its fervour and freshness in the hearts of the oppressed Poles, that they may cry out once more, with their ancestors of old, "Our Lady and Blessed Stanislas, help us! Hasten to our rescue in this hour of our deep distress!" Their protector will not be deaf to this appeal, but will hasten to their defence, not, as he appeared on the walls of Leopold, to threaten and discomfit their foes, but to raise his hands in supplication for them also, that they may be drawn into the one fold, and thus become united in the bonds of Christian brotherhood with that same people in whom they are now striving, ruthlessly, to trample out at once the life of faith and their very national existence.

The present time, indeed, seems in every way to call upon us by the most pressing motives to rekindle in

ourselves, and to excite in others, an ardent love and devotion to St. Stanislas ; for, independently of the sorrows and dangers of Poland, in whose interests all Catholics cannot but regard themselves as deeply concerned, we are surrounded by a wide-spread conspiracy against the faith of the young, which is daily gaining strength and increasing in malice. A persecution, the most insidious and the most formidable which has ever menaced the Church since the days of the Apostate Julian, seems to be even now impending over us ; a persecution the most deadly in its aims, seeing that it seeks to poison the very springs of Christian life by withdrawing the rising generations from under the teaching and influence of their true mother. Moreover, we are fighting with the spirits of wickedness in an atmosphere peculiarly laden with the corrupt exhalations of earth ; for never, perhaps, was there a time when, amongst the nations calling themselves Christian, the moral air was so saturated with subtle and baneful elements, destructive alike of purity, simplicity, and disengagement of heart, those virtues which shone so brightly in our saint. Whose aid, then, can we implore with greater certainty of being heard and regarded than that of Stanislas, the patron of youth ? Armed with his powerful intercession, and with that of the Immaculate Mother, which he never fails to obtain for his clients, we cannot doubt that we shall be more than a match for all the combined powers of earth and of hell.

This consideration suggests a third and most constraining motive for increased devotion to Stanislas—its inseparable connection with devotion to Mary. “It is by the most holy Virgin,” says the Venerable Grignon de Montfort, “that Jesus has come into the world, and it

is also by her that He has to reign in the world." And again: "If, as is certain, the kingdom of Jesus Christ is to come into the world, it will be but a necessary consequence of the knowledge of the kingdom of the most holy Virgin Mary, who brought Him into the world the first time, and will make His second advent full of splendour."\* That it is the will of her Divine Spouse that Mary should be more widely known, and more highly honoured in the present times, we might, indeed, infer, if it were only from His having moved the hearts of the faithful so ardently to desire, and the Vicar of Christ so gloriously to proclaim, the dogma of her immaculate conception. Perhaps we are even now beholding the dawn of "that great age of the Church which" (says Father Faber) "is to be the Age of Mary."† If so, how can we more surely help to advance its coming than by a deepening love of the Blessed Mother of God, and a more exalted estimate of her grandeurs and perfections? and what better instructor in this school, or more persuasive advocate with Mary, can we have than her own beloved and favoured child, St. Stanislas Kostka? "*Qui serviunt ei obsequentes erunt sancto; et eos qui diligunt illam diligit Deus*—They that serve her shall be servants to the holy one; and God loveth them that love her."—(Ecclus. iv. 15).

\* *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (Faber's Translation), p. 6.

† *Ib.* Preface, p. xii.

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