

Gelasinius, apostolic prothonotary, and Francis Pegna, the celebrated auditor of the Rota, by order of his holiness. See also Sedulius's *Historia Seraphica*.

ST. STANISLAS KOSTKA, C.

YOUTH is the amiable bloom of age in which sanctity has particular advantages and charms; a circumstance which recommends to our admiration this saint, who in his tender years surpassed the most advanced in the gifts of grace and virtue. Stanislas was the youngest son of John Kostka, senator of Poland, and of Margaret Kriska, sister to the palatine of Masovia, and was born in the castle of Rostkou, on the 28th of October, in 1550. His mother engraved in his tender heart early and deep impressions of piety; and the first use the saint made of his reason was to consecrate himself to God with a fervour beyond his age. The first elements of letters he learned at home under a private tutor named John Biliuski, who attended him and his elder brother, Paul, to the numerous college of the Jesuits at Vienna, when the saint was fourteen years old. From the first dawn of reason he showed no inclination to any thing but to piety; and, as soon as he was capable, he gave as much of his time as possible to prayer and study. His nicety in the point of purity, and his dread of detraction, and all dangers of sin, made him infinitely cautious in the choice of his company. When he arrived at Vienna, and was lodged amongst the pensioners of the Jesuits, every one was struck with admiration to see the profound recollection and devotion with which he poured forth his soul before God in prayer: the modesty and glowing fervour which appeared in his countenance at those times, raised in all who beheld him a veneration for his person. He sometimes fell into

raptures, and often even at public prayer torrents of sweet tears gushed from his eyes with such impetuosity that he was not able to contain them. He always came from his devotion so full of the spirit of God, that he communicated the same to those who conversed with him. The fire of divine love which burnt in his breast, he kindled in the hearts of several devout companions, with whom it was his delight to discourse on God and heavenly things: on which subjects he spoke with such energy, as imparted to others some sparks of that joy with which his heart and words overflowed.

His innocence and virtue stood yet in need of being perfected by trials. Upon the death of the emperor Ferdinand, in 1564, his successor Maximilian II. who had not the same zeal for religion, took from the Jesuits the house which Ferdinand had lent them for the lodging of their pensioners. Paul Kostka, who was two years older than the saint, and who had their tutor Bilinski always in his interest, was fond of liberty and diversions; and to indulge this inclination prevailed with Bilinski to take lodgings in a Lutheran's house; and looking upon his brother's conduct as a censure of his own, treated him continually with injuries, and often struck and beat him. Bilinski was still a more dangerous tempter and persecutor, not only by declaring always for the elder brother against him, but also by endeavouring to persuade him by flattering insinuations and severe rebukes that he ought to allow more to the world, and that so much was not necessary for a person in his station to save his soul. Stanislas, far from being overcome, stood the more firmly upon his guard, and opposed these assaults by redoubling his fervour. He communicated every Sunday and great holyday, and always fasted the day before his communion: never went to school morning or afternoon, without first going to

church to salute the blessed sacrament; heard every day two masses, and made his meditation, slept little, and always rose at midnight to pray; he often wore a hair shirt; frequently took the discipline; never made his appearance in company only at table; and instantly rose up and left it, if any unbecoming word was let fall by any one in his presence. When he was not at church or college he was always to be found at his devotions, or studies in his closet, except for a short time after meals. By this conduct he deserved to be interiorly enlightened and strengthened by the Holy Ghost, who, by his inspirations, showed him how opposite the false maxims of worldly prudence are to those of the gospel; that it is an error to pretend to salvation by following them, and that what is usually called learning the world, is properly learning its spirit and maxims, which is to forget those of Jesus Christ.

The saint suffered these dangerous solicitations and persecutions for two years, and then fell very ill. Finding his distemper dangerous, he desired to receive the viaticum; but his Lutheran landlord would not suffer it to be brought publicly to his house, and the tutor and brother would have it deferred. The pious youth, in extreme affliction, recommended himself to the intercession of St. Barbara, who is particularly invoked in the northern kingdoms, for the grace of a happy death and the benefit of receiving the last sacraments. His prayer was heard; and he seemed in a vision to be communicated by two angels. The Blessed Virgin, in another vision, told him, that the hour of his death was not yet come, and bade him devote himself to God in the Society of Jesus. He had then for about a year entertained thoughts of embracing that state; and after his recovery petitioned the superiors to be admitted. F. Magius, provincial of that part of Germany, who happened then to be at Vienna,

durst not receive him, for fear of incurring the indignation of his father, who warmly declared, he never would consent that his son should become a religious man. Cardinal Commendon, legate of Pope Pius V. at Vienna, whom the saint desired to recommend him to the provincial, durst not undertake to do it. Stanislas, therefore, having discovered his resolution to his confessor, and by a tender and edifying letter laid in his room, left notice of his design to his tutor and brother, stole away privately to Ausburg, and thence went to Dilingen, to make the same request to the pious F. Canisius, provincial of Upper Germany. F. Canisius, to try his vocation, ordered him to wait on the pensioners of the college at table, and cleanse out their rooms; which the saint did with such extraordinary affection and humility, that the students were exceedingly astonished at his meekness, charity, devotion, and spirit of mortification, though he was utterly unknown to them. F. Canisius, after having kept him three weeks, sent him to Rome, where the saint threw himself at the feet of St. Francis Borgia, then general of the Society, and earnestly renewed his petition. St. Francis received him with great joy. Stanislas had no desire to see the curiosities of Rome, but without further delay entered upon a retreat under the master of novices, during the whole course of which he was favoured with the sweetest consolations of the Holy Ghost, and extraordinary heavenly communications. He took the habit on SS. Simon and Jude's day in 1567; and a few days after received from his father a most passionate letter with threats that he would procure the banishment of the Jesuits out of Poland, and would make them feel the weight of his indignation for having concurred to such a dishonour of his family. Stanislas answered it in the most modest and dutiful manner, but expressed a firm purpose

of serving God according to his vocation. And, without the least disturbance or trouble of mind, applied himself to his religious duties, calmly recommending all things to God.

It was the saint's utmost study and endeavour to regulate and sanctify, in the most perfect manner, all his ordinary actions in every circumstance, particularly by the most pure and fervent intention of fulfilling the will of God, and by the greatest exactitude in every point of duty. Christianity teaches us that we are not to listen to the *prudence of the flesh* which is *death* to the soul. Stanislas therefore set no bounds to his mortifications but what obedience to his director prescribed him. In the practice of obedience to his superiors such was his exactitude, that as he was one day carrying wood with a fellow-novice, he would not help the other in taking up a load upon his shoulders, till he had made it less, because it was larger than the brother who superintended the work had directed, though the other had taken no notice of such an order. His own faults he always exaggerated with unfeigned simplicity, so as to set them in a light in which only humility, which makes a person most severe in condemning himself, could have represented them. Whence others said of him, that he was his own grievous calumniator. As pride feels a pleasure in public actions, so his greatest delight was secrecy, or some humbling circumstance whenever he made his appearance in public; as, a more than ordinary threadbare habit, by which he might seem to strangers to be a person of no consideration in the house, as he looked upon himself, and desired to be regarded by others. Nothing gave him so much confusion and displeasure as to hear himself commended; and he was ingenious in preventing all occasions of it, and in shunning every thing by which he might appear to others humble. The whole life of this

fervent novice seemed almost a continual prayer: nor was his prayer almost any other than an uninterrupted exercise of the most tender love of God, which often vented itself in torrents of sweet tears, or in holy transports or raptures. By the habitual union of his heart with God he seemed, in the opinion of his directors, never to be molested with distractions at his prayers. Several, by having recommended themselves with confidence to his good thoughts, have suddenly found themselves comforted, and freed from bitter anguish of soul, and interior trouble of mind. The ardent love which the saint had for Jesus Christ in the holy sacrament was so sensible, that his face appeared all on fire as soon as he entered the church. He was often seen in a kind of ecstasy at mass, and always after receiving the holy communion. The whole day on which he communicated, he could not, without great difficulty and reluctance, speak of any thing but the excess of the love which Jesus Christ has expressed for us in that adorable sacrament: and of this he discoursed with such interior feeling and joy, and in so pathetic a manner, that the most experienced and spiritual fathers took great delight in conversing with him.

This holy seraph, glowing with divine love, was inflamed with an uncommon ardour to be speedily united to the object of his love a considerable time before his happy death, which he distinctly foretold to several. In the beginning of August he said to several together, that all men are bound to watch, because they may die any day: but that this lesson particularly regarded him, because he should certainly die before the end of that month. Four days after, discoursing with F. Emmanuel Sa, concerning the feast of the Assumption of our Lady, he said, in a kind of transport of devotion: "O father, how happy a day to all the saints, was that, on which the Blessed

Virgin was received into heaven! I doubt not but they all celebrate the anniversary of it with extraordinary joy, as we do on earth. I hope myself to see the next feast they will keep of it." His youth, and the perfect health which he then enjoyed, made others give no credit to this prediction. Yet they perceived that he made all immediate preparations for the great journey of eternity. On St. Laurence's day, in the evening, he found himself indisposed: upon which he could not contain his joy that the end of his mortal pilgrimage drew near. Being carried to the infirmary he made the sign of the cross upon his bed, saying, he should never more rise out of it. His fever proved at first only intermitting; yet he repeated the same assurances. On the 14th day of the month he said, in the morning, that he should die the night following: a little after mid-day he fell into a swoon, which was followed with a cold sweat, and he demanded and received the viaticum and extreme unction with the most tender devotion; during which, according to his desire, he was laid upon a blanket on the floor. He begged pardon of all his brethren for whatever offences he had committed against any one, and continued repeating frequent aspirations of compunction and divine love. Some time after, he said that he saw the Blessed Virgin accompanied with many angels, and happily expired a little after three o'clock in the morning of the 15th of August, in 1568, having completed only nine months and eighteen days of his novitiate, and of his age seventeen years, nine months, and eighteen days. The sanctity of his life, and several manifest miracles engaged Clement VIII. to *beatify* him, that is, declare him happy, in 1604. Paul V. allowed an office to be said in his honour, in all the churches of Poland: Clement X. granted that privilege to the Society, and settled his feast on the 13th of November, on

which his body, which was found sound, and without the least signs of decay or corruption, was translated from the old chapel and laid in the new church of the Novitiate at Rome, founded by prince Pamphili. The saint was canonized by Benedict XIII. in 1727. The Poles have chosen him jointly with St. Casimir, chief patron of their kingdom: and he is particular patron of the cities of Warsaw, Posna, Lublin, and Leopold. The Poles ascribe to his intercession the deliverance of their country from a pestilence, and several victories of king Ladislas over the Turks, and others of his brother and successor, Casimir, over the Tartars and Cosaques, in 1651. Many miraculous cures have been wrought through his intervention. A relation of this that follows, with the attestations of five eminent physicians and a surgeon, and of all the Jesuits then living at Lima, and witnesses to the fact, approved by the vicariat, (the archbishopric being then vacant,) was printed at Madrid, in 1674. A novice in the convent of the Jesuits at Lima, after a malignant fever, in the month of October, was deprived by a palsy of all motion on the whole right side of his body, so that he was not able to stir in the least that hand or foot. A loathing of all food, with a fever, and other bad symptoms attended the disorder, which the physicians judged incurable. On the feast of St. Stanislas, the 13th of November, by applying a picture of the saint to that side, he found the motion and feeling in those parts instantly restored, and himself in perfect health. Certain companions who were present, called the rector, and the whole house followed him. The novice who was recovered, arose and dressed himself, and walked to the church as well as if he had never been sick. The whole community accompanied him, and sung a solemn Te Deum. See the new

edition of this saint's life, compiled by F. Orleans, published since his canonization.

ST. MITRIUS, M.

THIS ancient martyr suffered under Dioclesian, at Aix in Provence, and is honoured as principal patron of that city. St. Gregory of Tours¹ makes honourable mention of him. His torments were various and dreadful: but a miraculous constancy enabled him to bear them with joy. No authentic acts of his triumph have reached our times.

ST. BRICE, B. C.

HE was a native of Tours, and a monk under St. Martin, whose patience he exercised by his sloth and pride. That saint foretold his remarkable conversion, and that he should be his successor in the see of Tours, which accordingly happened in 339. Upon slanders spread to his disadvantage he was expelled the city by the people, and lived many years an exile at Rome. By holy patience he triumphed over malice; and being restored to his see, governed it with great sanctity to his happy death, in 444. His name was held in particular veneration in France and England, and maintains its place in the calendar of the English protestants. See St. Gregory of Tours, Hist. 1. 10. c. 31.

ST. CONSTANT.

A HOLY Irish priest and anchorite, in Logherne, famous for his sanctity and miracles. He died in 777.

See Colgan, Act. SS. p. 222; and MSS.

L. de Glor. Mart. c. 71.