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AN APPARITION OF ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA.

To the Editor of the NORTHWEST REVIEW.

Sir,—While requesting you to reproduce the following article from the *Ave Maria* of June 8th, I think it advisable to state how I came to be connected with this story. In the early spring of 1884, while I was in St. Beuno's College, Wales, the Rev. Daniel E. Hudson, C. S. C., then as now the distinguished editor of that admirable magazine, wrote me asking if I could find the picture of St. Stanislaus mentioned in the story and get a photograph of it for publication. As thirty-eight years had elapsed since the event, I experienced great difficulty in tracing the picture. The account sent me by Father Hudson was the one that appears in a fascinating book, "Glimpses of the Supernatural." It contained nothing about Father Bateman giving the picture to Mr. Weld; so I concluded that the picture might still be in the priest's house at Chipping. Accordingly I wrote to the different priests who had succeeded Father Bateman, long since dead, at Chipping. They very kindly helped me in the search, one of them even going out of his way to interview an aged charwoman whose recollections of the priest's house spanned the intervening forty years. But all to no purpose; nobody knew anything about the picture; even some members of the famous Weld family had not heard of it. At last, when I was about to give up the quest in despair, the Catholic priest then at Chipping, with whom I had exchanged half a dozen letters in vain, suggested that possibly Miss Katherine Weld, of Lymington, Hants, might know something about the picture. I wrote to her, and, by return of post, received the gratifying intelligence—on the feast, by the way, of St. Anthony of Padua, the finder of things lost—that the picture was in her possession, that she would be most happy to let me have it photographed, and that her brother, Mr. Joseph Weld, with whom she lived, cordially invited me to come to his home at Lymington. As soon as I was free to do so, I accepted this kind invitation and spent three or four days under Mr. Joseph Weld's hospitable roof. During that time I was allowed to carry the precious picture to the neighboring town of Bournemouth, where the best photographer of the place made an excellent copy, the negative of which I bought and sent to Father Hudson together with copious notes of my conversations with Miss Katherine. She was then in apparently perfect health and had a vivid recollection of all details. The account she wrote at my request was also forwarded to the Editor of the *Ave Maria*, who gave the gist of all these data in his magazine for November 7th, 1885. Those of your readers who would like more information on this apparition would do well to get that number. It contains only one slight inaccuracy, which does not appear in the present article. The editor, accustomed to see American Jesuits wearing the same habit as is portrayed in the picture of St. Stanislaus, expressed his surprise that Mr. James Weld should not have immediately recognized the portrait as that of a Jesuit saint. He evidently did not know that the Jesuits in England wear a sleeveless and beltless gown with wings behind, which bears no resemblance to what is, in America, called the Jesuit cassock. This latter is the traditional garb of our first Fathers, but not at all a matter of rule, not being worn in France, Belgium and many foreign missions.

Yours truly,
LEWIS DRUMMOND, S. J.

The following account of an apparition of St. Stanislaus Kostka will have special interest for most readers, because of the comparatively recent occurrence of the event. It is reprinted, with some fresh details, from a volume of a former series of the *Ave Maria*, at the suggestion of a well-known missionary priest, who assures us that the narration will be new to innumerable readers. For the most part, it is a transcript of the testimony of Miss Katherine W. Weld, one of the witnesses of the apparition; the Rev. Father Drummond, S. J., supplying further information. Miss Weld's statement is in our possession, and is all the more valuable now that she is dead. She was living when this account was first published, and certified to its correctness.

St. Stanislaus is one of the glories of the Society of Jesus, a beloved and favored child of Mary. His precious death, according to his prophecy, took place on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, 1568. He was canonized, in company with St. Aloysius Gonzaga, by Pope Benedict XIII, in 1726.

Philip Weld was the youngest son of James Weld, Esq., of Archer's Lodge, near Southampton. In 1842 he was sent by his father to St. Edmund's College, near Ware, in Hertfordshire, for his education. He was a well-conducted, amiable boy, and much beloved by all his masters and fellow-students.

It chanced that April 16, 1846, was a holiday at the College. On the morning of that day Philip had received Holy Communion at the early Mass (having just finished a retreat), and in the afternoon he went boating on the River Ware, accompanied by one of the masters and some of his companions. A row was one of the sports which he always enjoyed particularly.

After amusing themselves for some hours, the master announced that it was time to return to the College; but Philip begged to have one row more. The master consented, and Weld and a companion rowed out to the accustomed turning-point. On arriving there, and on turning the boat, Philip accidentally fell into the river; and, notwithstanding every effort to save him, he was drowned. (1)

The corpse was brought back to the College; and the Very Rev. Dr. Cox, as well as all the others who remained at home, was greatly shocked and grieved to hear of the accident. He was very fond of Philip, and to be obliged to communicate the sad news to the boy's parents was a most painful duty. He could scarcely make up his mind whether to write by post or to send a messenger. At last he resolved to go himself to Southampton.

Dr. Cox set off on the same afternoon, passed through London, and reached Southampton the next day. Thence he drove to the residence of the Weld family. Before entering the grounds he saw Mr. Weld, at a short distance from the gate, walking toward the town. Dr. Cox immediately stopped the carriage, alighted, and was about to address him, when the latter prevented him by saying:

"You need not speak one word, for I know that Philip is dead. Yesterday afternoon I was walking with my daughter Katherine, and we suddenly saw him. He was standing in the path on the opposite side of the turnpike road, between two persons, one of whom was a youth dressed in a black robe. My daughter was the first to perceive them, and exclaimed: 'O papa, did you ever see anything so like Philip as that?'—'Like him!' I replied; 'why, it is he!' Strange to say, she thought nothing of the incident other than that we had beheld an extraordinary likeness of her brother. We walked toward these three figures. Philip was looking with a smiling, happy countenance at the young man in a black robe, who was shorter than himself. Suddenly they all vanished: I saw nothing but a countryman, whom I had before seen through the three figures, which gave me the impression that they were spirits. I said nothing, however, to anyone, as I was fearful of alarming Mrs. Weld. I looked out anxiously for the post this morning. To my delight, no letter came (I forgot that letters from Ware came in the afternoon), and my fears were quieted. I thought no more of the extraordinary circumstance until I saw you in the carriage outside my gate. Then everything returned to my mind, and I could not doubt that you had come

to tell me of the death of my dear boy." The reader will easily imagine how inexpressibly astonished Dr. Cox was at this recital. He asked Mr. Weld if he had ever seen the young man in the black robe. The gentleman replied that he had never before seen him, but that his countenance was so indelibly impressed on his memory that he was certain he should recognize him at once anywhere.

Dr. Cox then related to the afflicted father the circumstances of his son's death, which occurred at the very hour in which Philip appeared to his father and sister. They felt much consolation on account of the placid smile Mr. Weld had remarked on the countenance of Philip, as it seemed to indicate that he had died in the grace of God, and was consequently forever happy.

Mr. Weld went to the funeral, and on leaving the church after the sad ceremony he looked round to see if any one present at all resembled the young man he had seen with Philip; but he could not trace the slightest likeness in any of them. A letter of the Rt. Rev. Monsig. Weld, a brother of the deceased, dated April 16, 1895, the anniversary of the apparition, may be quoted here. "I was present at the funeral," he writes; "and before it my father told me that he would look at all the members of the College, to see if he could recognize the one who was with Philip; for he said no matter in what part of the world he might see him he would recognize him instantly,—as he did the moment he saw the portrait. After the funeral I asked him the question, and he said: 'Oh, no! I saw no one with the slightest resemblance.'"

About four months later Mr. Weld and his family paid a visit to his brother, Mr. George Weld, at Leagram Hall, in Lancashire. One day he walked with his daughter Katherine to the neighboring village of Chipping; and, after attending a service at the church, called to see the priest, the Rev. Father Bateman. A few moments elapsed before he was at leisure to come to them, and while waiting they entertained themselves by examining the prints hanging on the walls of the room. Suddenly Mr. Weld stopped before a picture which had no name that one could see written under it, as the frame covered the lower portion, and exclaimed:

"That is the one whom I saw with Philip! I do not know whose likeness this print is, but I am certain that it is the one I saw with Philip."

The priest entered the room a moment later, and was immediately questioned by Mr. Weld concerning the print. He replied that it was a picture of St. Stanislaus Kostka, and supposed to be a very good likeness of the young Saint. Mr. Weld was much moved at hearing this; for St. Stanislaus was a member of the Society of Jesus, and Mr. Weld's father having been a great benefactor to the Order, his family were supposed to be under the particular protection of the Jesuit saints. Also Philip had been inspired by various circumstances with a particular devotion to this Saint. Moreover, St. Stanislaus is venerated as the special advocate of the drowned.

Father Bateman at once kindly presented the picture to Mr. Weld, who, of course, received it with the greatest joy and veneration, and kept it until his death. His wife valued it equally, and at her death it passed to the daughter who saw the apparition at the same time as her father. It is now in the possession of Monsig. Weld, who assures us in the letter quoted above that "nothing can be better than the *Ave Maria's* photograph."

Four circumstances, remarks Father Drummond, tend to make the objective truth of this narrative highly probable. The first is that Miss Weld saw the three figures, but without noticing the faces or dresses of the two companions of her brother, and without believing that what her father considered to be really his son's face was anything more than a likeness. This precludes deception arising from the "wish to believe." The second is that Mr. Weld himself was delighted when no letter came to him by the morning post. This would prove that he did not voluntarily cling to a delusion. Again, Mr. Weld's not immediately recognizing the picture of St. Stanislaus shows that he could not have known much about the Saint; for this

picture, though having a special charm of its own, is easily recognizable to any one who has ever seen a representation of St. Stanislaus. Mr. Weld, then, could not have been thinking of St. Stanislaus at the time, and therefore the likeness to the picture could not be the work of his imagination. Finally, Philip's second companion was not particularly observed by the father or the daughter. Supposing, for the moment, that the story was the product of "unconscious cerebration," or any other natural process, it would have been very hard to resist the tendency to explain who that second companion was. No explanation was ever offered. Needless to add that the mere fact of Miss Weld's having seen anything at all does away with the possibility of a merely subjective phenomenon on her father's part.

The Rev. Dr. Lee, a learned and well-known Anglican minister, who is numbered among the contributors to the *Ave Maria*, speaks of this remarkable occurrence as one of the most striking and best-authenticated instances of a supernatural appearance which has ever been narrated, and gives a brief account of it in his interesting work entitled "The Other World." He writes: "The various independent testimonies, dovetailing together so perfectly, center in the leading supernatural fact—the actual apparition in the daytime of a person just departed this life by sudden death, seen not by one only, but by two people simultaneously; and seen in company with the spirit of a very holy and renowned Saint, the chosen patron of the youth who had just been drowned. A more clear and conclusive example of the supernatural it would be impossible to obtain."

(1) The Rev. Robert Whitty, S. J., formerly Vicar-General to Cardinal Wiseman and sometime Provincial of the Society of Jesus in England, was then a young priest at St. Edmund's College. He was the first to break the sad news to the president, Dr. Cox. He states that the only other person in the boat at the time was Eustace Barron. "While Eustace was at one end of the boat, Philip tumbled out of the other. Eustace ran toward him, and shoved out an oar. Philip clutched at it, but missed it; sank and did not rise again."

THE BIBLE AND ALWAYS THE BIBLE!

Our esteemed contemporary, the Southern Messenger, thus facetiously deals with the stock-in-trade argument of Protestants anent the opposition of the Catholic church to a dissemination of the Bible among its adherents:

Mr. James Britten, Secretary of the English Catholic Truth Society, writes as follows:

"For the benefit of those who are willing to allow that a Catholic knows something about Popery, and who are not afraid of facts, even when they run counter to preconceived notions, I beg to state

(1) That I have now before me extracts from the letters of eighteen South American and eight Mexican Bishops and Archbishops, approving of Father Vaughan's work in distributing the Sacred Scriptures.

(2) That I have similar extracts from twenty South American, fourteen Mexican, and three Cuban papers to the same effect.

(3) That the first edition consisted of 100,000 copies, nearly all of which were circulated gratis.

(4) That a second edition is now being printed to meet the demands of South American Archbishops and Bishops.

(5) That an order for 4,000 copies of this edition has just been received from Spain."

This statement, taken without comment, would go against the ordinary preacher, whose primary article of faith is that the Catholic church hates the Bible; it would contradict the frequent news in the Protestant religious press detailing how the good, holy Protestant missionaries are being persecuted in Spain and South America by the bad Papists for distributing Bibles; but the preachers are not so easily downed, and, no doubt, they will find an explanation for this modern Catholic zeal in distributing Bibles. "The Catholic church," they will perhaps say, "never changes, and if she never changes, she is to-day the same as she was at the time of the Spanish inquisition. At that time, Protestants were stretched on the rack for reading the Bible. Consequently, the Catholic church must still hate the Holy Scriptures; and, if she now recommends them, it can be but a scheme to throw dust into the eyes of non-Catholics." But dear friends, you forget that the Bible is

older than Protestantism; that tens of thousands of monks were occupied many centuries in multiplying copies of the Bible, patiently writing out the whole Scriptures word for word by hand, and marvellously illuminating them—some of these copies being written entirely in letters of gold;—you forget that there were more than seventy different editions of the Bible in the different languages of the nations of Europe, printed before Luther's Bible was put forth. Father Young tells us that the library of the Paulist Fathers of New York city contains a copy of the ninth edition of a German Bible, profusely illustrated with colored wood engravings and printed by Antonius Coburger at Nuremberg, in 1483, the very year in which Luther was born. The first edition of this same Bible was issued in 1477. Nine editions of the Bible in the language of the people in six years in one city of Germany, and that within thirty years of the invention of the printing press, and issued many years before the first Protestant Bible was published! But Father Young comes to the rescue of Protestants, and shows how any intelligent Protestant can easily explain this extraordinary publication of the Bible by these Catholics, even before Luther was born. It was not love of the Scriptures; it was not a wish to have them spread and read, but it was hatred of Protestantism that prompted them to do it. You do not understand this, because there was no Protestantism in existence then; but, don't be so hasty, my friend, wait a moment, Father Young will tell you. "You can never catch," he says, "the wily priesthood of Rome napping. They foresaw that Protestantism with its enlightenment was coming—the religion of the Bible, and of nothing but the Bible, and they knew that the ministers of this Bible religion would for three hundred years devote themselves to 'spreading the Bible in Heathen and Papal lands,' and would charge Rome and all its Popes, Bishops, and Priests, including Jesuits, with keeping the Bible from the people, and burning it whenever they could. All this they knew—what do they not know? and so, with Jesuitical cunning, they set to work at once to print off as many Bibles as they could, in every language, just to have it to say that they printed Bibles in the vernacular before Protestants did, in order to deprive them of the glory of having been the first to do so; making up their popish minds all the while, that the people should never be permitted to look into one of them. Oh! there's no coming up with the astuteness of the wily Priesthood of Rome!" It is fortunate for Protestants to have Father Young to come to their rescue occasionally. He renders them the same service, when he explains why tens of thousands of monks took for centuries, the trouble of multiplying the Bible by copying it by hand. After the Paulist Father has found the solution of the enigma, it is easy for anyone but a blind and superstitious devotee of Romanism to see that these monks had the Protestant "British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" in their eye, and were determined to forestall them at all cost!

Catholics boast that their Church in the early days of her existence took so much pains to collect all the writings esteemed as inspired, and called that collection the "Bible." But they forget that Protestants could have done all that just as well and no doubt better: "but then Rome," says Father Young, "as usual, got on the ground ahead of them, for more than a thousand years, and Protestants were thus forced to take the Bible from her hands."

How fortunate would Protestants be if they could gain that Paulist Father over to their side; there would be no problem so difficult he could not solve for them; he could prove to them that it was the Jesuits that hunted up Christopher Columbus and persuaded him to make the discovery of America, just to be able to say that a Catholic made the discovery, especially knowing that some Protestants would soon be found that could do it just as well, if not much better. It is to be hoped, however, that Father Young will not be too friendly to the Protestants; will not help them to explain everything in their favor to the detriment of the Catholic cause; let them find out for themselves the schemes and the tricks of the Jesuits.