

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- December 6, Sunday.—Second Sunday in Advent.
 „ 7, Monday.—St. Ambrose, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor.
 „ 8, Tuesday.—Feast of the Immaculate Conception,
 „ 9, Wednesday.—St. Eutychian, Pope and Martyr.
 „ 10, Thursday.—Octave of St. Francis Xavier, Confessor.
 „ 11, Friday.—St. Damasus I., Pope and Confessor.
 „ 12, Saturday.—St. Melchisedech, Pope and Martyr.

St. Ambrose, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor.

St. Ambrose, son of a Roman magistrate, was born in France about the year 340. In 374 he was consecrated Archbishop of Milan. His administration of this important archdiocese extended over twenty-three years, and was one continuous victory over paganism and heresy. Completely forgetful of his worldly interests and personal comfort, St. Ambrose was always at the command of anyone who sought his assistance and advice. Though full of tenderness and compassion towards all, he knew how to be firm and unyielding when the interests of religion were at stake. His theological writings and sermons have gained him a place in the foremost rank of the Doctors of the Church. St. Ambrose died in 397.

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Her immaculate Conception was the first of the privileges by which the Blessed Virgin was prepared for the dignity of Mother of God. This privilege signifies that Mary never contracted the stain of original sin; that her soul, in the first moment of its union with her body, was pure and spotless. She was thus excepted from the universal doom, in virtue of which every member of the human race enters the world stained by Adam's sin. This doctrine, so admirably in keeping with what the holiness of Mary's Son required, though expressed more or less explicitly in every age of the Church's history, was not formally defined until the year 1854.

GRAINS OF GOLD

SELF-CHEATING.

When kindness we withhold
 From friends we daily meet,
 It is ourselves we cheat
 Of wealth more worth than gold
 For life must e'er be cold,
 And tares grow 'mid our wheat,
 When kindness we withhold
 From friends we daily meet.

Oh, let our hearts unfold
 Affection's stores full sweet;
 Life, at the best, is fleet;
 Too soon do we grow old
 When kindness we withhold
 From friends we daily meet.

—Ave Maria.

We must regard the community as superior to the individual in many an instance. Life is at best a climb, and celerity in the performance of duty, charm in speech and action and circumspection in all things will make the uphill journey all the easier.

An honest reputation is within the reach of all men; they obtain it by social virtues and by doing their duty. This kind of reputation, it is true, is neither brilliant nor startling, but it is often the most useful for happiness.

Make good use of your fortune during life. Be not blind enough to depend on heirs, believing that, having forgotten yourself while on earth, they will remember you when you have departed, and give alms in your name. Now that you are able, do what lies in your power.

Anticipate the Day of Judgement. Be beforehand with it. That day is coming, inevitably coming, as the rising of tomorrow's sun. The day is not far off when the great White Throne will be set up, and we shall stand before God, and the eyes that are as a flame of fire will search us through and through, and not His eyes alone but the eyes of all men will be upon us, and the ears of men will hear that which the accuser will say against us on that day. There will be no secrecy there; no hiding of our sins; nothing concealed from God, or from that multitude which is around the great Throne.—Cardinal Manning.

The Storyteller

A MESALLIANCE

When George Crackenthorpe and his daughter, Muriel, found their way to Ballysallagh Spa, the Spa was out of fashion. But it did very well for the Crackenthorpes, who were miserably poor. Most of the casinos of Europe had assisted in George's ruin. Bath and Cheltenham and Tunbridge Wells were no longer possible. Ballysallagh served at once to cover up George's retreat and to save him in his starveling income. He could write to the few friends of happier days that Ballysallagh was a thousand times better than Hamburg or Baden, or those new-fangled places, Marienbad and Salsomaggiore. And his daughter Muriel could buy him chickens at rod apiece, delicious, skinny bits of toothsome unknown to the millionaires of Park Lane, eggs at 6d a dozen, and other edibles in proportion.

George had several sisters living, who had not spoken to him for a good many years. They were respectable and pious ladies, whose handsome incomes, accumulating, had gathered like the rolling snowball, although much more solid. They had washed their hands of George long ago. The money would all go to Joe's children. Joe was a younger brother, who was a light of Exeter Hall. 'Money goes to money,' George would say bitterly. 'Never mind, my girl, we've had a rare good time with ours.'

Which meant that he had had. Poor Muriel, who had been dragged about Europe all her life in the train of a gambler, had had no great joy of the squandered money, nor had the weeping little mother she remembered.

Occasionally a letter would come for George, addressed in a feigned, backward-sloping hand. The letter would enclose a hundred pounds in Bank of England notes. George would feel them between his thumb and forefinger with great satisfaction. 'Good old Henrietta,' he would murmur to himself. Henrietta was the youngest of his sisters, and although she had agreed with the others to ignore that black sheep, George, she had apparently some relenting in her heart towards him. But for these bank-notes a couple of times a year they could hardly have lived, even at Ballysallagh.

The roof that covered their heads was that of the long, white, two-storeyed house, with green outside shutters to all its windows, that was known as the Spa House. About a hundred years earlier the greatest of great ladies had taken their cures there; had sipped the Spa water, with its agreeable rotten-egg flavor and odor; had tripped in the meadows in shepherdess costumes. But now the Spa water had a merely local reputation, and the O'Kelly family, who owned the Spa House, took an occasional lodger in one end of it, and filled it at the other end, being a long family.

The heads of the O Kelly family, since the father and mother were dead, were Patrick, the eldest son, and Kathleen, the eldest daughter. A brother and sister more unlike could not well be imagined. Patrick was quite a beautiful creature, though the indiscriminating people about him had not discovered it. His eyes were the bluest blue—not grey-blue, and not green-blue, but blue. His skin, that had a short, golden down on it, was firm with health, and had the most beautiful color. His hair, corn-colored, fell in waving masses that would have been the delight of a painter. His limbs were magnificent. He was a young giant, strong and graceful. Muriel, who adored beauty, was aware of it through his untidy everyday clothes, and the more disfiguring garments he wore on Sundays.

Kathleen, on the other hand, was cross-eyed, had a cheek like a little, hard, red winter apple, a squat figure, a short temper, and a managing disposition. Neither she nor Michael, the next brother, who resembled her, were satisfied with Patrick's way of doing business. It was too slow and easy-going for them. A deal more might be made of the land by Michael. Kathleen was prepared to develop the summer-lodgers scheme; to fill the house with those who would pay, and not be too particular about what they did, whether they were rowdy, and turned the quiet valley under the mountains into a sort of Hall by the Sea of some trippers' resort. Already she had a poultry farm, and sent fruit to the Dublin market. She kept bees, and had no end of schemes for making money.

Patrick quietly set himself in opposition to his sister's plan for attracting crowds to the Spa House. A dislike of the rowdiness and noise was a small part of his opposition. A great part was that the Crackenthorpes would go if the others were