

# Friends at Court

## CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

December 13, Sunday.	—Third Sunday in Advent.
„ 14, Monday.	—The Holy House of Loreto.
„ 15, Tuesday.	—Octave of the Immaculate Conception.
„ 16, Wednesday.	—St. Eusebius, Bishop and Martyr. Ember Day.
„ 17, Thursday.	—St. Leonard of Port Maurice, Confessor.
„ 18, Friday.	—Expectation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Ember Day.
„ 19, Saturday.	—Blessed Urban V., Pope and Confessor. Ember Day.

### Expectation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As we approach more nearly to the great feast of the Nativity, the Church redoubles her exhortations to prepare in a worthy manner for its celebration. To-day she urges us to join in the longing desires and fervent aspirations with which the Blessed Virgin hailed the approach of the happy day when she was to hold in her arms the Incarnate Son of God.

### Blessed Urban V., Pope and Confessor.

Before his elevation to the Papacy, Blessed Urban was abbot of the monastery of St. Victor, near Marseilles, and as Pope he cultivated the same qualities which had distinguished him as a monk. His virtues were in striking contrast with the corruption of the times in which he lived, and would have done honor to a better age. His pontificate lasted from 1362 to 1370.

## GRAINS OF GOLD

### A FRAGILE SPAN.

The swan's wake in the glassy mere,  
The southward highway of the bird,  
The path of a star-ray in the sphere,  
The road of the west wind ere 'tis heard:  
Aye, even as these is the fragile span  
Of years that are called the life of man.

—Ave Maria.

To select well among old things is almost equal to inventing new ones.—Trublet.

There may be only two or three opportunities in a lifetime of proving oneself brave, but every hour of every day one may have the satisfaction of knowing that he is not a coward.—Anon.

The simple question is, whatever a man's rank in life may be, does he in that rank perform the work that God has given him to do?

To work—to do honest work of any kind—is, after all, the very first requisite of true religion. And when we base our chances of acceptance on the work we have done with our hands, this will be a better world full of better men and women.

He who by nature is coarse and violent, and who by dint of resolution becomes gentle and amiable, often becomes capable of great and difficult undertakings in the service of God; because that very stubbornness, or that natural obstinacy, used in a good cause, knows neither defeat nor discouragement.—St. Ignatius.

No true product of human reasoning and no phenomenon in the world can ever defy the Faith; but the abnormal suppositions which vivid imaginations conjure up from the mass of disconnected facts that lie before them will never cease to disturb religious minds. These grotesque hypotheses, however, do not constitute science. They are as far removed from science as the sombre doctrines of paganism are removed from the revelations of Christianity.

If you would be 'young when old,' adopt the sun-dial's motto, 'I record none but hours of sunshine.' Never mind the dark or shadowed hours. Forget unpleasant, unhappy days. Remember only the days of rich experiences; let the others drop into oblivion. It is said that 'long livers are great hoppers.' If you keep your hope bright in spite of discouragements and meet all difficulties with a cheerful face, it will be very difficult for age to trace its furrows on your brow. There is longevity in cheerfulness.

# The Storyteller

## A MESALLIANCE

(Concluded from last week.)

'The man doesn't mend either as quickly as I'd like,' the doctor said to that faithful confidant, his wife. 'He won't be able for the same kind of work next winter. He's really a charming fellow. I begin to see, apart from his good looks, why she married him. It's an idyll, Alicia. I hope those people of hers won't let it be spoilt by the pinch of poverty.'

To that letter of hers to Miss Henrietta Crackenthorpe Muriel had received no answer. Ah, that was bad. It seemed as though the lady were unforgiving; and it was not the time to approach Patrick with the tale of his dwindling two hundred pounds being saddled with so heavy a debt. When he was stronger—and the strength came back so slowly—it would be time enough. The summer would surely make him well again.

She sent another letter to Miss Henrietta Crackenthorpe, asking time for the repayment of the debt. Her husband had been ill; there had been a baby; their resources had been strained to the uttermost.

A few evenings afterwards they sat in the lamplight, the little family of three, who were sufficient for each other's felicity. There was a little bright fire, for even summer evenings are damp in Ireland; but the windows were open, and the summer moths came in and fluttered about the lamp.

Muriel had the baby on her lap, his face in shadow away from the light. She was sewing, and Patrick was reading aloud, with deliberate carefulness, Miss Thackeray's 'Village on the Cliff.' It was a portion of his education. Seeing how late it had begun, it made wonderful progress, and Muriel, with a fond smile, would declare herself proud of her pupil. Learning seemed to come by second nature to Patrick.

Only that day the doctor had suggested to her that it would be unwise for Patrick to remain in his present employment during the winter, when there must be hardships.

'A winter abroad would set him up completely. After that I should have nothing to say.'

'Her rich friends will help her,' thought the doctor, nor guessed at the despair that filled Muriel's heart.

Now, as he read, she put in her careful stitches, and glanced from time to time at her husband's face. His illness had left an unearthly kind of delicacy behind. It had refined away the last traces of the class in which Patrick O'Kelly had grown up—the class which misses the refinement of the peasant as much as that of the gentry.

Her mind was working upon itself. If they must leave the Colonel after all, they could only repay him the money which he had not withheld from Patrick during his long weeks of his illness and convalescence. And what was Patrick to do? How was she to give him the fallow time in which to grow strong. As for going abroad, that was as unattainable as Heaven. Must they eat up the remainder of the two hundred pounds? If it were not for the baby: the coming of that small person had complicated everything. She no longer felt herself her own to spend for Patrick. There was the baby to be thought of.

Through the confusion of her thoughts, and that half-sense which listened to the fortunes of Dick Butler and his Reine, she had caught now and again a distant sound of wheels. She had only noticed it sub-consciously. This time of year tourists were common enough in the neighborhood. And presently the sounds died away. There was nothing outside but the broad silver shield of the lake in the full moonlight, and the sharp lights and shadows in the hills.

Suddenly someone came into the room—a lady cloaked and bonneted, a traveller. She had opened the door herself, and entered unannounced. As she came forward to the lamplight she put back her veil, and displayed a brown, elderly, shrewd, kindly face, with white teeth showing in a smile. But there was a flush of tears in her eyes.

'My dear, forgive me for coming like this,' she said; 'I saw your little maid was more pleasantly engaged sitting with a young man on a fallen tree at the lake's edge. So I slipped in through the creditably clean kitchen and found my way, your husband's voice guiding me. I am your Aunt Henrietta. And so this is your baby. What an angel! And your husband has been very ill. Never mind, I have come to take care of you all. I have only just had your letter of last February. I