

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- February 14, Sunday.—Sexagesima Sunday.
 „ 15, Monday.—St. Paul, the First Hermit.
 „ 16, Tuesday.—Commemoration of the Passion of Our Lord.
 „ 17, Wednesday.—St. Fintan, Abbot.
 „ Thursday.—St. Marcellus, Pope and Martyr.
 „ 19, Friday.—St. Martina, Virgin and Martyr.
 „ 20, Saturday.—St. Ignatius, Bishop and Martyr.

St. Paul, First Hermit.

St. Paul was a native of Egypt. Compelled to flee to the desert to escape the persecution of the Emperor Decius, in 250, he became enamored of the solitude, and spent there the remainder of his life in prayer and meditation. He died at the advanced age of 119.

St. Marcellus, Pope and Martyr.

St. Marcellus succeeded Pope Marcellinus in 308. After a pontificate of nineteen months, he succumbed to sufferings inflicted on him by the tyrant Maxentius.

GRAINS OF GOLD

MORNING PRAYER.

Let me to-day do something that shall take
 A little sadness from the world's vast store,
 And may I be so favored as to make—
 Of joy's too scanty sum a little more.

Let me not hurt, by any selfish deed
 Or thoughtless word, the heart of foe or friend;
 Nor would I pass, unseeing, worthy need,
 Or sin by silence when I should defend.

However meagre be my worldly wealth,
 Let me give something that shall aid my kind—
 A word of courage, or a thought of health,
 Dropped as I pass for troubled hearts to find.

Let me to-night look back across the span
 'Twixt dawn and dark, and to my conscience say,
 Because of some good act to beast or man,
 'The world is better that I lived to-day.'

Let us practise decent and pure speech until we have convinced even the most habitual swearers that there is something better fitted to the expression of feeling or emotion; something far more weighty when we would be impressive than the use of profanity.—Leigh Mitchell Hodges.

'Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.' St. John tells us that God is charity. Thus in the whole of the almost infinite and complicated system in which we live, God has contrived all things, quite wonderfully, for these two ends, if they might not more properly be called one end than two; He has arranged everything first, so that He may be loved; and, secondly, so as to enable us to love Him. If we may dare thus to speak of the Almighty, He seems to have no other end in view at all; and He manages things by artifices of almighty power in order to bring this about. This is His rule by which He has done everything. The hearts of His creatures are the only treasures He will condescend to accept from His own creation.—Father Faber.

Let us reanimate our Faith. Do we sufficiently reflect that it is at the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we daily assist? Now it is no longer a Bloody Sacrifice, though nevertheless real and true, for Jesus by a refinement of love wished to spare us a too painful representation of His sufferings and death. And if His Heart pushes generously to such an excess, if He be so prodigal of miracles, that the Holy Mysteries may be every moment renewed, should we be cold and indifferent, and yield to tepidity, and by accustoming ourselves to His benefits, become insensible to them? As Moses on the mountain, so do we too 'make haste, and bow our heads to the earth, and worship'; so we, each in his own place, with his own heart, with his own wants, his own thoughts, with his own intention, with his own prayers, separate, yet concordant, watching what is going on, watching its progress, uniting in its consummation. But out of these many minds rises one Eucharistic hymn.—Cardinal Newman.

The Storyteller

THE COMFORTER

There had been hope to the last; he was so strong, so animated, so filled with the very essence of life that it did not seem possible for him to die; his father, his mother, every member of the household expected him to recover. He was very ill, of course; dangerously so, they knew, but that he would not eventually pull through and be his bright, childish self again never occurred to them.

They were wealthy people, and he was the only child; the frets of poverty were not added to their other troubles; everything that could be done for him was done. The town's leading physician, the ablest, most untiring trained nurses labored together to keep death at bay; they fought as perhaps they had never fought before, spurred to heroic effort by his mother's anguished appeals. They were sorry for his father, of course. It was hard lines to lose an only child, and that one who bore your name, but it was the mother's frantic 'Save him for me, doctor; save my little child!' that inspired the zeal of the life-savers.

They had known her as a beauty and a belle, the leader of the old town's gaiety and fashion, and in their hearts they had not deemed her capable of deep feeling; her hollow-eyed misery now hurt their consciences and made them eager to atone.

She rarely left the boy. They could hardly persuade her to eat. It was only by reminding her that she would not be strong enough to nurse him later that she was even induced to rest.

Everything known to science, everything that love could suggest, was tried, but day by day the child's hold on life weakened. He ceased to play with his toys; he no longer asked for his mother; he did not try to smile when his father stooped over him and called him by his pet name. Still and white and spent with suffering, he lay on his little cot, indifferent to the hard fight they were making for his life.

One evening, just as twilight was falling, the dread change came. The doctor, his hand on the falling pulse, motioned to the young father.

'He cannot last long now; try and make Mrs. Greyson understand.'

Greyson approached his wife.

'Constance,' he began slowly, 'Constance, my poor darling, the doctor says our little boy cannot live.'

'Let me have him,' she cried sharply; dully, then with a low moan of terror pushed past him to the bed.

'Let me have him,' she cried sharply; 'give my baby to me.'

The nurse instantly made way for her. At another time the willing concession would have alarmed her, but she was past heeding trifles now.

'Archie,' she crooned, gathering him to her warm bosom, 'mother's little man, don't you know your mother, baby?'

The grey shadows were closing in, the end of the journey was already in sight, but the mother-cry pierced even the cold ear of death. To the bewilderment of the watchers the boy's long lashes lifted.

'Mother,' he said distinctly, 'mother's little boy,' then with a sigh his head fell heavily against her arm.

She clasped him to her in an ecstasy of joy. 'He knew me, doctor; he must be stronger than you think; he spoke to me.'

But at that triumphant cry her husband turned abruptly away. It did not need the doctor's, 'he is gone' to tell him that the struggle had been in vain, that the tired spirit, freed from its earthly bonds, had slipped away from earth.

'Madam,' said one of the nurses, gently, 'all is over!'

But with the boy's soft tones still echoing in her ears it was impossible to convince her, and when the truth finally beat its way into her consciousness she was as one bereft of reason.

In one breath she upbraided the doctors for letting him die; in the next apologised gently for her discourtesy, explaining with cold gravity that, 'of course, she knew they had done their best; that it was not their fault, but what chance had they to save him, when every one—the whole, wide, miserable world—was at the mercy of a relentless power to whom breaking mother-hearts meant nothing?'

'It is God who is cruel,' she cried, and bent dry-eyed over her child's still form.

When his nurse, the old servant who had been with her all her life, came in softly, bringing fresh, fair linen, she said again: 'God is very cruel, mammy; He has torn my baby from me.'

Tears rained down the old woman's cheeks.