

Friends at Court

CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- January 31, Sunday.—Septuagesima Sunday.
 February 1, Monday.—St. Ignatius, Bishop and Martyr.
 „ 2, Tuesday.—Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
 „ 3, Wednesday.—St. Blase, Martyr.
 „ 4, Thursday.—St. Andrew Corsini, Bishop and Confessor.
 „ 5, Friday.—St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr.
 „ 6, Saturday.—St. Titus, Bishop and Confessor.

The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It was ordained in the Old Law that a mother should present her first-born son in the temple, as an acknowledgment of the Divine Sovereignty, and in commemoration of the mercy of God, when, having in a single night destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians, He spared those of the Israelites. Moreover, to remind the Jews that, in consequence of Adam's fall, man is conceived in sin, a mother, after child-birth, was regarded as legally unclean for a certain period, during which she was forbidden to enter the temple, or to touch anything consecrated to God. Though the Blessed Virgin was, for various reasons, exempt from this law, she submitted to it in all humility. After the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice, according as it was written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons (Gospel of St. Luke).

St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr.

St. Agatha belonged to a rich and illustrious Sicilian family. During the persecution of Decius she displayed great constancy in suffering the bitter and protracted tortures which were inflicted on her by the orders of a pagan judge, and which eventually caused her death in 251. The city of Catania, situated at the foot of Mount Etna, honors her as patron, and attributes to her protection its safety on the occasions of many violent volcanic eruptions.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

ONE LOOK AT THE SACRED HEART.

There it hung on the cottage wall,
 Mately watching the deeds of all;
 Even its presence seemed to impart
 Light and grace from the Sacred Heart.

Those pleading eyes were ever bent
 On every face that came and went,
 As, pointing to the open side,
 He showed His love all crucified.

That sight sufficed to quell the fear,
 And dry the sorrow-laden tear,
 The wearing grief, the fretting care,
 All— all found balm and solace there.

Many a hasty word was stayed,
 Many a touch of grace obeyed,
 Many a prayer to heaven would dart,
 By only a look at the Sacred Heart.

We'll listen, then, to Jesus' Prayer,
 Then His Heart's promise we may share:
 'There where My Heart they shall expose,
 My benediction shall repose.'

Peace is rarely denied to the peaceful.
 Pride is quite liable to lead to other sins.
 Don't climb the hill before you cross the valley.
 Without prayer man is certain to go to perdition.
 He who can have patience can have what he will.

The Storyteller

MOTHER

Mrs. Heriot was sitting in the little back parlor darning stockings. She looked down now and again at the overflowing work-basket in a despairing sort of way that was not usual to her. She felt a strange weariness and lassitude—it had been creeping over her for some weeks now. She felt that she was on the verge of a breakdown. The busy housewife who rose early and went to bed last had reached the end of her tether. Without a change of some kind she would not be able to continue her duties.

She had reached that period that often, alas! comes to a tender, unselfish mother. The children she had slaved for and seen grown away from her; they did not consider her a necessary element in their lives. They had other varied interests and friends. Mother was always there, of course, when they wanted her, but she did not enter into their schemes of amusements. She was just mother—indispensable at times, but just a little different from the fashionable mothers of their friends.

Her husband, absorbed in his business, had grown indifferent to the claims of his wife for companionship and love. He would have been indignant had it been suggested that he was a careless husband. He would have repudiated it warmly. Even her youngest born, Tommy, thought the dignity of thirteen years was disturbed by such things as kisses and caresses from his mother.

Her eldest girl, a pretty, rather vain young creature of twenty, was engaged to be married to a young bank clerk, and the opinions and doings of her future relatives had more weight with her than those at home.

And yet Mrs. Heriot had been a beauty in her girlhood. She had been the idolised darling of an aristocratic home, but she had thrown aside everything at the bidding of love—given up riches and ease for a struggling existence of trying to make two ends meet, and she had never regretted it. But now she longed for some of the love she had given so lavishly, and she found herself put on one side as old-fashioned.

She raised her eyes to the little mirror over the mantelpiece. Her cheeks were delicately hollowed; there were lines of care on her brow. She was only forty-five. Many a woman was quite youthful at that age, with all the advantages of dress to help her. But her old brown gown, though it fitted her slender figure with a certain grace of its own, was unbecoming to her. She looked almost an old woman. It was true what Mary had said to her yesterday morning, though at that time it had cut her like a knife.

Her cousin, Mrs. Graham, wife of one of New York's foremost bankers, was the only one of her relatives who had kept up any connection with her.

The tired woman, sitting there with busy fingers, was formulating something in her brain that had been suggested to her a few days before by her cousin.

'Come and stay with me for a month, Barbara. You look as though you wanted a little patting and coddling. Come and let me dress you as you ought to be dressed: show people that you are as beautiful at forty-five as when you were eighteen. Your husband and children want you. Let them! They will value you all the more when you return.'

She had refused then, but the words had lingered in her mind, and that afternoon, as the mirror reflected her tired face where all its beauty seemed to be wiped out, the words had made her come to a sudden decision.

A holiday in the real sense of the word had never been hers since her marriage. The holidays of the family had meant increased work for her. But now she would take one. For one month she would return to the life that had been hers when she was a girl.

There was a little astonished silence when she mentioned her plans the next morning at breakfast. There was an outcry of protest that made her hesitate for an instant and look from one face to the other. Then she went on quietly: