

## Friends at Court

### GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- September 1, Sunday.—Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.  
 „ 2, Monday.—St. Stephen, King and Confessor.  
 „ 3, Tuesday.—Of the Feria.  
 „ 4, Wednesday.—Of the Feria.  
 „ 5, Thursday.—St. Lawrence Justinian, Confessor.  
 „ 6, Friday.—Of the Feria.  
 „ 7, Saturday.—Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

St. Stephen, King and Confessor.

St. Stephen was the first King of Hungary. Brought up from infancy in the Catholic religion, his greatest ambition was to bring his idolatrous subjects to a knowledge of the true Faith. At the same time he endeavored to promote their temporal interests. A brave and skilful general, he never engaged in war except when an honorable peace was impossible. St. Stephen died in 1038, at the age of 60.

St. Lawrence Justinian.

St. Lawrence Justinian was first Patriarch of Venice, in which city he was born in 1381. He was General of the Canons-Regular of St. George; Bishop of Venice (1433), Patriarch (1451). He built at Venice ten churches and several monasteries. He died in the year 1456. His beatification was ratified by Clement VII. in 1524, and he was canonised in 1690 by Alexander VIII.

### GRAINS OF GOLD.

#### MY OFFERING.

Almighty God, Supreme Eternal King,  
 Enthroned in glory amid the blessed throng  
 Of saints and angel choirs that ever sing  
 Thy praise! Look down on me, Thy child: frail  
 thing  
 Of earth, though fashioned after Thee, O Strong  
 Almighty God, Supreme Eternal King!

To Thee, unworthy though I be, I bring  
 My pledge of poverty. Amid the song  
 That saints and angel choirs forever sing,  
 I vow to wear, till death, the robe and ring  
 Of virgin chastity: to Thee belong,  
 Almighty God, Supreme Eternal King.

My will and life. O may the fountain-spring  
 Of Jesus' blood—whose praise let every tongue  
 And saints and angel choirs forever sing—  
 Make sweet my sacrifice! To Thee I cling.  
 In hope that after death Thy saints among,  
 Almighty God, Supreme Eternal King,  
 With angel choirs I may forever sing.  
 —Lionel E. Merlin.

The very essence of Christianity consists in a willingness to deny self for the benefit of others. Its central fact is redemption by the Cross—a great act of self-sacrificing love on the part of the Son of God for the redemption and restoration of humanity. It is the religion of the Cross and of the Crucified.

Every man has time enough to do his whole duty. When he leaves a duty undone or discharges it in the consciousness that it is not as well done as it should be his lack of time is never the real reason for his failure or his shortcoming. For duty is God's call, and God never asks a man to do what he has not time to do well.

Take an interest in human trouble and suffering, or the church service you enjoy so much will not bring you any nearer heaven, wrote Bishop Hedley. Be kind, considerate, gentle, and helpful to those in your home and your circle, or the largest number of the most devout prayer books will be no shield at the judgment, no rampart in the day of visitation.

## The Storyteller

### FABIOLA;

OR,

### THE CHURCH OF THE CATACOMBS.

(BY CARDINAL WISEMAN.)

#### Part Second—Conflict

#### CHAPTER XXI.—THE PRISON.

If a modern Christian wishes really to know what his forefathers underwent for the faith during three centuries of persecution we would not have him content himself with visiting the catacombs, as we have tried to make him do, and thus learning what sort of life they were compelled to lead; but we would advise him to peruse those imperishable records, the *Acts of the Martyrs*, which will show him how they were made to die. We know of no writings so moving, so tender, so consoling, and so ministering of strength to faith and to hope, after God's inspired words, as these venerable monuments. And if our reader, so advised, have not leisure sufficient to read much upon this subject we would limit him willingly to one specimen, the genuine Acts of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas. It is true that they will be best read by the scholar in their plain African latinity, but we trust that some one will soon give us a worthy English version of these and some other similar early Christian documents. The ones we have singled out are the same as were known to St. Augustine, and cannot be read by any one without emotion. If the reader would compare the morbid sensibility and the overstrained excitement endeavored to be produced by a modern French writer, in the imaginary journal of a culprit condemned to death, down to the immediate approach of execution, with the unaffected pathos and charming truthfulness which pervade the corresponding narrative of Vivia Perpetua, a delicate lady of twenty-one years of age, he would not hesitate in concluding how much more natural, graceful, and interesting are the simple recitals of Christianity than the boldest fictions of romance. And when our minds are sad, or the petty persecutions of our times incline our feeble hearts to murmur, we cannot do better than turn to that really golden, because truthful, legend, or to the history of the noble martyrs of Vienne, or Lyons, or to the many similar, still extant records, to nerve our courage by the contemplation of what children and women, catechumens and slaves, suffered, uncomplainingly, for Christ.

But we are wandering from our narrative. Pancratius, with some twenty more, fettered and chained together, were led through the streets to prison. As they were thus dragged along, staggering and stumbling helplessly, they were unmercifully struck by the guards who conducted them; and any person near enough to reach them dealt them blows and kicks without remorse. Those further off pelted them with stones or offal, and assailed them with insulting ribaldry. They reached the Mamertine prison at last, and were thrust down into it, and found there already other victims of both sexes awaiting their time of sacrifice. The youth had just time, while he was being handcuffed, to request one of the captors to inform his mother and Sebastian of what had happened; and he slipped his purse into his hand.

A prison in ancient Rome was not the place to which a poor man might court committal, hoping there to enjoy better fare and lodging than he did at home. Two or three of these dungeons, for they are nothing better, still remain; and a brief description of the one which we have mentioned will give our readers some idea of what confessorship cost, independent of martyrdom.

The Mamertine prison is composed of two square subterranean chambers, one below the other, with only one round aperture in the centre of each vault, through