

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- Sept. 15, Sunday.—Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- „ 16, Monday.—SS. Cornelius and Cyprian, Popes and Martyrs.
- „ 17, Tuesday.—Stigmata of St. Francis, Confessor.
- „ 18, Wednesday.—St. Joseph Cupertino, Confessor. Ember Day. Fast and abstinence.
- „ 19, Thursday.—SS. Januarius and Companions, Martyrs.
- „ 20, Friday.—SS. Eustace and Companions, Martyrs. Ember Day. Fast and abstinence.
- „ 21, Saturday.—St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist. Ember Day. Fast Day (no abstinence).

The Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To drink of that chalice of suffering which the Redeemer of mankind drained to the dregs has fallen to the lot of all the saints, but most of all to the Mother of God. Owing to the closeness of the sacred tie which bound her to her Divine Son she felt most keenly every danger which threatened Him, and every pang that wrung His Sacred Heart. Her seven principal sorrows, commemorated to-day, were the prophecy of St. Simeon—the flight into Egypt, the loss of the Child Jesus, the meeting with her Divine Son on the way to Calvary, the Crucifixion, the taking down from the Cross, and the burial of our Lord.

Stigmata of St. Francis.

God, not content with enriching His saints interiorly with every grace, has also vouchsafed to bestow on certain of them external signs of their conformity to their Crucified Lord, by miraculously imprinting on their bodies the marks of His five Sacred Wounds. One of those who were favored with this extraordinary grace was the seraphic St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Matthew, Apostle.

Before being called to follow Christ, St. Matthew was a tax gatherer, and bore the name of Levi. After the Ascension he preached for some time in Judea, and under Divine inspiration wrote his Gospel to convince the Jews that Christ was the long-expected Messiah. St. Matthew afterwards proceeded to the East, where he won the crown of martyrdom.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Mary, to thee have many names been given,
All loving offerings, spotless Queen of Heaven!
Touching, inspiring, tender, prayerful, true,
Endearing thee to faithful souls anew.

Royal are they, in attributes most rare:
Dazzlingly bright those gems, serene and fair:
On thy pure brow unfadingly they shine,
Linking thy sinlessness with Love Divine!

Of titles thou hast legion, Mother dear:
Restful and sweet they fall upon the ear.
Oh, but among them one supreme must be,
So that sad hearts, crushed by life's misery,
A sorrowing Mother thou, may find their balm in thee!

—Mary E. Mannix.

Keep the will free when anything naturally pleasing offers itself, some opportunity, some plan that you would naturally like; wait before you decide, and look to God, consult His will before you choose.—Father Maturin.

The Storyteller

FABIOLA;

OR,

THE CHURCH OF THE CATACOMBS

(BY CARDINAL WISEMAN.)

Part Second—Conflict

CHAPTER XXIII.—THE FIGHT.

The morning broke light and frosty; and the sun, glittering on the gilded ornaments of the temples and other public buildings, seemed to array them in holiday splendor. And the people, too, soon come forth into the streets in their gayest attire, decked out with unusual richness. The various streams converge towards the Flavian amphitheatre, now better known by the name of the Coliseum. Each one directs his steps to the arch indicated by the number of his ticket, and thus the huge monster keeps sucking in by degrees that stream of life, which soon animates and enlivens its oval tiers over tiers of steps, till its interior is tapestried all round with human faces, and its walls seem to rock and wave to and fro, by the swaying of the living mass. And after this shall have been gorged with blood and inflamed with fury it will melt once more and rush out in a thick continuous flow through the many avenues by which it entered, now bearing their fitting name of *Vomitoria*; for never did a more polluted stream of the dregs and pests of humanity issue from an unbecoming reservoir, through ill-assorted channels, than the Roman mob drunk with the blood of martyrs, gushing forth from the pores of the splendid amphitheatre.

The emperor came to the games surrounded by his court, with all the pomp and circumstance which befitted an imperial festival, keen as any of his subjects to witness the cruel games, and to feed his eyes with a feast of carnage. His throne was on the eastern side of the amphitheatre, where a large space, called the *pulvinar*, was reserved, and richly decorated for the imperial court.

Various sports succeeded one another; and many a gladiator, killed or wounded, had sprinkled the bright sand with blood, when the people, eager for fiercer combats, began to call, or roar, for the Christians and the wild beasts. It is time, therefore, for us to think of our captives.

Before the citizens were astir they had been removed from the prison to a strong chamber called the *spoliatorium*, the press-room, where their fetters and chains were removed. An attempt was made to dress them gaudily as heathen priests and priestesses; but they resisted, urging that as they had come spontaneously to the fight, it was unfair to make them appear in a disguise which they abhorred. During the early part of the day they remained thus together encouraging one another and singing the Divine praises, in spite of the shouts which drowned their voices from time to time.

While they were thus engaged Corvinus entered, and with a look of insolent triumph thus accosted Pancratius—

“Thanks to the gods, the day is come which I have long desired. It has been a tiresome and tough struggle between us who should fall uppermost. I have won it.”

“How sayest thou, Corvinus? When and how have I contended with thee?”

“Always—everywhere. Thou hast haunted me in my dreams; thou hast danced before me like a meteor, and I have tried in vain to grasp thee. Thou hast been my tormentor, my evil genius. I have hated thee; devoted thee to the infernal gods; cursed thee and loathed thee; and now my day of vengeance is come.”

“Methinks,” replied Pancratius smiling, “this does not look like a combat. It has been all on one side; for I have done none of these things towards thee.”