

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- September 22, Sunday.—Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.
- „ 23, Monday.—St. Linus, Pope and Martyr.
- „ 24, Tuesday.—Feast of Our Lady of Mercy.
- „ 25, Wednesday.—Of the Feria.
- „ 26, Thursday.—SS. Cyprian and Justina, Martyrs.
- „ 27, Friday.—SS. Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs.
- „ 28, Saturday.—St. Wenceslaus, Martyr.

SS. Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs.

These two saints were brothers, born in Arabia, and renowned for their skill in medicine. They were remarkable for their charity, and for the zeal with which they endeavored to propagate the Christian religion. They were both beheaded in the persecution of Diocletian, about the year 303.

Our Lady of Mercy.

In the thirteenth century, when the Mediterranean was swept by Moorish pirates, a religious Order was instituted under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary for the purpose of collecting alms for the relief and ransom of Christian captives, of visiting them in their captivity, and restoring them, when possible, to their friends and families. In memory of the institution of this admirable Order and of the tender compassion of the Blessed Virgin, to whom it owed its origin, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy was instituted.

St. Wenceslaus, Martyr.

St. Wenceslaus, Duke of Bohemia, was remarkable for his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. His zeal for the propagation of the true faith led to his death at the hands of his brother, A.D. 982.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

TO MARY, GOD'S MOTHER.

What voice shall hymn the greatness of thy name,
Sweet Virgin Queen, as flawless as a flower
That lifts its head in Summer's golden hour,
When hills and fields are flushed with Morning's flame?
No mortal heart that once has bowed to Shame
Is fit to gauge thy loveliness, thy power:
For thou dost rise in beauty like a tower
Of sunlit diamonds, so bright thy fame.

And yet, within the span of these black years,
O Queen of Pity, look: we raise our hands!
Thy war-wracked children, suffering and in tears,
We cry thy help from all the smoking lands.
Deign but to ask thy Son, the Peer of Peers,
To give us peace: thy words He understands.

—J. Corson Miller.

REFLECTIONS.

The bravest man is one that never swerves from the path of duty, says Calderon.

The design of Providence is a design of love, doubt it not. It is carrying out for some a work of justice: for others a work of mercy: but for all it is, in the Divine intention, a work of love.—Cardinal Mercier.

A courageous heart calls out the best in head and hands. You cannot think keenly and accurately when your heart feels like lead within you. It is impossible to work with the energy which gives the best results if you are downhearted and discouraged. Keep up your heart. When courage fails all is lost.

For whereas a prayer, a sign, a tear would have sufficed for the salvation of humanity, our Saviour strove to conquer our souls by every means that could touch and move us, that could make us love Him, and pass by Him, to the love of His Father.—Cardinal Mercier.

The Storyteller

FABIOLA;

OR,

THE CHURCH OF THE CATACOMBS

(BY CARDINAL WISEMAN.)

Part Second—Conflict

CHAPTER XXIV.—THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER.

The body of the young martyr was deposited in peace on the Aurelian way, in the cemetery which soon bore his name, and gave it, as we have before observed, to the neighboring gate. In times of peace, a basilica was raised over his tomb, and yet stands to perpetuate his honor.

The persecution now increased its fury, and multiplied its daily victims. Many whose names have appeared in our pages, especially the community of Chromatius's villa, rapidly fell. The first was Zoë, whose dumbness Sebastian had cured. She was surprised by a heathen rabble, praying at St. Peter's tomb, and was hurried to trial, and hung with her head over a smoky fire till she died. Her husband, with three others of the same party, was taken, repeatedly tortured, and beheaded. Tranquillinus, the father of Marcus and Marcellianus, jealous of Zoë's crown, prayed openly at St. Paul's tomb; he was taken and summarily stoned to death. His twin sons suffered also a cruel death. The treachery of Torquatus, by his describing his former companions, especially the gallant Tiburtius, who was now beheaded, greatly facilitated this wholesale destruction.

Sebastian moved in the midst of this slaughter, not like a builder who saw his work destroyed by a tempest, nor a shepherd who behold his flock borne off by marauders; he felt as a general on the battlefield, who looked only to the victory: counting every one as glorious who gave his life in its purchase, and as ready to give his own should it prove to be the required price. Every friend that fell before him was a bond less to earth, and a link more to heaven: a care less below, a claim more above. He sometimes sat lonely, or paused silently, on the spots where he had conversed with Pancratius, recalling to mind the buoyant cheerfulness, the graceful thoughts, and the unobscured virtue of the amiable and comely youth. But he never felt as if they were more separated than when he sent him on his expedition to Campania. He had redeemed his pledge to him; and now it was soon to be his own turn. He knew it well; he felt the grace of martyrdom swelling in his breast, and in tranquil certainty he awaited its hour. His preparation was simple: whatever he had of value he distributed to the poor; and he settled his property, by sale, beyond the reach of confiscation.

Fulvius had picked up his fair share of Christian spoils; but on the whole he had been disappointed. He had not been obliged to ask for assistance from the emperor, whose presence he avoided; but he had put nothing by; he was not getting rich. Every evening he had to bear the reproachful and scornful interrogatory of Eurotas on the day's success. Now, however, he told his stern master—for such he had become—that he was going to strike at higher game, the emperor's favorite officer, who must have made a large fortune in the service.

He had not long to wait for his opportunity. On the 9th of January a court was held, attended, of course, by all aspirants for favors, or fearers of imperial wrath. Fulvius was there, and, as usual, met with a cold reception. But after bearing silently the muttered curses of the royal brute, he boldly advanced, dropped on one knee, and thus addressed him—

“Sire, your divinity has often reproached me with having made, by my discoveries, but a poor return for your gracious countenance and liberal subsidies. But now I have found out the foulest of plots, and the