

Friends at Court

CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- November 17, Sunday.—Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost.
- „ 18, Monday. Dedication of the Basilicas of SS. Peter and Paul.
- „ 19, Tuesday. St. Elizabeth, Widow.
- „ 20, Wednesday.—St. Felix of Valois, Confessor.
- „ 21, Thursday. Presentation of Blessed Virgin Mary.
- „ 22, Friday. St. Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr.
- „ 23, Saturday. St. Clement, Pope and Martyr.

Dedication of the Basilicas of SS. Peter and Paul

These two basilicas are situated in Rome, the one on the Vatican Hill, the other on the road which leads to the mouth of the Tiber. They are famous throughout the world for size, richness, and magnificence of decoration; but the most precious treasures which they contain are the relics of the two great Apostles—St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ; and St. Paul, the zealous missionary of the infant Church.

Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

According to a pious tradition dating from the earliest times the Blessed Virgin, when a child, was taken by her parents to the temple of Jerusalem, where she was carefully instructed and trained by pious matrons in the practice of virtue. The feast we celebrate to-day commemorates the generous enthusiasm with which the Blessed Virgin dedicated her life to the service of her Creator, an offering which she never recalled by the slightest misdeed.

St. Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr

St. Cecilia was a member of a noble Roman family. Betrothed by her parents to a man her own widow, Valerian, a pagan, she succeeded in converting him and his brother to the Christian religion. On this occasion, to the ears of the Prefect of the city, the two brothers were beheaded. The same sentence was passed on St. Cecilia, but owing to the clamour in which the executioner performed his work the holy virgin lingered for three days in great agony. A.D. 230.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

MOTHER MOST POWERFUL,

That thou so often held Him in thine arms,

So often pressed His infant lips to thine,

And in thy bosom warmed the helpless,

That came with flesh and to the Child Divine:

That thou hast clothed Him, felt Him cheek to cheek,

In dreams and waking; in thine ear hast known

His first lisped "Mother"; marked His soft hands' soot,

Thine aid with glances cast on those alone.

That thou hast known such countless ecstasies

Of love through that sweet hidden time of yore,

And yet thy heart held strong, spite all of these,

Shows thou wert mortal, Mother—yea, and more!

Roderick Gill.

Each temptation is a question put to the soul. "What kind of a being are you: do you love God or the following of your own inclinations?" Rev. Basil W. Maturin.

Faith is our greatest treasure, and the devil, who knows this, tries to rob us of it, because if we lose this all is lost. If by mortal sin we lose charity or the love of God we can get it back by a good confession. If we lose hope, thinking it is no use trying to save our soul, we can recover our trust in God by prayer, and by remembering what faith teaches us, that He is always ready to forgive and help us. But if we lose faith itself what can bring us back to God and save us? Therefore we must dread above all other evils the loss, or even the weakening, of our faith.

The Storyteller

FABIOLA;

OR,

THE CHURCH OF THE CATACOMBS

(By CARDINAL WISEMAN.)

Part Second—Conflict

CHAPTER XXXIII.—MIRIAM'S HISTORY.

The next morning, when Dionysius came, he found both patient and nurse so radiant and so happy that he congratulated them both on having had a good night's rest. Both laughed at the idea; but concurred in saying that it had been the happiest night of their lives. Dionysius was surprised, till Miriam, taking the hand of Fabiola, said—

"Venerable priest of God, I confide to your fatherly care this catechumen, who desires to be fully instructed in the mysteries of our holy faith, and to be regenerated by the waters of eternal salvation."

"What!" asked Fabiola, amazed, "are you more than a physician?"

"I am, my child," the old man replied; "unworthily I hold likewise the higher office of a priest in God's Church."

Fabiola unhesitatingly knelt before him and kissed his hand. The priest placed his right hand upon her head and said to her—

Be of good courage, daughter; you are not the first of your house whom God has brought into His holy Church. It is now many years since I was called in here, under the guise of a physician, by a former servant, now no more; but in reality it was to baptise, a few hours before her death, the wife of Fabius."

"My mother!" exclaimed Fabiola. "She died immediately after giving me birth. And did she die a Christian?"

"Yes; and I doubt not that her spirit has been hovering about you through life by the side of the angel who guards you, guiding you unseen to this blessed hour. And, before the throne of God, she has been pleading in her supplications on your behalf."

Joy tenfold filled the breasts of the two friends; and after arrangements had been made with Dionysius for the necessary instructions and preparations for Fabiola's admission to baptism she went up to the side of Miriam, and taking her hand said to her in a low, soft voice—

"Miriam, may I from henceforth call you sister?" A pressure of the hand was the only reply which she could give.

With their mistress, the old nurse, Euphrosyne, and the Greek slave, placed themselves, as we now say, under instruction, to receive baptism on Easter-eve. Nor must we forget one who was already enrolled in the list of catechumens, and whom Fabiola had taken home with her and kept, Emerentiana, the foster-sister of Agnes. It was her delight to make herself useful, by being the ready messenger between the sick-room and the rest of the house.

During her illness, as her strength improved, Miriam imparted many particulars of her previous life to Fabiola; and as they will throw some light on our preceding narrative we will give her history in a continuous form.

Some years before our story commenced there lived in Antioch a man who, though not of ancient family, was rich, and moved in the highest circles of that most luxurious city. To keep his position he was obliged to indulge in great expense; and from want of strict economy he had gradually become oppressed with debt. He was married to a lady of great virtue, who became a Christian, at first secretly, and afterwards continued so, with her husband's reluctant consent. In the meantime their two children, a son and daughter, had received their domestic education under her care. The former, Orontius, so called from the favorite stream