

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

March 27, Sunday.—Easter Sunday.
 „ 28, Monday.—Easter Monday.
 „ 29, Tuesday.—Easter Tuesday.
 „ 30, Wednesday.—Of the Octave.
 „ 31, Thursday.—Of the Octave.
 April 1, Friday.—Of the Octave.
 „ 2, Saturday.—Of the Octave.

Easter Sunday.

'The festival of Easter,' writes St. Gregory, 'is the solemnity of solemnities, because it raises us from the earth into eternity, which it enables us to enjoy beforehand by faith, hope, and charity.'

'You shall rise again!' This is what the Church says to us by the eloquent voice of her ceremonies. From the holy temple all signs of mourning have disappeared. The altars are decked out with extraordinary magnificence. Ornaments of gay color and rich embroidery appear. Every face is bright. The bells are all in motion. The song of joy—the Alleluia—that word of the language of heaven, fallen on earth for our festive days, resounds on all sides, is repeated every moment; is varied again and again, is modulated into every key; and when thereto are added the rays of a beautiful sun, avoid, if you can, those feelings of hope and delight which it is the mission of this great day to inspire.—Gaume.

GRAINS OF GOLD

THE GUIDING STARS.

As when of old 'neath soft Judean skies,
 The Wisemen wondered at the heavenly Star
 Which had so strangely caused them to arise
 And follow, silent, where it led afar,
 To stranger lands where smiled the Victory won,
 The Dreamed of Ages, God and Man as one.

So do I marvel that your tender eyes,
 So full of childish love and modesty,
 Can guide me safely when, 'neath darkened skies,
 Temptation, luring, smiling, whispers me,—
 When sin with silent scorn and mockery
 Would blind my eyes to Christ and Calvary.
 —Ave Maria.

We glance from our own problem to that of our neighbor, and think, 'How easily solved!'

If our religion brings us courage, joy, and peace, we shall not rail at the faults of men, but shall rather strive from a happy and loving heart to lead them towards the light.

How many paupers in the world would consider themselves happy to have bread and water *ad libitum*? Is it reasonable to turn the favors of Divine goodness into food for sensuality?

When we pray, says St. Ambrose, we speak to God, and when we read the Holy Scriptures, it is God Who speaks to us. Whence this great doctor inquires, Wherefore do you not employ every moment in reading the Holy Scriptures, that is to say, in conversing with Jesus Christ?

Children possess a divining-crystal in their own clear thoughts, and know well when Love is at the helm. They can discern in a moment whether an arbitrary self-will dictates the course of things, or that single-minded affection that seeks the truest good of those who are in its charge. They will not love less, but more as time goes on.

Of all the beautiful creations of God there is surely none so beautiful or so dear to Him as the pure, unsullied heart of a little child. Whether it be cherished in the palace of the rich, or in the slum dwelling of the poor, it is the same lustrous pearl, shining in radiant splendor like the star of the morning, until, alas! the world, the flesh, and the devil may despoil it of some of its virginal beauty.

The glare of human joy hides from our sight ten thousand blessings, which we cannot see until it grows dark about us. And it would be a dire loss to live through all our days and never see those blessings. There are hundreds of Bible texts which seem pale and without meaning at the time of earthly gladness, but which come out bright and shining like stars when the darkness comes on.

'Children should laugh,' says Ruskin, 'but not mock; and when they laugh, it should not be at the weaknesses or faults of others. They are permitted to concern themselves with the characters of those around them, to seek faithfully for good, not to lie in wait maliciously to make themselves merry with evil; they should be too painfully sensitive to wrong to smile at it; and too modest to constitute themselves its judges.'

The Storyteller

ANNIE'S PET

'It's a real nice room when the sun shines,' said the little maid anxiously, as the new lodger glanced disdainfully at the cheap oak dresser, the iron bed, and the shabby carpet. 'It's good and big and airy.'

For answer Virginia Julian sat down in a creaking rocking-chair and wept as though her heart would break. 'You poor child!' said the maid, carefully taking off the mourning hat with its heavy veil, and putting a pillow behind the new lodger's head; 'you'll feel better soon.'

'It will never be any better,' sobbed Virginia. 'I have lost everything worth living for.'

Annie Graves stole downstairs, and sought out the busy, bustling landlady. 'The new lodger has come,' she explained, 'and may I take her some tea and toast? She's all dressed in mourning and feels awful bad.'

'Yes, if it doesn't interfere with your other duties,' said the landlady crisply. 'But tell her, Annie, that she must not expect such things regularly.'

Whether Annie heard or not, the message was never repeated to Virginia. Annie coaxed her to eat the toast, and then helped her to bed, getting back to the kitchen in time to begin the evening meal in time for the boarders. Virginia was thankful to be alone, though the tea and toast were very comforting, and the fire Annie kindled warmed her chilled body.

That evening the boarders discussed the latest addition to the family with the frankness which usually prevails at such places. 'I just wonder how she'll act,' said Miss Vickers, who had taught school for years. 'They say she's all broken up over the news, and I wouldn't wonder. It would be dreadful to have to give up a life of luxury for one of hard work, if one were wholly unprepared for the change.'

'I've heard her uncle never paid much attention to her, but kept her in expensive schools most of the time,' said another. 'Of course, that was better than nothing at all, but he should have provided for her future.'

'She's lucky to get a good place right away,' said the landlady. Mr. Sears takes her right into his office at fifty dollars a month, and when she is able to handle his work, he will promote her. I call that the height of good fortune; and if she has sense enough to appreciate it, she will soon be making much more. Of course, he couldn't think of doing such a thing for a stranger, though she is only a stranger to him; but somehow, when he was a struggling young man, her father, or somebody, helped him, and he has never forgotten it.'

'I feel sorry for her,' said the girl who was clerking in a store and taking night lessons in stenography. 'It's hard enough for a girl when she's grown up with the idea of making her own living, let alone having such a drop as Virginia Julian got. I don't suppose she'll look at any of us, because she's been brought up to be exclusive, and all that, but I'm sorry for her just the same.'

Annie was bringing in a fresh supply of biscuits, and before she left the dining-room she had a chance to hear many comments about the new boarder and lodger. They spoke of her sad look, her black clothes and air of utter weariness, and all united in feeling sorry for her when she would have to face the merry group in the dining-room, for it was a happy-go-lucky group every meal-time. They had been together so long that they seemed almost like one family, and they rather dreaded the coming of a stranger to the place. Annie cooked and served well—cooked too well, her mistress often reflected, and the whole place, though decidedly shabby, was homelike after all.

The next morning Annie ran as fast as she could up the stairs with a pitcher of hot water for Virginia. 'If you're timid about—about meeting folks,' she panted, 'you might come right down now, and I'll get your breakfast before they come down.' Virginia looked at the faded, thin girl at the door, and decided to try the plan. 'They mostly come to the dining-room about seven-thirty, and it's only seven now.'

Virginia took the water with an indifferent 'Thank you,' and hurried to dress. The landlady could trust Annie with the breakfast, so she always went to early market before the meal was served, and the chambermaid did not stay in the house at nights, so Virginia and Annie had the big dining-room to themselves. Annie served cream toast, a poached egg, and a dainty saucer of cereal to the new boarder, and rejoiced to see every drop and crumb vanish. Virginia was a healthy girl of eighteen, with a fine appetite which all her woes could not destroy; so the food tasted good in the chill November morning.

That was the beginning of the one-sided friendship which quickly sprang up between the two. It was not a friendship, either, for Annie waited upon Virginia like a slave, because she felt sorry for her. The black dress, the look of discontent, the indifference with which she regarded every one about her, and the helpless ways, all appealed to Annie, and the warmth of her lonely, loving heart was lavished on the cold, indifferent Virginia. It was all so pathetic to Annie that her heart ached. She did not