

# Friends at Court

## GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- April 3, Sunday.—Low Sunday.
- „ 4, Monday.—The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- „ 5, Tuesday.—St. Vincent Ferrer, Confessor.
- „ 6, Wednesday.—St. Sixtus I., Pope and Martyr.
- „ 7, Thursday.—St. Celestine I., Pope and Confessor.
- „ 8, Friday.—St. Benedict, Abbot.
- „ 9, Saturday.—St. Frigidian, Bishop and Confessor.

### Low Sunday.

This Sunday is styled in liturgical language Dominica in Albis, or Sunday in White, because in olden times the neophytes, whom it was customary to baptise on Holy Saturday, wore their white robes for the last time to-day.

### The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, and the Virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." (Gospel of St. Luke.)

## GRAINS OF GOLD

### HOLY COMMUNION.

O Gracious Saviour—Dearest Lord,  
This morn have I communed with Thee;  
And now with heartfelt gratitude,  
I thank Thee for this mystery.

This perfect Gift of perfect Love,  
To me, unworthy sinner given:  
Under this mean and lowly roof,  
Entered the Lord of Earth and Heaven!

Absorb my soul in thoughts of Thee,  
And hear my praise from day to day:  
With all the company of Heaven:  
My thankful adoration pay.

My sweetest Guest! abide with me,  
My God, and Everlasting Friend:  
Ever remain within my soul,  
Continue with me to the end.

Engrave my name upon Thy Heart,  
And on my forehead set Thy Seal;  
Then when the sting of Death is past,  
To me Thy unveiled Face reveal.  
—Boston Pilot.

The dangers that we know are many, but many more those that are unknown. We pray God to deliver us from our secret sins; we have need to pray that He may deliver us from our secret dangers. There is a shield over us which is turned every way, as the assault comes from all sides when we least know it to be near.—Cardinal Manning.

Day-dreams are the mothers of ideals. The reaching out for ideals; the striving to achieve them, and the failure to do so—these are part and parcel of every life that lifts itself the least above the grind of mere existence. And what shall be the final ideal? asks the seeker, earnest in the search and wearied with the insufficiency of those already grasped and grieved over? What shall be the final ideal? If there be many great questions unanswered in the Sermon on the Mount, they have not as yet become apparent. And in this divinest of utterances that ever passed the lips of man we find an answer to this universal question: 'Be ye perfect, therefore, even as your Father Who is in Heaven is perfect.'

It is very obvious to say that if we always knew what God wished, it would be a great help to us in serving Him. We should not surely throw ourselves into open rebellion against the express will of God. Yet practically, in by far the greatest number of our actions, we do not know this; and in all of them, if we do not know what He would have us do, we know at least the motive from which He would have us act, whenever we act at all. 'Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.' St. John tells us that God is charity. Thus in the whole of the almost infinite and complicated system in which we live, God has contrived all things, quite wonderfully, for these two ends, if they might not more properly be called one end than two; He has arranged everything first, so that He may be loved; and, secondly, so as to enable us to love Him. If we may dare thus to speak of the Almighty, He seems to have no other end in view at all; and He manages things by artifices of Almighty power in order to bring this about. This is His rule by which He has done everything. The hearts of His creatures are the only treasures He will condescend to accept from His own creation.—Father Faber.

# The Storyteller

## AT THE ST. JEAN BAPTISTE

### I.

That was a fine farm down upon the road past the sawmill, and it belonged rather to the parish of St. Jean Baptiste than to the mountain village. Row upon row of acacia, maple, butternut, and hickory trees surrounded the substantial house of wood that stood but little back from the highroad, and wore an air of cheerfulness and prosperity unwonted even in that region of well-being. The very sunlight seemed to flow down there in superabundant streams. The animals in their stalls, too, had a contented, well-cared-for appearance; and it accordingly always came with something of a shock to strangers in the neighborhood when they heard that the name of the owner, by a very antithesis of ideas, was Death—All Saints' Death—Toussaint La Mort.

Toussaint himself, who was often to be seen working about the place in blue blouse and overalls, his head covered by a straw hat of domestic manufacture, likewise supported that law of contrast. He was stalwart of build, healthy in coloring, and smiling and good-humored of countenance. 'Oui, c'est moi, qui est toujours bien,' he said. 'I am always well.' And he was well, not only in health, but, as has been seen, in all material necessities.

Now, the majority of the damsels who lived in the small group of dwellings in the immediate environs of the parish church, or in the scattered cottages or farm-houses of the district, were not, as a rule, sentimental. In fact, they had been trained from childhood to regard marriage as a necessity, save for those whom the good God called to the cloister; and to consider as lucky those who procured in good season an establishment. They consequently gave little heed to the romantic side of the question; although even this might have had some justification in the case of the good-looking farmer, who was already on the shady side of thirty and had not as yet made a choice. When on a Sunday he walked up the aisle of St. Jean Baptiste's Church to a front pew, his appearance created a little flutter both in mothers of marriageable daughters and in the daughters themselves. The farm he possessed, the many cows, the maple trees which in the spring yielded an abundant and profitable sap, the large orchard, and the grain fields stretching away over so many acres—all these things were in the minds of matron and maid alike, and had to be put aside as distractions while the Holy Sacrifice proceeded.

After Mass, on that broad wooden platform before the doors of the substantial edifice of grey stone, the girls lingered as long as possible; while practical mothers detained more guileless fathers, who were concerned only with harnessing up the horse and driving off home again without further delay.

Of course there were usually a variety of attractions in and about the church on Sunday mornings; for it was in all things, spiritual and even temporal, the centre of village life. Numberless announcements were made from an improvised rostrum close at hand, or political speakers made known their programmes for the ensuing week. Most of all, those gatherings on Sundays or feast-days gave the opportunity for a few moments' pleasant social intercourse, or for a whispered conversation between the young men and girls.

Of these opportunities Toussaint availed himself, going about from group to group, exchanging a compliment or a polite phrase with the best-looking girls. None of them, however, could claim him as her own. Despite the curé's objection to any excess of finery which savored too much of the pomp and vanity of that wicked world lying out and beyond, the girls could not refrain from putting an extra ribbon in their hair or about their neck, or securing a bright-colored feather for their hats; always with a secret hope of attracting that *bon parti*, who was by common consent *un très beau garçon*. And it must be owned that mothers did not discourage them in this laudable desire.

Toussaint himself, despite the general opinion to the contrary, was not so indifferent to feminine attractions as was commonly supposed; carelessly allowing it to be understood that his admiration was of too universal a character ever to become particular. 'But I love them all,' he would say to those who remonstrated with him upon his single blessedness. 'Our girls are the prettiest in the world.'

Nevertheless, in his heart he cherished a secret, and there his general admiration resolved itself into a particular liking. Its object wore no bright-colored ribbons or gaudy feathers, and hence was, to a certain extent, held to be out of the running. She had, in fact, been compelled to wear mourning for one or another of her kindred ever since she had grown to womanhood. She was considered by the older people as an excellent *ménagère*, superintending her father's establishments, together with a large family of brothers, with much skill and a praiseworthy economy.

According to local ideas, this Aurore Destroismaisons was no beauty. She was fragile and slender, with scarcely a trace of color in her cheeks, her hair a dark brown running into black. Her eyes, which were grey, changed their hue every moment, growing darker with the stress of any emotion. The village verdict would not have been endorsed