

## Friends at Court

### CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- February 12, Sunday.—Septuagesima Sunday.  
 „ 13, Monday.—St. Gregory II., Pope and Confessor.  
 „ 14, Tuesday.—Commemoration of the Passion of Our Lord.  
 „ 15, Wednesday.—St. Paul, the First Hermit.  
 „ 16, Thursday.—St. Gregory X., Pope and Confessor.  
 „ 17, Friday.—St. Fintan, Abbot.  
 „ 18, Saturday.—St. Marcellus, Pope and Martyr.

St. Paul, First Hermit.

St. Paul was a native of Egypt. Compelled to flee to the desert to escape the persecution of the Emperor Decius, in 250, he became enamored of the solitude, and spent there the remainder of his life in prayer and meditation. He died at the advanced age of 119.

Commemoration of the Passion of Our Lord.

There is no practice more constantly or more earnestly recommended by spiritual writers as a means of awakening in our hearts a tender love for the Son of God than meditation on His sufferings and death, which can best be done by making the Way of the Cross.

St. Fintan, Abbot.

St. Fintan, who was a native of the diocese of Leighlin, in Ireland, lived in the sixth century. Few details of his life are extant.

### GRAINS OF GOLD

#### THE SHEPHERD.

Down from the heights of the mountain steep  
 The torrents rush with a mighty sweep,  
 And cavernous rocks are gaping wide  
 As they sullenly roar in the rumbling tide;  
 Barren are fields in the biting cold,  
 And a lone lamb bleats for the distant fold.

Who is it comes in the wintry night,  
 Far from the glow of His hearthstone bright,  
 Braving the wrath of the angry flood,  
 Staining the rugged rocks with blood,  
 Turning His ear for a bleating cry  
 Of the lamb that has laid it down to die?

Who but the Shepherd Who loves His own  
 (Not one of the hireling heart of stone),  
 Who rests not happy with all His flocks  
 While e'en one wanders amid the rocks.  
 What is a lamb to be loved so well?  
 'Tis only the Shepherd's heart can tell.

O Shepherd, Thou Who art called the Good,  
 Who watching over Thy sheep hast stood;  
 Safe are they ever beneath Thine eye,  
 But out of the distance comes the cry  
 Of wandering sheep that have missed the fold,  
 And starve and freeze in the winter's cold.

'Other sheep'—yet the sheep are Thine,  
 O Lamb of God with the ninety-nine;  
 Far in the wilderness sad they roam,  
 But, Shepherd Good, Thou shalt lead them home.  
 To follow Thee in at the sheepfold's door,  
 One fold, one Shepherd, for evermore.

—REV. HUGH P. BLUNT.

There is nothing so beautiful in the character of youth as simplicity of manners and the absence of design in its undertakings; it is this quality that makes it lovable and attractive.

Humbly and reverently attempt to trace His guiding hand in the years which we have recently lived. Let us thankfully commemorate the mercies He has vouchsafed to us in times past, the many sins He has not remembered, the many dangers He has averted, the many prayers He has answered, the many mistakes He has corrected, the much light, the abounding comfort which He has from time to time given.—Cardinal Newman.

Every morning compose your soul for a tranquil day, and all through it be careful often to recall your resolution, and bring yourself back to it, so to say. If something discomposes you, do not be upset or troubled; but, having discovered the fact, humble yourself gently before God, and try to bring your mind into a quiet attitude. Say to yourself, 'Well, I have made a false step; now I must go more carefully and watchfully.' Do this each time, however frequently you fall. When you are at peace use it profitably, making constant acts of meekness, and seeking to be calm even in the most trying things. Above all, do not be discouraged; be patient; wait; strive to attain a calm, gentle spirit.—St. Francis de Sales.

## The Storyteller

### SHORN

'It must be done, Gustave,' exclaimed the Countess, tapping her son's shoulder playfully, as she leant against the easy chair in which he reclined.

'When your cousin arrives (at least allowing her a little time to know you), propose to her as soon as possible. You have no rival in this town, except the Marquis de Santa Herminia; none of the other young men would presume to aspire to her hand. Supposing the Marquis should take a fancy to Marie—which is not at all unlikely—he certainly would be a formidable rival. So, my dear Gustave, you must be first in the field. He is very rich, noble, and a handsome young fellow. But for the present you need not trouble about him; he is no way related to Marie, while you, her cousin, may visit at her house at any hour of the day, from the moment of her arrival. Visit at her house! Why, we shall go to the station to meet her, and so begin to lay siege to her heart from the very first minute.'

'For heaven's sake do not jest about it, mother,' said Gustave. 'I do not know my cousin, except through her letters to you, and they show me plainly enough that there will be no sympathy between us. True, one cannot guess by her letters whether she is ugly or pretty, but, even if she were a beauty, would you like to place me in a ridiculous position by marrying an imbecile?'

'And what leads you to suppose she is an imbecile, Gustave?'

'Why, yourself, mother—and her own letters. Have you not said over and over she must be half silly? She hardly ever writes to you except on spiritual subjects. She is making a retreat, or such and such a novena, she has had herself inscribed as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society that she may visit and succor the poor, or that she has been attending a mission in the cathedral which has caused some wonderful conversions!'

'That is only the result of the kind of education her parents have given her. Just fancy keeping her in a convent school till she was eighteen! Who but they could think of educating a girl of her position in such a manner?'

'And yet you wish that I, who have travelled over half the world, spent so much time at the principal centres of culture and modern civilisation, and mixed in the society of the loveliest, most distinguished and enlightened woman, I who have enlarged my mind by the most profound scientific studies, and perfected my artistic and literary studies by visiting the museums of the chief capitals of Europe, should now marry a woman who has neither culture nor education, a woman whose mind is clouded by ignorance and vulgar fanaticism? In fine, a devotee. Horror of horrors, mother! A most repulsive type of girl to my mind. Do you wish to make me the laughing stock of good society?'

'That is precisely what I want to avoid, my son—putting you, or rather both of us, in a ridiculous light, not only before good society, but in the eyes of the whole country. And can you not see why? If you do not marry money, how otherwise are we to sustain the lustre of our house, not alone according to our rank, but with common decency?'

Gustave was thinking deeply. He was weary of hearing this terrible truth which he scarcely dared breathe to himself, and which had given him many sleepless nights lately.

'Your marriage with Marie,' continued the Countess, 'is the only way I see out of our difficulties—or ruin. Do you wish to retire to an obscure little town, and live humbly on the produce of one of our few farms? And even there shall we not be still what we are and always have been, the illustrious Count and Countess of Cumbres Azules! Now, do you wish to be made ridiculous before the whole world?'

'Certainly not,' exclaimed Gustave vehemently. For this worldly young man thought it ignoble to live honestly on the product of his farms, while he had no scruple about marrying without love and solely for his own interest.

'Well, then, said his mother, 'I see no other solution of the difficulty. You must marry your cousin, no matter what it cost you.'

'It is a terrible sacrifice, mother.'

'I know it is, my poor son. It is terrible, but also remember it is indispensable. No other girl in the town, or in the whole country round, has such a large fortune as your cousin; she is extremely rich and an only child. When her parents die, her dollars may be counted by millions. So it seems to me you ought to think the matter over, or rather, I should say, do not hesitate a moment,' said the Countess, rather bitterly.

Gustave yielded at last. He agreed with his mother, there was no other way out of the difficulty. He must sacrifice himself, but at what a price! Immolate his youth, his elegance, his brilliant scientific, literary, and artistic education in marrying such a woman—a devotee!

How could he, without blushing, present such a wife to the society which he and his mother frequented? Oh, it was simply horrible! He, the cultured and fastidious Gustave, shuddered at the thought of this thing. But it was absolutely necessary; the state of his funds at that moment demanded the sacrifice. He