

Friends at Court

CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- September 22, Sunday.—Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Thomas of Villanova, Bishop and Confessor.
- „ 23, Monday.—St. Linus, Pope and Martyr.
- „ 24, Tuesday.—Our Lady of Mercy.
- „ 25, Wednesday.—St. Eustace and Companions, Martyrs.
- „ 26, Thursday.—St. Eusebius, Pope and Martyr.
- „ 27, Friday.—SS. Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs.
- „ 28, Saturday.—St. Wenceslaus, King and Martyr.

St. Linus, Pope and Martyr.

St. Linus, the immediate successor of St. Peter, received the martyr's crown after a pontificate of twelve years.

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. Eustace and Companions, Martyrs.

St. Eustace, a Roman general, suffered martyrdom, together with his wife and two sons, shortly after the beginning of the second century.

GRAINS OF GOLD

BEFORE THE TABERNACLE.

Thou gazest down with loving kindness,
Dear Lord, upon Thy suffering child;
And into light is changed my blindness,
As night before the sunbeams mild.
With many wounds, with deep, deep sadness,
I came before Thee, Lord, to-day;
But all is changed to heavenly gladness,
And at Thy feet has passed away.

Thy love sheds blessings all around us,
As once in far Judea's land;
With many graces Thou hast bound us
Thy captives in a holy band;
And oh! Thine eyes, with levelling shining,
Console my grief and make me know
That I can rest, till life's declining,
Within Thy care, Who lov'st me so!

How meet Thy Presence on Thine altar!
How near, how near, Thou art to me!
Oh, never let me change or falter,
My heart shall live alone for Thee.
Here let me kneel in adoration,
Here at Thy feet beneath Thy gaze,
This is my rest, my soul's safe station,
Be Thou my all, through all my days!

Swift kindness is the best; a long delay in kindness takes the kindness all away.

The secret of life is not to do what one likes, but to try to like that which one has to do.

Bitter experience may be most wholesome. The efficacy of medicine is not determined by its flavor.

Our whole life should be nothing else but a Lent to prepare ourselves against the Sabbath of our death and the Easter of our resurrection.—St. Bernard.

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

(A Weekly Instruction specially written for the N.Z. Tablet by 'GHIMEL'.)

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD (I.)

Catholic Doctrine.—The fullest expression of the Church's teaching on this point is to be found in a profession of faith subscribed by the Greeks at the General Councils held respectively at Lyons in 1274 and Florence in 1439. '[We define] likewise that if the truly penitent die in the love of God, before they have made satisfaction by worthy fruits of penance for their sins of commission and omission, their souls are purified by purgatorial pains after death; and that for relief from those pains they are benefited by the suffrages of the faithful in this life, that is, by Masses, prayers, and almsgiving, and by the other offices of piety usually performed by the faithful for one another according to the practice of the Church.' The great Council of Trent (1545-1563) contented itself with repeating 'that Purgatory exists, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but especially by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar' (Session xxv.). This belief is, of course, intimately bound up with our belief in Purgatory and the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. And here, as always, the Church, in her teaching, meets and ennobles the deepest aspirations of the human heart. Men at all times have instinctively felt that 'those we love truly never die,' and in the heavy hours of sorrow have craved for an assurance that the dead are even still their dead, and have tried to pierce the veil in order to live once more with and, if possible, help those whom God has called to rest. And now the Church comes to tell us in her solemn language that the power of death does not loosen the bonds that have knit hearts together on earth, that God, in His mercy, allows us to follow the souls of our friends beyond the grave, and that 'the prayers of the living avail to aid the souls of the dead.' Are we wrong in seeing in this consoling belief another proof of the divinity of the Catholic Church?

Proofs from Sacred Scripture.—The clearest passage in Scripture—and in our opinion the passage is remarkably clear—in favor of prayers for the dead is to be found in the second book of Machabees (xii. 40-46). A number of Jews had fallen fighting in the cause of God in the battle against Gorgias, but when their brethren at the command of Judas Machabeus came to bury the dead, they were horrified to find 'under the coats of the slain some of the donaries of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbiddeth to the Jews: so that all plainly saw, that for this cause they were slain. Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord, Who had discovered the things that were hidden. And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought Him, that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain. And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection (for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead), and because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.' Two things are noteworthy about this passage. In the first place, it furnishes us with evidence of the fact that at least two centuries before the time of our Lord the Jews, God's chosen people, believed in praying for the dead and were accustomed to have sacrifices offered publicly in the Temple for that purpose. We say, 'at least two centuries before the time of our Lord,'