

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- October 19, Sunday.—Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.
- „ 20, Monday.—St. John Cantius, Confessor.
- „ 21, Tuesday.—Blessed Victor III., Pope and Confessor.
- „ 22, Wednesday.—SS. Cyril and Methodius, Bishops and Confessors.
- „ 23, Thursday.—Our Most Holy Redeemer.
- „ 24, Friday.—St. Raphael, Archangel.
- „ 25, Saturday.—St. Boniface I., Pope and Confessor.

Our Most Holy Redeemer.

This day is set apart by the Church to praise and glorify God for the great mystery of our redemption, and to honor the Person of His Son, Who, by becoming man and dying for us, has freed us from the slavery of Satan, and restored to us our heavenly inheritance.

St. Raphael, Archangel.

It is narrated in the Old Testament that the Archangel Raphael was sent by God to guide the young Tobias on a journey. The description of this journey, given in the Book of Tobias, enables us to better understand the exceeding charity of our guardian angels, who, though invisible to our eyes, preserve us from evil and guide us on our way to heaven.

St. Boniface I., Pope and Confessor.

St. Boniface was, much against his will, elected Pope on the death of Pope Zosimus in 418. Though a lover of peace, he strenuously maintained the rights of the Holy See against the ambitious encroachments of the patriarch of Constantinople. He died in 422.

GRAINS OF GOLD

MORNING STAR.

Hail, crowned Maid, we praise and honor thee!
 Of womankind thou art the blessed one,
 The pure, the lustrous herald of the sun
 Forever shining over land and sea
 In glory of the Christ Whom thou hast borne.
 Thou art as chaste and bright in thy array
 As thou wert on thy great Assumption day,
 As brightly thou shalt shine on Judgment morn.

Ere Christ shall come to judge the human race,
 Before the throne of God for sinners plead.
 Thou art the Morning Star forever fair,
 The beacon-light of hope, the Queen of Grace;
 Ere He shall come, for mankind intercede,
 And Christ, thy Son, shall heed His Mother's prayer.

What is coming out of our lives we can never quite know. The unexpected continually happens. But of one thing we can be sure—that is, if we do our best, something will come that is worth while.

It must be admitted that to those who have endured a great sorrow it is permitted to grasp the lesser consolations of life, to seek peace where joy once reigned.

To have a sweet temper we must have faith in a Divine Providence. That alone lifts us above anxiety and care; that alone plants our feet upon a rock and brings content, satisfaction, and peace into the soul.

Life is largely a matter of habit. As we grow older we shall certainly have habits good or bad. We cannot live on without fixed habits of action. It would be a great waste of strength if we could. But the formation of a good habit is not a matter of accident or circumstances. Bad habits will form themselves; good ones must be cultivated.

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

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

THE ROMAN CHURCH IN ITS INFANCY

THE PERSECUTION UNDER NERO—IV.

Our Lord sent His disciples to bear witness to His Person and mission even to the ends of the earth, and at the same time predicted that they would suffer persecution; they bore their testimony, and His words soon found their fulfilment in the pathetic story of the persecution under Nero.

All citizens of the Roman Empire were obliged to accept the national gods: failure to do so was looked upon as a denial of the gods' existence. The Jews indeed were exempt from this obligation, and Roman Law recognised their religion as legal, for after all it was the worship of some national god; but the ordinary people of Rome and other large cities were fully persuaded that the Jews must be atheists, for they were never seen to worship idols. At the beginning the Christians were looked upon by outsiders as a Jewish sect, and consequently were treated in the same way; they could look to the Roman officials for protection against the violence of Jewish and Pagan mobs, but they had to bear their share of the calumny and the ill-treatment of which the Jews were the subject on account of their supposed atheism.

But from the year 50 or so onwards the Jews themselves became anxious to make it clear that they had nothing to do with the Christians, and the rapid growth of the new religion soon forced the same fact upon the attention of the Roman authorities. This distinction, however, was not beneficial in many ways to the Christians. They were still charged with atheism, and, like the Jews, were accused by the populace of adoring an Ass's head—nay, they were considered worse than Jews, for so far as could be seen they offered no sacrifices. In the course of time, writes M. Allard, they were 'accused of every kind of crime, appearing in the eyes of the populace scarcely worthy of the title of humanity.'

Horrible misdeeds, such as incest, murders, and ritual cannibalism, were quite commonly imputed to them. Dreadful stories went the rounds concerning the abominations which were committed at their places of meeting; under cover of the darkness the most awful mysteries of depravity and cruelty were supposed to be enacted. A Christian, too, seemed good for nothing; he was considered unfitted equally for public or private business.' When, in the year 64, Nero found himself the object of popular hatred on account of the burning of Rome, he could easily take his stand on this stupid belief, and accuse the Christians, 'those criminals capable of every crime,' of the conflagration. The great Roman writer, Tacitus, must tell the story. His account begins thus:—'A disaster followed, whether accidental or treacherously contrived by the Emperor is uncertain, as authors have given both accounts, worse however, and more dreadful than any which ever happened to this city by fire.' After describing the rise and progress of the fire, Tacitus continues: 'No one dared stop the spread of the fire, because of incessant menaces from a number of persons, who forbade the extinguishing of the flames, because again others openly hurled brands, and kept shouting that there was one who gave them authority, either seeking to plunder more freely, or obeying orders.' These circumstances all point to Nero as the author of the fire. The people were provided with food, but: 'Their murmurs, though popular, produced no effect, for the rumor had gone forth everywhere that, at the hour when the city was in flames, the Emperor appeared on a private stage and sung of the destruction of Troy, comparing present misfortunes with the calamities of antiquity.' After five days the fire ceased, but broke out afresh under very suspicious circumstances. 'Nothing availed to get rid of the sinister report that the fire was due to Nero's order. And so, in the hope of dissipating the rumor, he falsely