

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

December 18, Sunday.—Fourth Sunday of Advent.
 ,, 19, Monday.—Of the Feria.
 ,, 20, Tuesday.—Of the Feria.
 ,, 21, Wednesday.—St. Thomas, Apostle.
 ,, 22, Thursday.—Of the Feria.
 ,, 23, Friday.—Of the Feria.
 ,, 24, Saturday.—Vigil of the Nativity. Fast Day
 —No Abstinence.

ST. THOMAS, APOSTLE.

St. Thomas, also called Didymus, was one of the 12 Apostles. He is rarely mentioned in the New Testament. According to Origen and Sophronius, he preached in Parthia, Media, Persia, Carmania, Hyrcania, and Bactria, extending his missionary labors as far as India. The Persian Magi, who adored Christ Our Lord in Bethlehem, are also numbered among those who were baptised by this Apostle. The Roman martyrology represents him as suffering martyrdom by a lance at Calamina, near Madras, India.

GRAINS OF GOLD

THE VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY.

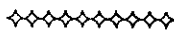
Night on Judea's plains—calm, holy night,
 In silence deep the royal city lies;
 The shepherd band their nightly vigil keep,
 Out on the hills beneath the star-strewn skies.

Many a longing heart thy walls enclose,
 City of David, as the night descends:
 Come and delay not, O Expected One!
 Up to the door of Heaven the cry ascends.

A manger-cave outside the city's gates—
 Upon the hills the light of Christmas morn;
 A holy Mother with her Babe Divine,
 And glad hearts telling: "Christ the Lord is born!"

Ages have fled since, casting off His glory,
 Our friend and Brother came that holy night;
 Still may we hasten where His star is shining—
 The ever-gleaming sanctuary light.

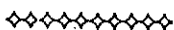
Like shepherds, we too kneel, our God adoring,
 (Within our hearts His joy it is to dwell);
 To-day as long ago, in Bethlehem's manger,
 The King is here—our Lord Emmanuel.



OUR DAILY DUTIES: A MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION

Our Divine Lord said that we must take up our cross and follow Him; and every person has a cross to carry. This cross is the performance of our daily duties in the spirit of penance, and for love of God; and when our souls are in the state of grace, every good work done for love of God will bear an everlasting reward. Our duty is to supernaturalise all our daily actions, and perform them for love of God. The mother and father of a family may have to struggle hard, and work and toil from early morning till late at night for the benefit of their children. These same children may have many faults, which parents must correct, and this correction of faults is sometimes very trying on a fond parent, who loves his children so dearly.

Yet if parents would only offer their works to please God, and if they would frequently make fervent aspirations or ejaculatory prayers during the day, their actions and these same works would soon make them saints. Some do very many good actions, and work very hard, and yet lose all the fruit of their labors, because they will not do them with a good intention, and for God's glory.



REFLECTIONS.

Love to be unknown and to be made of no account.—Thomas a Kempis.

The Day of Judgment is a day of decision, and displayeth unto all the seal of truth.—St. Uriel.



The Storyteller



WHEN WE WERE BOYS

(By WILLIAM O'BRIEN.)

(CHAPTER XXXII.—(Continued.)

"Well, well, Harman—I will think it over—I will think it over," he said at last, giving Harman his hand with a stately courtesy, as if he were extending it to a vassal to kiss; and when the door closed upon the agent, as if he felt the need of flying from the darkest spot in his mind to the brightest, he rang the bell, and flinging himself wearily in his easy chair, asked: "Where is Miss Westropp?"

"Here, papa, and so is your lunch," said a voice of music in his ear; and, a moment afterwards, as his lips touched his daughter's golden-crowned forehead, and he felt her soft arm steal round his neck, Ralph Westropp thought to himself here was a treasure worth all the woods and cornfields of Drumshaughlin—worth all the bosky acres that were ever put up and knocked down in the Landed Estates Court.

"I almost wish," pondered the agent, as he drove down the avenue, "we could patch things up again—Dargan is furious, of course, but it would be easy to square him—Psha! you're in a maudlin mood this morning, Hans Harman—it's poor Rebecca! No, no, we haven't gone thus far prosperously to founder in harbor and in dead calm. Drumshaughlin is too weak or too lazy to slave-drive his tenants himself. He expects that I shall keep his bath of golden waters filled, and then soothes his conscience by abusing me himself as well as inviting the public to fire at me. There has been quite enough of this sort of cheap virtue—if I've taken the administration and risk, it's about time I reaped some more substantial reward than a stingy commission. At all events the situation is now mine, to be managed to my own liking, as circumstances may determine. Hallo, you there—Dawley—I want you at Stone Hall, the sooner the better—do you hear?"

The insolent tone of the request was not lost upon Dawley, who looked after the trap with a curious blending of pugnacity and quailing in his little eyes which, as well as his nose, were unusually fiery from recent potatoes. Nevertheless he found himself shuffling along in the direction of Stone Hall, and in due time he found himself slouching about still more uncomfortably in front of Mr. Hans Harman, who was affording his hands the benefit of the fire by playing bo-peep with them under his coat-tails while he faced his visitor.

"Now," said the agent, coolly, "I have not a policeman concealed behind that screen—I always deal above-board with a man—so we can speak freely. I dare say you scarcely require me to tell you that I know who killed Quish."

A momentary nervous tremor shot through Dawley's limbs; then he screwed his lips tightly together.

"I see you're wondering that I have not a policeman concealed on the premises," proceeded Harman, his handsome smiling eyes watching every twitch of a muscle in the other's face like a superb cat, with a small mouse between its paws. "You know you're sold, eh?"

Blotches of dirty white overspread Dawley's face, to the lips—almost to the tip of the nose. By a desperate effort he crushed on his lips the cry: "Has he split?" but not before Harman could almost see his bloodless lips form the words. Dawley's face suddenly collapsed into a more whining aspect; and he said, with as much simplicity as he could put in the words: "Me? yerra, what had I to do wid it, in de honor o' God?"

"You're a precious rascal!" cried Harman, his smiling eyes filling with threatening light. "Perhaps, you want me to ring the bell and send for a policeman to explain it to him? Dawley," he said, suddenly and fiercely, "you deserve to be hanged, and I'll have you hanged by the neck until you're dead the moment it suits me."

A look of desperation flamed up red into the other's face and eyes. "Damn you!" he cried, fumbling in his breast pocket. "You're a—Devil!"

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