

## Friends at Court.

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

(Written for the N.Z. TABLET.)

December 10, Sunday.—Second in Advent.  
 " 11, Monday.—St. Damasus, Pope.  
 " 12, Tuesday.—St. Melchior, Pope and Martyr.  
 " 13, Wednesday.—St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr.  
 " 14, Thursday.—St. Andrew Bobola.  
 " 15, Friday.—Octave of the Immaculate Conception.  
 " 16, Saturday.—St. Eusebius, Bishop and Martyr.

ST. LUCY, VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

St. Lucy was born of honourable and wealthy parents at Syracuse in Sicily, and was brought up from her cradle in the Christian faith. She lost her father in her infancy, but her mother, Eutychia, spared no pains to inspire her with fervent sentiments of piety. Lucy corresponded admirably with these efforts, and at a very early age made choice of Jesus Christ as her only spouse by a secret vow of virginity.

In course of time her mother, who was anxious to settle her in life, while at the same time she was unaware of her pious intentions, urged her to accept an offer of marriage made by a young man of good position, but unfortunately a pagan. Lucy tried every means to escape the match, but had not the courage to inform her mother of the vow which she had taken. Almighty God, who watched over the purity of His spouse, at length afforded her a favourable opportunity for making the disclosure.

For four years past Eutychia had suffered from a grievous flux of blood, for which she could find no relief from the physicians. Under these circumstances she was persuaded by her daughter to make a pilgrimage to Catania, a small city situated at the foot of Mt. Etna, in order to seek a cure from heaven at the tomb of St. Agatha. Lucy accompanied her thither, and by their prayers they obtained from God the object of their desire.

Shortly afterwards a young nobleman who had treated with Eutychia on the subject of the marriage, hearing of the sale of Lucy's goods and jewels, and the distribution of the price among the poor, felt much aggrieved, and in order to revenge himself denounced the Holy Virgin as a Christian before the Governor Paschasius. As the persecution of Dioclesian was then raging with the utmost fury, Lucy was at once summoned to the tribunal, where she boldly professed her faith, showing herself equally insensible to the blandishments and threats of the judge. Seeing that all his efforts were thrown away, and that the more he pressed her to sacrifice the more eloquently did she speak in defence of the Truth, Paschasius exclaimed in a rage, 'There will be an end to words when we come to stripes.' To which the holy virgin made answer: 'Words will never be wanting to God's servants, to whom he said, When you shall stand before kings and princes take no thought how or what to speak, for it shall be given to you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak but the holy spirit that speaketh in you.'

'Is there,' said the governor, 'a holy spirit dwelling in you?'  
 'All those,' she replied, 'who live chastely and piously are the temple of the holy spirit.'  
 'I will send you then,' he said, 'to a house of prostitution, that the holy spirit may abandon you.'

The martyr answered: 'If you cause violence to be done to me, my chastity will have a double crown.'

Upon this Paschasius in a fury ordered her to be carried to a house of ill-fame; but God watched over her and rendered her immovable as a rock, so that the guards were unable to fulfil their mission. Foiled in his diabolical purpose, the inhuman judge ordered a great fire to be kindled round her and fed with resin, oil, pitch, and other combustibles; but it was all in vain, for by the Providence of God the raging flames had no power to hurt her. Various other torments were employed to overcome her constancy, but God by His grace made her more than a match for the cruelty of the persecutors. At length, after a glorious combat, she died in prison of her wounds, about A.D. 304.

St. Lucy is honoured in the Church as one of the most illustrious of the band of virgin martyrs, and her name has found a place beside those of SS. Cecily, Agnes, and Anastasia in the canon of the Mass.

ST. EUSEBIUS, BISHOP OF VERCELLI, MARTYR.

St. Eusebius was born of a noble family in the island of Sardinia, but was brought up at Rome, where his mother resided after the death of her husband. He was ordained Lector by Pope St. Sylvester, and became attached to the Church of Vercelli in Italy, where he was employed in various offices of the sacred ministry, until upon the death of the Bishop he was chosen to fill the Episcopal Chair.

The virtue of our Saint would not have been perfect without the test of persecution. Being deputed by Pope Liberius to defend the Catholic cause in the council of Milan, Eusebius found his efforts completely paralysed by the Arian Bishops, who, relying on the protection of the Emperor Constantius, carried everything their own way by fraud and violence. In this assembly St. Athanasius, the illustrious champion of the Incarnation, was condemned to exile. Eusebius along with two other Bishops, though pressed by the Emperor, steadfastly refused to subscribe to this sentence, whereupon the enraged Prince loaded them with reproaches and sent them into banishment.

This great prelate and generous Confessor of the Faith went to receive the reward of his labours and sufferings about A.D. 371.

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