

Friends at Court.

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

(Written for the N.Z. TABLET.)

December 31, Sunday.—Within octave of Nativity of Jesus Christ, 1900

- January 1, Monday.—Feast of the Circumcision.
 " 2, Tuesday.—St. Macarius, Anchorite.
 " 3, Wednesday.—St. Genevieve, Virgin.
 " 4, Thursday.—St. Thos. Plumtree, Martyr.
 " 5, Friday.—St. Simon Stylites.
 " 6, Saturday.—Feast of the Epiphany.

ST. GENEVIEVE, VIRGIN AND PATRONESS OF PARIS.

In A.D. 429, St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, was sent into Britain by Pope St. Celestine to combat the rising heresy of Pelagius. Travelling in company of St. Lupus of Troyes, he arrived at Nanterre in the neighbourhood of Paris, where many of the inhabitants came out to meet him. Germanus made them a suitable exhortation, and looking round upon the assembled crowd fixed his eyes upon a little girl of six years old, in whom he remarked something supernatural. Having called her to him, he reverently kissed her on the head, to the great surprise of the spectators, and inquired her name and that of her parents. He was told that she was called Genevieve, and that her father's name was Severus and that of her mother Gerontia. Her parents coming up, he congratulated them on being blessed with such a daughter, and declared that the day would come when she would be a bright example to people of both sexes. He then exhorted her to reveal to him the secret thought which she nourished in her heart, and asked her whether it was not her desire to become the consecrated spouse of Jesus Christ. She replied that this was her fixed intention, and begged him to give her the solemn benediction bestowed on those who embraced the state of virginity. They then entered the church for the office of none, after which certain psalms were sung and prayers recited, while the Bishop kept his right hand upon the child's head. He afterwards took his meal with her parents, and bade them bring their daughter to him on the following morning. They did so, and Germanus asked her if she remembered what she had promised the previous day. 'Yes, holy Father,' she replied, 'and with God's help and by the aid of your prayers, I hope to observe it.' Then looking upon the ground he perceived a piece of copper marked with a cross, which he picked up and gave to her, saying, 'Keep this for my sake, and wear it always round your neck in place of other ornament. As for gold and precious stones, leave them to those who serve the world.' He then commended her again to the care of her parents and resumed his journey.

From the age of fifteen to that of fifty, Genevieve ate but twice a week—namely, upon Sunday and Thursday. Her food was only barley bread and beans, and she never tasted wine or other intoxicating liquor. A few days after the departure of St. Germanus, her mother wished to prevent her from going to Church, and not succeeding struck her on the cheek. At the same moment the mother was struck blind, and remained so for two years. At the end of that time, calling to mind the prediction of St. Germanus, she bade her daughter bring some water from the well and make the sign of the cross over her. Genevieve did so, and when she had washed her mother's eyes, the latter began to see a little, and after two or three washings was entirely restored to sight. Upon the death of her parents, Genevieve went to live with her godmother in Paris. She there received the veil from the Bishop with the usual solemnities in company with two other virgins. Almighty God tried her with many sufferings. On one occasion her body was struck with paralysis, and for three days she appeared as if dead. Upon returning to herself she related that an angel had conducted her to the abode of the just to behold the reward which God had prepared for those who love him. She also received the gift of being able to read the secrets of hearts.

A report having gone abroad that Attila, King of the Huns, was coming to ravage Gaul, the inhabitants of Paris were so terrified that they resolved to emigrate and transport their goods into other cities of greater strength. Genevieve did all in her power to dissuade them, and, gathering together the women, exhorted them to have recourse to prayer and fasting, as in the days of Judith and Esther, to avert the anger of God. They accordingly assembled in the baptistery, where for many days they gave themselves up to prayer and works of penance. She warned their husbands not to quit Paris as by the Divine protection it would remain uninjured, while the cities to which they thought of flying would be laid waste. Her words, however, were unheeded by the citizens, who raised an outcry against her and treated her as a false prophetess, threatening to stone her to death or drown her in a pit. At this crisis the Archdeacon of St. Germanus arrived from Auxerre. He found the Parisians assembled at the corners of the streets, and talking of killing Genevieve. 'Beware,' said he, 'of committing so great a crime. She whose death you are plotting is, as we have learned from our holy father Germanus, a chosen servant of God.' These words delivered the virgin from further molestation, and when afterwards the citizens beheld the Huns turning their forces in another direction, they began to regard her as a Saint.

While the admirable virtues and tender charity of Genevieve secured for her the affection of the people, the miraculous gifts with which God favoured her, strongly excited their veneration. Frequently did they behold her with the sign of the cross cure the sick, give sight to the blind and speech to the dumb, cast out devils, and even raise the dead to life. For the hand of God was with her in all that she undertook. After a life of 89 years spent in the practise of every good work, Genevieve happily expired on January 3, A.D. 518, and was interred in the famous church of her name at Paris, of which city she has always been regarded as the principal patron.

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