

Friends at Court

CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

December 16, Sunday.—Third Sunday in Advent.
 „ 17, Monday.—St. Leonard of Port Maurice, Confessor.
 „ 18, Tuesday.—Expectation of the Nativity.
 „ 19, Wednesday.—St. Urban V., Pope and Confessor. Ember Day.
 „ 20, Thursday.—St. Josaphat of Poland, Bishop and Martyr.
 „ 21, Friday.—St. Thomas, Apostle. Ember Day.
 „ 22, Saturday.—St. Deusdedit, Pope and Confessor. Ember Day.

Expectation of the Nativity.

This feast has been instituted by the Church to commemorate the longing desires and fervent aspirations with which the Immaculate Virgin greeted the near approach of that happy day when she was to bring into the world the long-expected Messiah, Whose coming to redeem mankind had been the continual object of her sighs and prayers.

St. Urban V., Pope and Confessor.

Urban V. was Pope from 1362 to 1370. Being a pattern of every virtue, he strove to make the Papal Court a model of Christian life. He was a great patron of learned men and most generous to the poor. One of his first cares was to carry on the expedition for the recovery of the Holy Land, begun by his predecessor, Innocent VI. Convinced that the residence of the Popes at Avignon was injurious to the interests of the Church, he returned to Rome in 1367, and was received amid great rejoicings. The factious and turbulent spirit of the Italians induced him to transfer the Papal residence to Avignon in 1370.

St. Thomas, Apostle.

St. Thomas, also called Didymus, was one of the twelve Apostles. He was a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee when Our Lord called him to be His Apostle. There are only three incidents related of him in the Gospels, but these are enough to make his character more familiar to us than that of any other, except SS. Peter and Paul.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

GOD'S LITTLE FLOWERET.

A Floweret grew in a dismal valley,
 Where all around it was wild and drear;
 Where love came seldom, where rage'd unceasing
 The storms of sorrow and sin and fear.
 And the Floweret turned its face toward heaven,
 Crying, 'God of Pity, look down on me,
 And take me away to Thy peaceful gardens
 Across the bosom of Death's dark sea!'

God heard the cry, and His hand outreaching,
 Drew forth the Flower from the wind-swept vale.
 It was weak and wasted, and worn with suffering,
 The poor little face of it pinched and pale.
 He softened the wrath of the heaving billows,
 He rolled back the angry, clamorous waves,
 And smoothed a path for His tiny Floweret
 O'er Death's dread sea, and the Land of Graves.
 The Flower He brought home from the lowland wild
 Was the stainless soul of a holy child.

— 'Ave Maria.'

The golden moments in the stream of life rush past us, and we see nothing but sand; the angels come to visit us, and we know them only when they are gone.

Energy will do anything that can be done in the world; and no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities will make a man without it.

It is the little pleasures that make life sweet, as the little displeasures may do more than afflictions to make it bitter.

A generous prayer is never presented in vain; the petition may be refused, but the petitioner is always, I believe, rewarded by some gracious visitation.—R. L. Stevenson.

The Storyteller

THE PLAY'S THE THING

Every one among us loved old Joe Keene, whose roles on the boards were usually the irate father, the cold-blooded family solicitor, the dishonest skinflint, the close-fisted or profligate husband, but who in real life was the gentlest, most upright and generous of men.

We were a theatrical company, gathered together after the opening of the season from the ranks of those unfortunately out of an engagement, by a leading man who was determined to 'star.' And after a short tour on the road, we were actually playing in New York, although not at the paradise of an actor's day-dreams, a Broadway theatre.

Not so long ago, the player's calling was looked down upon by the people on the other side of the footlights even while they applauded the player's genius.

Now we are judged more justly, and the profession is known to be made up of men and women who, in their virtues or their faults, only 'hold the mirror up' to the rest of the world.

In our company there were several Catholics, including Joe, Richard, and myself. Someone had asked us to contribute our mite to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and at intervals I used to go around collecting the dimes and quarters from my band and any others who chose to give, usually the whole company.

There are no people on earth more generous and charitable than the members of 'the profession,' unless, perhaps, it be the very poor of the tenement-house districts in a great city.

'Here comes Mimi with her little green silk bag,' Mr. Keene would say as he caught sight of me on these occasions, and down would go his hand into his pocket on the instant.

It was the same whenever he heard the story of any poor fellow, either in our ranks or out of them, who was down on his luck. When any woman was in need, his assistance was always as delicately and chivalrously rendered as though she were a princess.

Hitherto I had played only ingenue parts. But this year, when the leading lady was taken ill and had to give up, I found myself at a bound promoted to the top rung of our particular theatrical ladder.

'It is all right, Mimi, you can do it!' Joe exclaimed when I told him.

Very proud I was that he thought so, for our acquaintance had begun only when we were both engaged by the actor-manager.

We were friends from this hour, and he grew so fond of me that Richard became almost jealous. Richard and I are to be married at the close of the season.

But the old man said I looked like someone he had known long ago, and I understood that many of the little acts of kindness he showered upon me were prompted by his enduring affection for that other woman, whoever she was. At least she must now be gray-haired and elderly, unless, indeed, while still in her youth and beauty she had made her exit from life, in the first act of the drama—idyll, comedy or tragedy—whatever it was.

Yes, we all knew he had his romance, and one day, with the heedlessness of youth and an impetuous disposition, I made bold to ask him about it.

'Mr. Keene, you must have often thought me an audacious little minx,' I began, 'and you know you are a beautiful old hero in my eyes, so don't be angry when I ask you to tell me a story. Why have you never married?'

The question disconcerted him, and was, truly, an impertinence for which I blamed myself as soon as it was uttered.

He tried to smile, but the sad expression of his eyes haunted me for days afterwards and his voice trembled in spite of his attempt to keep it steady.

'Ah, Mimi, child,' he replied, 'I am just another who has grasped at happiness and failed to obtain it. When I was a young man I had my ambition. I dreamed of becoming prominent in my calling, a star of the first magnitude. Then, grown rich and famous, I would marry the woman I loved. She was not one of us, and wished me to adopt another profession. It was the one point upon which we differed. Circumstances parted us. My dream of fame and fortune has not yet come true, and never will. Long ago, she became the wife of another. For years I have heard nothing of her; I do not even know her

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