

# Friends at Court

## GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

February 24, Sunday.—Second Sunday in Lent.  
 „ 25, Monday.—St. Felix III., Pope and Confessor.  
 „ 26, Tuesday.—St. Margaret of Cortona, Penitent.  
 „ 27, Wednesday.—St. Marcellus, Pope and Martyr.  
 „ 28, Thursday.—St. Ignatius, Bishop and Martyr.  
 March 1, Friday.—The Holy Shroud of Our Lord.  
 „ 2, Saturday.—St. Simplicius, Pope and Confessor.

St. Margaret of Cortona, Penitent.

St. Margaret was a native of the province of Tuscany, in Italy. During twenty-three years she endeavored to repair by a life of extraordinary austerity the scandal she had given by the crimes of her youth.

St. Marcellus, Pope and Martyr.

St. Marcellus succeeded Pope Marcellinus in 308. After a Pontificate of nineteen months, he succumbed to sufferings inflicted on him by the tyrant Maxentius.

The Holy Shroud of Our Lord.

St. Matthew, after describing the Crucifixion, continues: 'When it was evening there came a certain rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked the body of Jesus. And Pilate commanded that the body should be delivered, and Joseph, taking the body, wrapped it up in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own monument, which he had hewed out in a rock.'

## GRAINS OF GOLD

### THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

If I should see a ghostly hand,  
 Against the wall this night,  
 What message would it bring to me,  
 What sentence would it write?  
 If 'Mane' were the first word traced  
 Before my awe-filled gaze,  
 Should I find comfort in the past,  
 Its countless squandered days?  
 If 'Thecel' on the wall appeared,  
 Should I not be afraid  
 Lest justice full be meted out  
 When life's poor deeds are weighed?  
 And if that hand should write once more,  
 What would the message be?  
 Should I a sentence dread of doom,  
 Or pledge of mercy see?  
 'Tis not till night the hand appears—  
 Life's sun is shining still:  
 I yet have power to guide the hand,  
 To write whatever I will.  
 —'Ave Maria.'

Sacrifice imparts to the soul a holy power of affection, hitherto unknown to it.

They who are right can afford to pardon whether victorious or defeated.—Bishop Spalding.

Have death always before your eyes as a salutary means of returning to God.—St. Bernard.

It is God alone for whom we never have to search in vain; we are always able to find Him.—St. Bernard.

The foolhardy man prevails there and now; the prudent man in the long run and everywhere.—Abbe Roux.

Keep thyself innocent, O my soul! that, endowed with greater delicacy, thou mayest feel thyself at all times penetrated with the presence of God.

Take care that you do not knowingly rejoice at the downfall of your neighbor, nor at a misfortune that has befallen him.—Ven. L. de Blois, O.S.B.

Every heavy burden of sorrow seems like a stone hung around our neck, yet are they often only like the stones used by pearl-divers, which enable them to reach their prize and to rise enriched.

Teach self-denial in your homes. It is not kind to the child to allow him everything he asks. Teach him that the truest and greatest happiness is to be found in denying himself and helping others.

# The Storyteller

## THE DEFECTION OF MRS CAPTAIN

When young Doctor Marlowe came to Corning, carrying somewhere in his luggage his hard-earned shingle, fresh from the paint shop, he little knew what excitement he was going to cause in that staid old New England town. He might have guessed, had he been acquainted with the genius of such places, that the mere announcement weeks before of the coming to town of a new doctor—made in the 'Daily News' amid such state affairs as the painting of Tim Roche's house and Martha Cutler's birthday party—was going to throw into the shade all other topics of conversation. For days and days it was wondered who he was, whence he came, what he looked like, was he married, was he going to be, was he any good, and what did old Doctor Blake, who had seen vast generations succumb to the infliction of his perpetual poultice and pill, think of this young upstart of a boy who was coming with a new diploma to be his rival?

And so when Dr. Marlowe did alight from the train on a Sunday evening he discovered from the nudging and whispering that took its course amid the crowd—which evidently included all the femininity of the town—that he was the conquering hero of the hour. Involuntarily he glanced at John Murray's wagon, as if, perchance, it might not be a car of triumph with a brass band hidden somewhere to do honor to him and his new shingle. But the wagon drove off with the box of boneless codfish it had come for, and the nearest approach to the town band was the whistling of the train in the distance. The doctor smiled and bowed to his audience, and entered the station to arrange for the removal of his baggage, which now attracted the glances of the ladies, and extorted their surmises as to whether all the trunks contained his clothes or his wife's—that is, if he had a wife.

But the doctor was not prosaic enough to enlighten them upon the point, and grasping his suit case he trudged along the main street till he came to the aristocratic old mansion of Martha Pickering, the relict of the late Captain Pickering, who served so nobly during the war of the Rebellion. When he was alive they were distinguished as Mr. and Mrs. Captain Pickering, and now that he had gone to his fathers there was no conceivable reason, to Corning folk, why the title she enjoyed should be taken away just because the Captain had been taken away, and so the widow was 'Mrs. Captain' to the end of her many days and beyond that, even on her tombstone. But that is anticipating.

Pickering was the first name in the peerage of Corning gentry. Its origin had been lost in the dim obscurity of history, somewhere about two or three years after the Captain had come from battle with a title to bravery, and no one except the narrow-minded was anxious to remember that the Captain had questionable antecedents, and, as old Tim Murphy, who served under him, testified, had done 'more mean tricks than the devil himself.' The Captain in his new dignity—which was made still greater by his being elected a selectman and called upon every Decoration Day to give his reminiscences of the war, while the school children in white dresses and patriotic sashes surrounded him in Evergreen Cemetery and sang 'America'—the Captain, I say, soon became an honored personage, with glory enough to terrify even Abigail Darling, who called herself a real daughter of the Revolution, and who was, without doubt, past her teens, even at that remote period.

The Captain's glory was not dimmed by his sudden demise. Mrs. Captain still held to it tenaciously, and poor Abigail, who had hopes of recovering her vanished heritage when the Captain was well under ground, was doomed to disappointment. Mrs. Captain was still the leader of society, the first of the first families whose dictum upon affairs, general and particular, religious, social, artistic and political, was as final as the day of doom. It mattered not that her well-worn black silk, which had done service at weddings, funerals, and affairs of state for an indefinite period, still clung to the fashion plates of the fifties. It had as many reminiscences as an antiquated actress, and Mrs. Captain was always eager to be its fond interpreter. But, leader of society as she was, and was conceded to be even by her younger opponents who aspired to that vaguely honorable title of rank, it was not on account of receptions and big dinners. Mrs. Captain always had a horror, vehemently expressed, of such abuses of the talent and the