

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- April 28, Sunday.—Fourth Sunday after Easter. St. Paul of the Cross, Confessor.
 „ 29, Monday.—St. Peter, Martyr.
 „ 30, Tuesday.—St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin.
 May 1, Wednesday.—SS. Philip and James, Apostles.
 „ 2, Thursday.—St. Athanasius, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor.
 „ 3, Friday.—The Finding of the Holy Cross.
 „ 4, Saturday.—St. Monica, Widow.

St. Paul of the Cross, Confessor.

St. Paul was born near Genoa, in Italy. From childhood he showed a special devotion to the Passion of Christ. He founded the Congregation of the Passion, the members of which, besides the usual three vows, make a fourth, that they will do their utmost to keep alive in the hearts of the faithful the memory of Our Lord's Passion. St. Paul died in Rome in 1775.

St. Peter, Martyr.

St. Peter was born at Verona, in Italy. At the age of fifteen he was received into the Dominican Order by the great St. Dominic. To a profound humility he joined exceptional talents. He was very successful as a preacher, and in particular brought about the conversion of many Manichaean heretics, a sect which was still very numerous in the neighborhood of Milan. He met his death at the hands of some sectarians, who, remaining obstinate in their heresy, were enraged at his successful efforts to propagate the genuine teaching of Christ, A.D. 1252.

St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin.

Siena, in Italy, has the honor of having been the birthplace of this great saint. From her earliest years St. Catherine cultivated a spirit of perfect union with God, and even when engaged in the most distracting occupations succeeded in keeping herself no less sensible of His presence than if she had no exterior employment. She was indefatigable in her efforts to bring souls to God, and her words and example, and even the very sight of her emaciated but saintly countenance, were the cause of many conversions. She seemed to have a special grace for effecting the reconciliation of enemies. Her powerful influence in this direction was exercised, not only in the case of private individuals but also in reconciling States that were at variance, and in obtaining the submission and pardon of rebellious cities which had incurred the censures of the Holy See. But the most important service she rendered to the Church was the restoration of the Sovereign Pontiff to his episcopal city, after a residence of nearly seventy years at Avignon, in France, an end being thus put to the innumerable evils resulting to the Church from the prolonged absence of the Vicar of Christ from Rome. St. Catherine died in 1380, at the age of 47, and was buried in Rome, in the Church of the Minerva, where her remains are still preserved.

GRAINS OF GOLD

NOCTURN.

Night on the deep!
 Lord, my soul keep
 From sudden harm:
 Stand Thou me near
 To curb the fear,
 The swift alarm!
 Send Thou one light,
 Dispart the night,
 Blume the sea;
 An instant gleam
 On the doubtful stream,
 Enough for me.
 All stars denied,
 Wild runs the tide
 With flash and sweep.
 Lord, who can save,
 Through wind, on wave,
 If the Pilot sleep?

— Ave Maria.

The strongest mind on earth is that of him who will consider naught but himself and God.—Lacordaire.

The Storyteller

THE LITTLE OLD MAID

Miss Erminie Wakely was nearly sixty years old, and a spinster; she lived in the village of L—. She was so peculiar in manner and in habits that the people who were her neighbors—kindly enough neighbors at that—called her crazy, and took little notice of her queer speeches and queerer actions. In all L— there was no cottage as old-fashioned as her own. All the others had acquired modern improvements, modern comforts, and even added jaunty little wings and additions that said much for the progressiveness of the small town. Visitors to L— invariably paused at Miss Wakely's cottage, and, after a pitying smile, would ask if it were inhabited, and who its owner might be. Poor Miss Erminie, they were told. Sometimes some of them, professing to be students of human nature, would want to see poor Miss Erminie.

There was an excuse for this. In the front window of the tiny cottage she kept hanging, on a string, some shoe-laces, some cheap toys, such as whips and whistles and balloons, and a picture-book or two. So to see poor Miss Erminie one would merely want to purchase some trifle—a shoe-lacing generally, if it were a man, or a spool of thread or needles, if a woman. What people saw, when they entered, was a meagre display indeed, although everything in the small window and the smaller case was scrupulously clean. Miss Erminie waited on them—a slender figure, robed in black, with soft white hair and soft gray eyes, and yet with an expression about the mouth and firm lips that repelled the attraction her appearance might otherwise have created.

There was an air about Miss Erminie, a fleeting hint of past beauty, a touch of dignity, a bearing that, even in her sixtieth year, could be called distinguished.

Looking at her one would know she had a history—sad enough, lost in the years that had passed over her head. She had loved one of whom her aristocratic father did not approve; defied that father in order to marry him; and, on the eve of her nuptials, had been deserted by the man for whom she was willing to give up her luxurious home, and all pre-existing family ties.

Miss Erminie's heart was sorely wounded, but Miss Erminie's pride never recovered from the shock. Her people rallied to her nobly, but she refused even her father's advances. He had been a little too stern all his life, he acknowledged, but if Erminie allowed him he would make up for his seeming indifference.

After a while his prayers—and he had always been a very proud man—seemed to have effect. She went about with him; they became almost inseparable. But she was too cold, too indifferent to take more than a passive interest in the things transpiring around her. His death within the year left her her own absolute mistress. Wakely Hali passed into other hands; slowly, almost imperceptibly, Miss Erminie drifted away from all who had known her and cared for her; little by little she gave up the practice of her religious duties. From the merry girl her friends had once known, she became a taciturn, middle-aged woman; a reserved, silent, old one.

Very few in L— knew Miss Erminie's story. She had no relatives there—all were dead, or had removed to some distance. She had no friends, for she wanted none. She was never ill, never known to require assistance, never known to give any.

Mr. Ledyard had recently come to L—. He had been a wealthy manufacturer, and had just retired from active participation in the affairs of a big iron industry. But he had enough private interests to keep him well employed, and also to employ a young man in a confidential capacity.

It was Jack Severne who discovered Miss Erminie. He related the tale of his discovery to Mr. Ledyard and his daughter Olive that night at dinner.

'A queer-looking place, the queerest I ever struck,' he said. 'Set away back in the trees, with funny little strings of lacings and sugar pop-corn in the window! I went in to buy a shoe-lace. I wish you could see the little old lady. Come down that way with me to-morrow, Miss Olive. She is like an old-fashioned painting; a carving in mellow ivory; a Dresden shepherdess grown old.'

'She is old, then?' asked Olive Ledyard, smiling a little. Her pretty face was turned with speaking interest toward Mr. Severne, and her eyes were soft. 'What is her name?'