

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- December 1, Sunday.—First Sunday in Advent.
 " 2, Monday.—St. Bibiana, Virgin and Martyr
 " 3, Tuesday.—St. Francis Xavier, Confessor.
 " 4, Wednesday.—St. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop Confessor, and Doctor.
 " 5, Thursday.—St. Martin, Pope and Martyr.
 " 6, Friday.—St. Nicholas, Bishop, and Confessor.
 " 7, Saturday.—St. Ambrose, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor.

First Sunday in Advent

Advent is a time of prayer and penance, which the Church has appointed to dispose her children for the worthy celebration of the birth of our Saviour. During Advent we ought to prepare ourselves to receive the Son of God, quitting the bosom of His Father in order to become man, and converse with us. We ought daily to steal a little time from our affairs, that we may meditate on the following questions:—Who comes? Why does He come? What shall be the fruit of His coming? Let all our desires call on Him with the just, and the Prophets of the Old Testament who longed for Him so much; and to open a way for Him into our hearts, let us purify ourselves by confession, fasting and Communion.

St. Francis Xavier, Confessor

The great Apostle of the Indies, the St. Paul of modern times, was born in Spain in 1506. Having gone to the University of Paris to complete his studies, his brilliant talents gained him an applause which, unfortunately, served as an incentive to vanity and ambition. Through the instrumentality of his countryman, St. Ignatius, he learned to seek a higher ideal, and to devote the exceptional gifts with which God had endowed him to the glory and honor of the Giver. Having been chosen by the Vicar of Christ to preach the Gospel to nations of the Far East, he sailed for India in 1541. The zeal which he displayed for the propagation of the faith, the privations which he endured, the labors which marked his life in India and Japan, are well nigh incredible, and have no parallel except in the labors and journeyings of the Apostle of the Gentiles. His mission was signalised by many miracles, and crowned with remarkable success. He died in 1552, when on the point of undertaking the conversion of China. St. Francis Xavier is honored as one of the patrons of Australia.

GRAINS OF GOLD

TO MY ANGEL GUARDIAN

IN THE MORNING

Good-day, my Guardian Angel!
 The night is past and gone,
 And thou hast watched beside me,
 At midnight as at dawn.

The day is now before me,
 And, as it glides away,
 Oh! help me well to make it,
 A good and holy day.

AT NIGHT.

Good-night, my Guardian Angel!
 The day has sped away;
 Well spent or ill, its story
 Is written down for aye.

And now, of God's kind providence,
 Thou image pure and bright!
 Watch o'er me while I'm sleeping—
 My angel dear, good-night!

—Rev. Mathew Russell, S.J.

Unworked brains make for prematurely old faces.

One tear of the heart over the Passion of Our Blessed Lord! How much fire of Purgatory has it the power to quench.—Faber.

The most precious thing we have next to grace, is time, and we owe an account of our time as we owe an account of our grace.

The Storyteller

THE PROFESSOR AND THE TIGER

Bravery, doctor (said my friend, the third officer) isn't such a simple thing as you think it. One man is brave in one way, and another in a different one. Often enough, that which is called bravery is nothing more than custom. You would not go up on the fore-royal-yard in half a gale to reef sale, would you? Not you! You'd be afraid. Well, you might think me a brave man because I would. But, then, I'd be afraid to cut a chap's leg off, and you wouldn't.

That was what old Captain Hoskins, whom I used to sail with, could never understand. If a man was a bit nervous about the sea, he used to look down on him as all sorts of a coward. But there came a day when he learned better.

It happened when I was with him in a three-masted sailing ship called the 'Arrow.' We lay at Singapore, alongside the Tanjong Pagan Wharf, loading with general cargo for Liverpool. The principal object in that cargo—or at least the one we took most notice of—was a tiger that we were shipping for London. It lay in a strong cage of wood and iron, with a door in the front through which it could be fed. It was a fine big brute, and every time it stretched itself you could see the muscles slipping over its sides, and the big, wicked-looking claws peeping out of the pads of its feet in a way that made you very thankful for the bars.

We had a passenger or two. One of them was a young girl who went by the name of Hilda Sandford. She had been a governess in the family of one of our agents out there, but the climate hadn't suited her, and she had to go home. She was coming with us instead of by the steamer because she got her passage for nothing, and she wasn't too well off. Directly the old man set eyes on her trim figure and the wealth of golden brown hair about her head he was struck all of a heap, so to speak, and I could see that he was promising himself a mighty pleasant voyage.

The other passenger was a strange, little, dried-up man, who wore gold pince-nez and kept peering about the ship in a most uncomfortable way. He gave his name as Mr. Hay—Professor Hay, he called himself, though we didn't find out what he professed until later. Of course, the tiger had its attendant, but he berthed forward.

An hour or two before we started this Mr. Hay came up to the old man and began asking him a lot of questions.

'Captain,' he said nervously, 'I hope we shall have a quiet passage.'

'I don't see why we shouldn't,' said Hoskins, genially.

Mr. Hay looked up at the sky.

'There seems to be a good deal of wind about,' he said.

'Pretty fair,' said Hoskins. 'That's what's going to take us home. Not being a steamer, we can't do without it.'

'You're sure it's safe?' asked Hay.

'Safe!' says the old man, getting on his high horse; 'safe! I'm sailing this ship.'

The little man smiled apologetically.

'You will excuse me, captain,' he said; 'I did not mean any offence. The fact is, I am constitutionally nervous on ship-board. It is a feeling that I have never been able to overcome.'

The old man looked at him with a sort of good-natured contempt.

'You've no call to be alarmed,' he said; 'we'll take you to England safe enough.'

Mr. Hay smiled again and walked off into the waist, where we had fixed up the tiger's cage. It seemed to have a sort of attraction for him, for he stood before it for at least a quarter of an hour. Hoskins looked after him, and then turned to Miss Sandford, who was sitting near.

'Nice sort of chap to have on a ship,' he said. 'A man like that ought to stick to dry land.'

'Well, you know, I have a fellow-feeling for him, captain,' she answered; 'I am afraid of the sea myself.'

'Ah,' he said, 'but you're a woman, you see. A bit of fear is all right in a woman. It's natural to them. But with a man it's different. A man ought to be afraid of nothing.'

'And are you afraid of nothing, captain?' she asked.

'Not I,' said Hoskins. 'You can have the biggest