

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

July 19, Sunday.—Sixth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Symmachus, Pope and Confessor.
 „ 20, Monday.—St. Jerome Emilian, Confessor.
 „ 21, Tuesday.—St. Alexius, Confessor.
 „ 22, Wednesday.—St. Mary Magdalen, Penitent.
 „ 23, Thursday.—St. Appollinaris, Bishop and Martyr.
 „ 24, Friday.—St. Vincent de Paul, Confessor.
 „ 25, Saturday.—St. James, Apostle.

St. Appollinaris, Bishop and Martyr.

St. Appollinaris, first Bishop of Ravenna, and, according to tradition, a disciple of St. Peter, suffered martyrdom during the reign of the Emperor Vespasian.

St. Vincent de Paul, Confessor.

St. Vincent was born in the south of France. Having been ordained priest, his heart was touched by the state of spiritual destitution in which he found the remoter country districts of France. The remedy for this appeared to him to be a series of retreats or missions, by which the people might be taught their duties to God and man, and at the same time earnestly exhorted to fulfil them. For this purpose St. Vincent instituted a congregation of priests, popularly known in English-speaking countries as Vincentians. He was also led by a spirit of ardent charity to found numerous hospitals, asylums, and orphanages, and to establish confraternities for the education of youth, the service of the sick, and the relief of the destitute. St. Vincent died in 1660, at the age of eighty-five.

GRAINS OF GOLD

A THOUGHT FROM THE PSALMS.

When I behold the heavens, O my God,
 How petty seem the things of this brief life!
 How weak my heart beneath the chastening rod!
 How cowardly my spirit in the strife!

When I behold the heavens, where each star
 Is as a seraph's shining heart of flame,
 My sins, like myriad hands, press me afar
 From Thee, O God, and low I bow in shame.

When I behold the heavens all aglow
 With dawnlight from dark shadow-lands made free,
 Hope stirs within me, and, somehow, I know
 That Thou hast made the stars and heavens for me.
 —'Ave Maria.'

A light heart and cheerful face are the heritage of those who possess contented minds.—Father Hayes.

So long as the multitude are made use of, and not loved and helped, so long shall the world be full of misery and crime.—Bishop Spalding.

Happiness is a great power of holiness. Thus kind words by their power of producing happiness have also a power of producing holiness, and so of winning men to God.

The benefactors of humanity are those who have thought great thoughts about her. Her benefactors are the poets, the artists, the inventors, the apostles, and all pure hearts.—'Amiel's Journal.'

A great people and petty thoughts or revengeful feelings go ill together. The strong do not wail; the brave make no outcry. In proportion to one's power should be his forbearance and self-control.—Bishop Spalding.

Never be discouraged because good things get on so slowly here; and never fail to do daily that good which lies next to your hand. Do not be in a hurry, but be diligent. Enter into the sublime patience of the Lord. Learn to endure meekly whatever trials may come upon you in your every-day life.

The statement that we are all creatures of habit is far more true than the ordinary run of such general observations. One thing is certain in this respect—we can usually be what we want to be if we want hard enough! It is simply a question of the desire being well backed by the will. But few persons have a proper appreciation of the importance of training the will. Few seem to realise that in this lies the solution of the problem of happiness, which is really not much of a problem, but largely a habit.—Leigh Mitchell Hodges.

The Storyteller

SISTER BRENDA'S NIECE

Some persons would say I am an old maid! At least, those who know when I was born would say so. But unless I told the rest of the world, they would not believe it. I am quite up to date in my styles, wear my hair in the latest coiffures; I am full of life and vivacity; slender, quick and always ready for amusement; read the latest works, and can dance, swim, ride and play golf and tennis. Now, am I conceited if I pride myself some on my accomplishments?

Of course, I am a convent-bred girl, and I just adore the nuns. Everybody would if they knew them as I do. Sweet, gentle, cultured women, with eyes that make you think of half-open tabernacle doors, with voices that linger in your heart long after you leave their presence. Gracious, yet unworldly; always glad, yet ready with brimming eyes to share your sorrow or lighten your troubles. Why, their very influence—silent, almost imperceptible—rules people more than written law. Even their letters can work miracles. I've seen it. Just ask some white-haired veteran who smelled the smoke of battle and was nursed back to life by the quiet-voiced nuns; he will bear me out. Ask the schoolboy who learned his catechism and prepared for his First Communion at the hands of the nuns; ask him his impressions. And what about the schoolgirl who has lived six, eight, ten years at some convent boarding school, and knows the religious as her mothers, her best friends? I was one of these. So I say again I just adore the nuns! (You understand how I use the word 'adore'.)

The reminiscence I am giving you has to do with an incident of my school life and dear Sister Brenda, who was my teacher and my ideal seventeen years ago, and is the latter still. I was a wild creature of fourteen then, impulsive, warm-hearted, with some talent, they said. But Sister Brenda could tame me in any wild mood she found me. She developed my nature, formed my character, and any good that is in me she brought out and fostered. In one thing only was she disappointed, but it was all my fault, and the bitterness is all mine.

Sister Brenda was the sacristan of the convent chapel. How beautiful that chapel was! A marble railing divided it into two parts. One was filled with pews, where the pupils knelt and sat, and where they heard Mass and benediction, where they made little visits to the Blessed Sacrament in the quiet twilight. How well I remember those summer evenings, when the stained-glass windows stood aslant, and the distant twitter of the birds, or the hum of insects, or the sighing of the wind in the tree tops were the only sounds that broke the hush of the sacred place. In the upper part of the chapel, beyond the railing, were the stalls of the nuns—two long rows on each side, under the arching pillars. The marble high altar stood in a sort of apse, while behind it, high up on the wall, was a touching picture of the Crucifixion. The marble shrines of Our Lady and St. Joseph were on each side. The beautiful tessellated floor gave no echo to the quiet footsteps of the nuns, and to glance up to this part of the chapel, which was called the choir, during the time when the nuns chanted their office was like looking at a picture of an old cloister in some convent beyond the sea. The long lines of religious, all robed and all veiled alike, all in the same posture, all bending, or standing, or kneeling together—one would never tire of the beauty of the scene. I wonder if any convent girl whose eyes rest on this page will not recall it all as she reads?

One day I slipped into the chapel at an unusual hour. At first no one was visible, but as I knelt and prayed a nun approached the altar. She placed something before the tabernacle door, then knelt a long time. Finally, she rose and glided down the aisle. It was Sister Brenda. I followed her, for I was just a little curious, a fact which I would not think of acknowledging to any one, much less to her.

When she saw me she held the door open, and when it closed I saw an envelope in her hand.

'You saw me at the foot of the altar, dear?' she said.

'Yes, Sister.'

'Well, I am going to tell you why I went so close to our dear Lord.' And she held the envelope up. 'I was asking Him to take this little heart and make it His own; to guard it from the dangers and troubles of this hard, cold world; to win it to His love, and thus make it happy in time and eternity.' And she drew out of the envelope the picture of a