

# Friends at Court

## CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

December 27, Sunday.—St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.  
 „ 28, Monday.—The Holy Innocents, Martyrs.  
 „ 29, Tuesday.—St. Thomas of Canterbury, Bishop and Martyr.  
 „ 30, Wednesday.—St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Widow.  
 „ 31, Thursday.—St. Sylvester, Pope and Confessor.  
 January 1, Friday.—Feast of the Circumcision. Holiday of Obligation.  
 „ 2, Saturday.—Octave of St. Stephen.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Widow.

St. Elizabeth was the daughter of the King of Hungary, and the wife of Louis, Landgrave of Thuringia. She was remarkable for her charity, and took a special delight in serving the sick with her own hands. On the death of her husband, St. Elizabeth was driven from her home, and reduced to take shelter with her children in a building that had been used for swine. These and other privations she bore uncomplainingly. She died in 1231, in the 24th year of her age.

St. Sylvester, Pope and Confessor.

St. Sylvester, a native of Rome, was called to rule the Church during the twenty-one years which followed the accession of Constantine. One of his principal cares was to provide churches for the faithful, who were now, for the first time, allowed perfect liberty in the exercise of their religion. The most important event in the pontificate of St. Sylvester was the celebration of the First General Council, which was presided over by the Papal legates, and in which the errors of Arius were condemned. St. Sylvester died in 335.

## GRAINS OF GOLD

### A LEGEND OF THE NATIVITY.

The chilly, wind-swept stable-home  
 A holy Temple hath become,  
 And Mary worships at the shrine  
 Of Emmanuel Divine.  
 Prostrate, adoring, kisses meet  
 She presseth to His sacred feet  
 Who lieth where the beasts have trod,  
 While in great awe she doth repeat—  
 'My God! my God!'

The cattle's straw-strewn stable-home  
 A Royal Palace hath become;  
 Before Him, throned upon the mow,  
 Again Our Lady sweet doth bow,  
 In homage kissing His dear hand  
 Who earth and heaven doth command,  
 While in great rapture doth she sing  
 With all the choir of angel band—  
 'My King! my King!'

But now the stable hath become  
 The Holy Infant's earthly home,  
 And Mary stoops to lift and hold,  
 And fondly to her bosom fold,  
 This Child of glory and of grace  
 And shower soft kisses on His face:  
 'My Love! My own most precious One!  
 Come to Thy Mother's dear embrace—  
 'My Son! my Son!'

—Rev. David Bearne, S.J.

No man can make a habit in a moment or break it in a moment. It is a matter of development, of growth. But at any moment one may begin to make or begin to break any habit.—William G. Jordan.

More abundantly, perhaps, than any other season of the ecclesiastical year, the Christmas tide furnishes valuable and graphically presented lessons well worth pondering over by religious, the young, penitents, and all who are immediately subject to legitimate superiors. Not the least important and practical among these lessons is one which that eminent master of the spiritual life, St. Francis of Sales, thus succinctly formulated in a discourse on the virtue of obedience 'I take for my model,' he said, 'the little Babe of Bethlehem, who knew so much, could do so much, and yet allowed Himself to be managed without a word.'

# The Storyteller

## JOB WARNER'S CHRISTMAS

The day before Christmas was drawing to a close. Cold gray clouds drifted off to the eastward, and a snow storm seemed imminent. But in spite of threatening clouds gay throngs crowded the thoroughfares. The shop windows were brilliant with articles of every conceivable variety adapted for Christmas gifts. So the human tide ebbed and flowed, surging into shops, taxing to the utmost the attention of overworked clerks, and receded with pleasant surprises destined on the following morning to make many households happy.

In front of a large window, brilliantly illuminated, stood an elderly man, somewhat under middle stature. Job Warner was scarcely fifty, but sedentary habits and long stooping over a desk had bowed his form and gave him the appearance of being several years older than he actually was. For twenty-five years he had been assistant bookkeeper in the counting-room of Bentley and Co., importers of dry goods and wholesale jobbers. His excellent business capacity would have secured his promotion to the post of chief bookkeeper, but his own humility and absence of pretension had unconsciously influenced his employers to accept him at his own valuation. So while the firm had prospered and made money by the hundreds of thousands, still Job Warner continued to be assistant bookkeeper on a modest salary of seven hundred dollars. With a family becoming daily more expensive, the little bookkeeper had found it hard work to make both ends meet. He was compelled to live in very poor and incommodious lodgings and practice humble acts of self-denial, all of which he bore with a meek and uncomplaining spirit, with which he was doubtless credited in that better world, where, we trust, all the inequalities of this life will be made up.

The last year had been rather a trying one to Job Warner. The enhanced price of nearly every article which is included under the head of necessities had made a rigid economy needful. Months ago the family had given up using sugar and butter was only used on Sundays. Frugality had become a rule, and was meekly submitted to as a necessary condition of life. But, in spite of his habitual self-denial, the worthy bookkeeper was stirred with an impulse to extravagance on this day. In the window before him bloomed a large doll—quite a queen she must have been in the realm of dolls—royally attired in a purple silk dress and a bonnet of the latest style. The eyes of the good bookkeeper were fixed in admiration upon this beautiful doll vision. There was a household pet at home, little Effie, whom the possession of that doll would exalt to the seventh heaven of happiness. True, such a royal lady might spurn the idea of entering so humble a home, and her silks might seem out of place in contrast with the calicoes and gingham with which Effie and her mother were contented. But when these considerations suggested themselves to Job Warner he triumphantly answered: 'Is there anything too good for Effie?'

Yes, we have found out the little bookkeeper's weakness. He no sooner thought of little Effie's bright eyes dancing with delight than his habitual prudence forsook him. With the air of desperate resolution he entered the brilliant shop, and, timidly pushing his way among the well-dressed crowds surrounding the counter, asked with an apologetic cough the price of her Royal Highness in the window.

The clerk looked a little surprised at such a question from a man of so humble appearance, and answered, in a short, quick tone: 'Five dollars, sir. Will you take it?'

Five dollars! Job was startled at the price, and answered in an abashed tone that he would not decide just yet.

Outside, he again looked longingly at the doll. Effie would be so delighted with it—but then five dollars! He reckoned up what a number of articles might be purchased for five dollars, and shook his head reluctantly. Mrs. Warner would think he had quite taken leave of his senses. Of course, he must give up all thoughts of it. But no! A daring suggestion occurred to him. Might he not apply to Mr. Bentley for an increase of salary? There had been a general raising of salaries elsewhere. That he knew. His old friend Timothy Fogg had his raised six months ago, but somehow Job had never succeeded in summoning up courage to make such a request of his employer. He was not sure, in his humility, whether he was worth any more than seven hundred dollars a year. But his love for his little Effie gave him unwonted boldness. With an increase of salary he could buy this magnificent doll for her and afford his oldest boy a course of lessons in drawing, for which he had a strong taste. Yes, he would ask to