

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

January 3, Sunday.—Octave of St. John, Apostle.
 „ 4, Monday.—Octave of the Holy Innocents.
 „ 5, Tuesday.—Vigil of the Epiphany.
 „ 6, Wednesday.—Feast of the Epiphany.
 „ 7, Thursday.—Within the Octave.
 „ 8, Friday.—Within the Octave.
 „ 9, Saturday.—Within the Octave.

GRAINS OF GOLD

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE.

How happy is he born and taught,
 That serveth not another's will;
 Whose armor is his honest thought,
 And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are,
 Whose soul is still prepared for death,
 Untied unto the worldly care
 Of public fame or private breath.

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
 Or vice; who never understood
 How deepest wounds are given by praise,
 Nor rules of state, but rules of good.

Who hath his life from rumors freed,
 Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
 Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
 Nor ruin make oppressors great.

Who God doth late and early pray,
 More of his grace than gifts to lend;
 And entertains the harmless day
 With a religious book or friend.

This man is freed from servile bands
 Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
 Lord of himself, though not of lands,
 And having nothing, yet hath all.

DON'TS FOR PENITENTS

Don't crowd into the confessional ahead of some one else who was waiting before you came.

Don't tell any one's sins but your own.

Don't mention another's name in telling your sins.

Don't make the priest irritable by forcing him to repeat: 'How many times?' for every mortal sin you confess.

Don't forget it is a sin to accuse yourself wilfully of something you have not committed, just as well as it is to conceal a sin you have committed.

Don't confess a doubtful sin as if it were not doubtful. Confess exactly as your conscience saw it.

Don't fail to ask for special remedies against your habitual sins if the priest forgets to give them. Take an interest in your soul.

Don't go to confession intending to use all the wiles and deceits of present day worldly life to conceal and shade over and soften down sins and circumstances of sins necessary for the priest to know.

Don't flit about from priest to priest to escape a little scolding for habitual faults.

Don't think a confessor is naturally severe and stern because he is so with you. He may be the kindest of the kindly with the one that goes before or follows you.

Don't go to confession merely to relieve your mind.

Don't talk so low in confessing that the priest can not hear.

Don't talk so loud that everybody can hear you.

Don't neglect to say your penance immediately after confession.

Don't get the blues because your confessor is changed to another parish.

Don't get the blues because he is not changed.—Victorian.

The Storyteller

THE CABIN IN THE VALLEY

Beyond shone the sparkling tops of the twin mountains; near by the range of hills that circled in the lower valley. The setting sun touched the white-clad peaks to crimson glory; the moon rode palely in a sky where she would soon reign supreme and splendid. The snow had fallen heavily the day before, so that this cold, still, quiet air, that scarlet sun making ruddy the virgin whiteness, the intense blue of the azure dome, flecked here and there by tiny clouds, pink now in reflected beauty—all combined to make one remember what day it was, and marvel and rejoice. Nature was adorning herself to greet the coming of the Child.

The little mountain path which led from the city was easy enough to travel, for the snow packed tightly under pressure. The traveller coming up that path on his sure-footed, neat-limbed mare, had been in the saddle many hours. He welcomed, therefore, the sight of the low-roofed cabin nestling against a background of pines, half lost in their protecting shadow. He welcomed the sight of the man who, standing in the doorway, kept peering in his direction. A tall, wiry man, clad in rough frieze and with a woollen scarf wound tightly about his throat. As the traveller approached, so that his features were discernible, the inmate of the cabin turned away. But by this time the other had drawn rein, and now leaped from his horse.

'Friend,' he said, and spoke quite pleasantly, 'will you let me warm myself awhile? I've been in the saddle since noon and am chilled to the marrow.'

The man, bending over a pile of neatly sawed and as neatly piled logs, from which the snow had evidently just been cleared, did not turn or raise his head, but jerked his thumb in the direction of the cabin door.

'Go inside,' he answered.

The traveller was used to, or expected, this brevity. He gave the mare's nose a friendly rub, drew her close to the shelter of the cabin wall, and then opened the door and went in. It was a two-roomed shack, the floor of hard earth, the furniture a table and some rude stools. Three or four shelves held the few utensils necessary to the most simplified housekeeping. All adornment was conspicuous by its absence. The windows, high in the wall, served to light the room, and on the sill of one rested a little kerosene lamp. But the hearth was wide and deep and filled with a blaze that sent a thrill of pleasure through the tired wanderer, while before it were stretched several splendid skins. The stranger went over to it, and sank on one of the stools beside it. The man from whom he asked hospitality entered in a few moments, laying a great armful of wood where one could reach it easily to replenish the fire. Then, in silence, he took the stool opposite his guest.

'I hope you'll excuse me,' began the latter, rather because he wished to enter into conversation than to make any apology. 'I am on my way to Clifton for the Christmas holidays, and it's no joke of a journey.'

'You've only about two miles more to go,' said the man.

'Oh, I know how far it is; I'll be able to push on as soon as I rest and warm up a bit.'

If he expected any reply to this he was disappointed. If he thought to wake the man into any semblance of cordiality, in this, too, he was disappointed. Michael Jordan's eyes rested somewhat curiously on his host. He received more than a usual share of deference from the world at large, but this was bare civility—and it was not pleasant.

'You know Miss Jordan, of Clifton?' he ventured now.

'Every one hereabouts knows Miss Jordan, of Clifton,' was the reply.

'And like her—that, of course.'

'She is the right kind,' answered the man; 'a fair-spoken woman.'

Michael Jordan smiled at this characterisation of his sister. It would amuse her mightily, he thought; for Helen Jordan was a power to be reckoned with in more circles than one, well-educated, clever, successful, whom some called a genius, and others merely lucky—one from whose keen brain and fertile pen had come much that was to be admired. She might have been the central star in a bright firmament had she chosen to make her home nearer the haunts of men, but she loved the mountains too well. She had hungered for them during her student days, and now that those days were ended, she preferred the quiet of her home, wherein, for her, was supreme