

## Friends at Court

### CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- March 21, Sunday.—Fourth Sunday in Lent.  
 „ 22, Monday.—St. Frigidian, Bishop and Confessor.  
 „ 23, Tuesday.—St. Benedict, Abbot.  
 „ 24, Wednesday.—The Five Wounds of Our Lord.  
 „ 25, Thursday.—The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.  
 „ 26, Friday.—The Most Precious Blood.  
 „ 27, Saturday.—St. Rupert, Bishop and Confessor.

St. Benedict, Abbot.

'The Patriarch of the Western Monks,' as St. Benedict is styled, was born in Central Italy about the year 480. Shocked at the dissolute conduct of his school companions, he retired, at the age of sixteen, to the mountains of Subiaco, where he lived for three years in a cavern practising well-nigh incredible austerities. The place of his retreat being discovered, so many disciples flocked to him that he was able to establish twelve monasteries in the neighborhood. The regulations which he drew up for the guidance of his monks form the basis of the rule of most religious orders. Leaving Subiaco in consequence of an unjust persecution, St. Benedict founded the celebrated abbey of Monte Cassino, where he died in 543.

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

'The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, and the virgin's name was Mary. . . . And the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus."'—(Gospel of St. Luke.)

### GRAINS OF GOLD

#### MY HOPE.

Seest thou yon lonely, silent tomb,  
 Where flowers bloom and children play?  
 I see, but ah, I have my hope  
 Not there, but far, far, far away!

Seest thou yon cloud of azure hue  
 On heaven's fair bosom sport and play?  
 I see, but ah, I have my hope  
 Not there, but far, far, far away!

Seest thou yon dome of silent sky,  
 Where sparkle stars of silver ray?  
 I see, but ah, I have my hope  
 Not there, but far, far, far away!

Nor mossy tomb, nor cloud, nor star,  
 My soul from Higher Love can stay,  
 For while God lives I have my hope  
 Not here, but far, far, far away!

—From the Spanish.

Gossip is a sort of smoke that comes from the dirty tobacco pipes of those who diffuse it; it proves nothing but the bad taste of the smoker.

Don't imagine you are the only person in the world who has annoyances. There is so much trouble in the world that there is plenty to go around.

Religious indifference on the part of many may be traced to the lukewarmness of those who profess the Faith but are cold and careless in the practice of it. The careless Catholic is, indeed, a stumbling block to many who might have some spirit of religion, and which would increase with time if his Catholic friend or neighbor would only have the fervor and piety that his Faith supposes and imperatively demands. There are, unfortunately, too many that are Catholics only in name. It is unfortunate for mankind that there are so many in the world who have no religion, for they give to life a coldness and gloom that make it at times trying and almost unbearable. It is in fact the reason for most of the suicides that occur. Men have nobody outside of themselves to look to, hence they despair. They have no life, only this disappointing one to live, so they end it. If men would only be reasonable and acknowledge a God infinitely good and merciful Who created them, and Who desires one day to bring them to Himself never to be separated from Him, they would be buoyed up 'midst life's struggles and disappointments, and no matter how much they would know of suffering, they still would have hope and, like Job, would exclaim: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

## The Storyteller

### A STRING OF PEARLS

A year ago, August and Lotte had been an engaged couple, with at last—at long last—their marriage-day in prospect. They had been so long engaged that it seemed a strange and wonderful thing to think of being married.

August would have given up in despair long ago, would have settled down to a miserable life of teaching the piano to young ladies in schools for a miserable pittance, if Lotte had not been at his elbow to inspire and uplift him.

'Ah, that is good!' she would say, all her soft face ashine as she listened to his music. 'That is good! There must be some to have ears for such music. Courage, August! The day will come for thee and me. Such a musician as thou art, my August, can not remain hidden and in obscurity. Thou wilt come to thine own one day, and soon.'

A year ago they had married, because a very small prosperity had come to them. August had had two or three songs accepted—not of his best, and Lotte had unexpectedly come upon an old friend, a professor of the Academy of Music, under whom she had worked a year or two at the violin. He had procured her some engagements to play at concerts and private houses. On the strength of the achievement and the hope, they married.

They had married just before Advent. A few weeks later, both being freer than usual because of the closing of schools, they took a walk through the glittering streets to see the Christmas shops. They were exquisitely happy being together; and they had found out that there were so many delightful treats to be enjoyed in London for so very little money, or no money at all. They had, indeed, known that for a long time; but it was another matter when, after a concert or a picture-gallery, or a walk in the Park or down Regent street, they had to go their separate ways, instead of going home together.

It was exquisite. Lotte thought, pressing August's arm against her side, to be going home, after the sight-seeing and the engagements, together to the little room and the little fire and the little meal, over which there would be such happy laughter, each insisting upon the other's sitting still and being waited on, till the dispute should end in the two preparing and serving the meal, and washing up the dishes afterward.

Well, on that far-away, exquisite afternoon of December, with the light haze in the air, and the touch of scarlet in the smoky sky above the high houses, and all the electric lights sparkling like so many jewels, and the happy, present-giving people skurrying from shop to shop, a wonderful thing had happened.

August had pulled up in front of a jeweller's window. 'Thou art to have a Christmas present, Lotte,' he said, 'for which I shall pay the sum of two whole pounds. Ask me not if I can spare it. I have it here'—he slapped his pocket proudly—and it is for thy present. Not for anything useful nor prudent, little Lotte. A present thou shalt have, so seek not to turn me from my purpose.'

All in a happy tremor, Lotte scanned the glittering windows. She had always been prudent, always tried to look at every penny before spending it; but the recklessness was only the sweeter because of that. It was good for once to be reckless, and August—her dear August, her handsome, gifted husband and lover—was laughing like a boy as they scanned the beautiful things in the shop window, playing at being rich people, and considering whether a diamond and sapphire bracelet or a diamond and emerald tiara would be more suitable to Lotte's needs and desires.

At last they went in without having decided upon anything. The shop was in two parts—one with barred windows, behind which the precious things blazed in their cases; the other showing only pretty, trumpery things, which Lotte thought every whit as lovely as the others. August and Lotte went into the cheap part, which was crowded with customers, two and three deep in front of the counter, and the tired-looking, hurry-skurrying assistants.

In time August got some one to attend to him—a bewildered-looking, freckled youth, plainly put on for the Christmas pressure. He set before them tray after tray of brooches and rings and such things, all so pretty that Lotte found it more and more difficult to choose.

Suddenly August caught sight of something in a case on the shelf behind the assistant—a pearl necklace which seemed to shine with a soft moving light in the obscurity. Of course, it was imitation, but how excellently done! He pointed it out to the assistant, who took it up in a tired way and dropped it into his hand. He and Lotte bent