

Friends at Court.

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

(Written for the N.Z. TABLET.)

January 21, Sunday.—Third after Epiphany. Feast of St. Agnes.
 " 22, Monday.—SS. Vincent and Anastasius, Martyrs.
 " 23, Tuesday.—Espousals of the B.V. Mary.
 " 24, Wednesday.—St. Timothy, Bishop and Martyr.
 " 25, Thursday.—Conversion of St. Paul.
 " 26, Friday.—St. Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr.
 " 27, Saturday.—St. John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doctor.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

The great apostle of the Gentiles, who carried the glad tidings of redemption to so many nations, and who joyfully underwent so many sufferings and afflictions for the love of Jesus, was once the deadly enemy of the Christian name. The glorious miracle of God's power and goodness by which he was transformed in a moment from a wolf into a lamb, from a furious persecutor of the faithful into a meek and zealous apostle, is celebrated in the Church by a special festival. Born at Tarsus, in Cilicia, of Jewish parents, and brought up at Jerusalem in the fanatical principles of the Pharisees, Saul, as he was then named, grew up in an intense hatred of the doctrines taught by Jesus and promulgated to the world by His apostles. The zealous and successful preaching of St. Stephen aroused his special indignation, and when that holy martyr was dragged away from the tribunal to be stoned as a blasphemer, Saul accompanied the crowd to witness the execution. He even consented to have a share in it by taking charge of the garments of those who cast the stones, 'and thus,' says St. Augustine, 'he stoned him by the hands of others.' But at the same moment the voice of the innocent victim was heard before the mercy seat of God pleading for his murderers: 'O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' And his prayer was heard in favour of the blinded Pharisee. But the moment of grace for Saul had not yet arrived. After the martyrdom of Stephen a violent persecution was raised against the faithful, in which Saul signalled himself above others. By virtue of the power which he received from the high priest, he dragged the Christians from their houses, loaded them with chains, and thrust them into prison. He caused them to be scourged in the synagogues, and endeavoured by torments to compel them to blaspheme the name of Jesus. Not yet satisfied, he applied for a commission from the high priest to take up all the Jews at Damascus who confessed Jesus Christ, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. Having obtained the requisite powers he set out with a number of attendants, and had almost arrived at his journey's end, when about noon he and his companions were suddenly surrounded by a great light brighter than the sun. Being struck with terror they fell to the ground, when a voice was heard by all, though understood only by Saul, which said, 'Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me?' Christ did not say, 'Why dost thou persecute my disciples,' but 'Me,' for it is He, their Head, who is chiefly persecuted in His servants. Saul answered, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' To which Christ replied, 'Jesus of Nazareth Whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad, in other words, to contend with One so much more mighty than thyself, and thus only to wound and hurt thyself.' Trembling with awe, and at the same time moved by a powerful interior grace, Saul cried out, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' To which Jesus replied, 'Arise and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do.' Whereupon Saul rose from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he found himself unable to see. His attendants accordingly took him by the hand and led him into Damascus, where he remained for three days blind, and without eating or drinking.

Transformed by the grace of God into a new man, Saul now bewailed his past blindness in the bitterness of his soul, and offered himself without reserve for the accomplishment of the Divine Will. At the end of three days, our Blessed Lord, Who is accustomed for the greater exercise of our humility to complete by the ministry of others the work begun in us by the operation of His grace, appeared in a vision to a Christian named Ananias and called him saying, 'Ananias,' to which he replied, 'Behold, I am here, Lord!' Whereupon Christ said to him, 'Arise and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus. For behold he prayeth.' Ananias answered in his simplicity, 'Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke Thy Name.' To this Christ replied, 'Go thy way, for this man is to Me a vessel of election to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake.'

'And Ananias,' continues the sacred writer, 'went his way, and entered into the house, and laying his hands upon him, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.' And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales, and he received his sight, and rising up he was baptised. And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples that were at Damascus for some days. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the son of God. And all that heard him were amazed, and said, 'Is not this he who persecuted in Jerusalem those that called upon this Name, and came hither for that intent that he might carry them bound to the chief priests? But Saul increased much more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, affirming that this is the Christ.'

VICTORIA INSURANCE COMPANY,

LIMITED.

ESTABLISHED 1849.

Local Director, J. T. WRIGHT Esq. (Messrs. Wright, Stephenson and Co.)

This Old-Established Company accepts

FIRE RISKS on buildings and Contents of every description, also on grain in field.

MARINE RISKS on Wool from sheep's back to London, and on goods shipped coastwise or to any port in the world.

GUARANTEE RISKS Insuring the fidelity of persons in positions of trust.

BRANCHES AND AGENCIES THROUGHOUT THE COLONY
 Further information to be had from any of the Company's Representatives.

Head Offices for New Zealand NO. 5 BOND STREET

JAMES EDGAR,

Manager for New Zealand.

STEAM ARTESIAN WELL SINKER

House and Sanitary Plumber. Hot and Cold Water Services. Founder and General Engineer. Maker of the Celebrated Titan Steel Windmill. Creamery and Butter Factory Machinery. Contractor to the Central Dairy Company. Pumps, Pipes, Rams, Gasfittings, etc., etc., fixed at Lowest Rates. Estimates and Plans on Application.

THOMAS DANKS,

Providence Works, Lichfield street, Christchurch, N.Z.

THE LATEST PAMPHLET TO READ.

"The Church and Commerce, Industry, Sciences, and Arts,"

Illustrating in a striking and most interesting manner that the Catholic Church has at all times been the mother of all the factors of true civilisation.

Written by the VERY REV. FATHER LE MENANT DES CHESNAIS, S.M., V.G. Price - 6d.

We have also a number of

"OUT OF THE MAZE,"

by the same author. Price - 6d.

Copies may be had by sending postal notes or stamps to

J. MURRAY, TABLET Office.

CITY HOTEL, DUNEDIN.



Having LEASED my HOTEL to Messrs. J. J. CONNOR and J. T. HARRIS, I have to THANK the PATRONS of the 'City' for their LIBERAL PATRONAGE; and in bespeaking a Continuance of the same for my successors I feel quite satisfied that the reputation the Hotel has enjoyed will be fully maintained under their Management.

J. F. NIXON

WITH reference to the above, we feel that it is hardly necessary to assure our Friends and the Patrons of the 'City' that no effort will be spared on our part to merit the Patronage so liberally bestowed on our esteemed predecessor.

J. J. CONNOR,

J. T. HARRIS,

Proprietors

TWO WELLERS TOBACCO

Made from Extra Choice MATURED SUN-CURED LEAF. Gives a pleasant, cool smoke. Try it and it will give you satisfaction

NOONDAY OIL
 BRIGHT, CLEAR, STEADY LIGHT.

Insist upon having NOONDAY.

BEST Value in CHRISTCHURCH for MANTLES MILLINERY, DRESSING, Etc.

BEATH AND CO.