

# VICTORIA INSURANCE COMPANY,

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Manager for New Zealand.

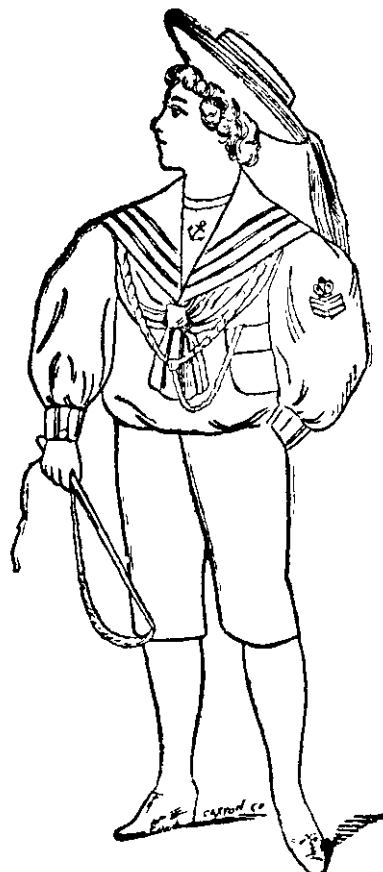
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GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

(Written for the N.Z. TABLET.)

January 28, Sunday.—Fourth after Epiphany.  
" 29, Monday.—St. Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor.  
" 30, Tuesday.—St. Martina, Virgin and Martyr.  
" 31, Wednesday.—St. Peter Nolasco.  
February 1, Thursday.—St. Bridget, Patroness of Ireland.  
" 2, Friday.—Purification of the B.V. Mary  
" 3, Saturday.—St. Lawrence, Bishop.

PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

The prophets had announced that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. And so it came to pass. They had predicted that He would come to His temple and there offer Himself to His heavenly Father in place of the ancient sacrifices. On this day Christ accomplished that which the prophets had announced. He came forth from Bethlehem in the arms of His blessed mother and entered His temple in Jerusalem. One of the obligations imposed upon parents by the Mosaic Law was to present and consecrate to God the first-born son, for in the person of the eldest the rest were offered to Him to whom all belong. But this rite had for the Jews a special signification. When God in a single night destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians, He spared those of the Israelites. And henceforth He enjoined that, as a remembrance of His mercy, parents should possess no right over their first-born sons until they had redeemed them by the payment of a certain sum of money prescribed in the law. Let us learn from the example of Jesus and Mary to seek no excuse to exempt ourselves from the observance of the precepts of the Church. Jesus, being himself the Lawgiver, was above the law, but he sought only to accomplish His Father's will. Our Lady, too, by the very terms of the law, was exempt from its burthen, for there was no defilement in her pure conception of the Son of the Most High or in her miraculous delivery. But both Jesus and His mother wished to give us an example of profound humility and obedience to the laws of the Church, which are the laws of God Himself. 'And behold,' continues the Evangelist, 'there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when his parents brought in the child Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he also took Him into his arms and blessed God and said: Now dost Thou dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace, because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.'

'And His father and mother were wondering,' continues St. Luke, 'at those things which were spoken concerning Him.' Why this wonder? For they were already acquainted with the sublime Mystery of the Incarnation, and, though the angel had not spoken to them of the vocation of the Gentiles but had simply said that the Lord God would give to the Child the throne of David His Father, we cannot suppose that they, who were so supernaturally enlightened and who had beheld the first fruits of the Gentiles in the adoration of the Magi, were ignorant of the mystery of their vocation. But that this should be revealed to Simeon and published in the temple, was in itself a great subject of admiration. The souls of the holy spouses were filled with reverence and awe, and they silently glorified God for His wonderful designs for the redemption of sinful man.

'And Simeon,' says the Evangelist, 'blessed them, and said to Mary, His mother, "Behold this child is set for the fall and resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."'

Behold fresh causes of wonder and pious meditations for Mary! The Son of the Most High, Who is to come to save His people, will be an occasion of ruin to many in Israel! That sweet babe, up to this time praised and blessed by angels and by men, adored by the shepherds and the kings, is to become a sign or mark set up for contradiction of every kind, and that so violent as to pierce the soul of His Virgin Mother with a sword of sorrow and expose to view the secrets of many hearts, manifesting who is really good and pious, and who those are that have but the outward appearance and semblance of virtue.

ST. LAWRENCE, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Among the first companions of St. Augustine when he came, A.D. 597 to preach the Faith to the barbarous Anglo-Saxons, and among those who were afterwards sent from Rome to assist him in his mission, were several holy men who became the first Bishops of the English Church and are now canonised saints. Such were St. Mellitus of London, St. Justus of Rochester, St. Paulinus of York, and St. Lawrence the Second, Archbishop of Canterbury and the immediate successor of St. Augustine. After the baptism of King Ethelbert of Kent along with a number of his subjects, St. Augustine wrote to inform the Pope of the happy fruits of his mission. It was to St. Lawrence, one of the first band of monks who had accompanied him from the monastery of St. Andrew, that he entrusted this important business. St. Gregory received him with great kindness and was filled with joy at the receipt of the good tidings that another nation had been gathered to the fold of Christ. St. Augustine before his death consecrated Lawrence as his successor.

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