

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- March 19, Sunday.—Third Sunday in Lent. St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church.
 „ 20, Monday.—St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor.
 „ 21, Tuesday.—St. Benedict, Abbot.
 „ 22, Wednesday.—St. Frigidian, Bishop and Confessor.
 „ 23, Thursday.—The Holy Winding Sheet of Our Lord.
 „ 24, Friday.—Commemoration of the Five Wounds of Our Lord.
 „ 25, Saturday.—The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor.

Born at Jerusalem, St. Cyril became Bishop of the See about the year 350. He suffered much from the violence of the Arian heretics, who twice succeeded in driving him into exile. He died in 386.

Commemoration of the Five Wounds of Our Lord.

‘He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed’ (Isaias).

Feast of 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

JESUS, MIGHTY LOVER.

Jesus, mighty Lover,
 Victor all sublime,
 Bright Thine armies cover
 All the coasts of Time!
 Lords of earthly empery
 Rule not, nor are loved like Thee.

Throngs of martyrs dying
 In Thy dearest name,
 For the tortures sighing,
 Flying to the flame—
 Prove the fire’s most fierce excess
 Than their eager love is less.

Hosts of virgins, living
 Angel lives for Thee,
 Rich in utter giving,
 In Thy bonds most free,
 Join Thy sinless choirs above
 In their ecstasies of love.

Jesus, patient Lover,
 Bid us love Thee more;
 All Thy charms discover,
 All Thy grace outpour,
 Till our utmost heart’s desires
 Kindle with Thy love’s sweet fires!

—*Ave Maria.*

The Church has a fascination men cannot escape. They love her or hate her according to the spirit that moves them. They praise or they revile her, but they cannot keep silence about her. The modern world can ignore anything rather than the Catholic Church. This it knows to be a living power, the only power it fears.

Let each of us be diligent in offering thanks to God for the individual blessings we have received, and then we may hope to be more abundantly refreshed at the Fountain of Grace, for the prayer of thanksgiving is a heavenly stream that flows into the ocean of divine love and returns to us again in showers of benediction.—Cardinal Gibbons.

Faith is not a dream—an inlet from the real world into shadow-land; but the very gate of reality. As it is something deeper than sense, subtler than fancy, keener than intuition, wider than reason, it plunges farther than these four powers of mind into the things that meet our sight or our insight. It is a two-edged sword cleaving through phenomena or the things we see and touch, to the very frontiers of soul and spirit, and therefore rejoicing the truer reality. For reality is not with the things of the world which are seen and pass away, but with those inner unseen abiding forces that give the world of fact and phenomena its worth and strength and coherence, changing it from a pastime or a puzzle into a song of creation. Faith is the ‘Te Deum’ of Time chanting to the Eternal.

The Storyteller

THE STUFF OF HEROES

Above the steady grinding of wheels through sand and the straining creak of harness taxed almost to the breaking point, rose the voice of Ezra Butters, teamster of the first blue-bodied waggon of the long train.

Oh, Beulah Land, sweet Beulah Land,
 As on thy highest mount I stand!

There was no variation in Butters’ selection. Two members of the cavalry escort, who had been relegated by fate to a position in waggons two hundred yards distant from Butters’, estimated that Ezra had sung that particular Gospel hymn every quarter of a mile for thirty miles. They were tired of the racket, and, had it not been for the fact that an army needs teamsters for various purposes, they would probably have shot Ezra while he sang, both of them being short of ethical scruples.

Even Lieutenant Cadman, in the advance party, could hear the hoarse voice and was annoyed. ‘Why is it,’ he asked of Stevens, his second in command, ‘that there is always something offensive about a teamster?’ They invariably sing or do something equally bad.

‘Probably,’ suggested Stevens sagely, ‘because the teamsters as a rule are such an exquisitely rum lot of beings.’

‘I know it,’ agreed Cadman. ‘They are a worthless lot. They can drive horses, grease axles, and that sort of thing. As long as you keep them far enough from the firing line, they are all very well, but let one bullet whistle overhead, and they are cutting the traces and getting away, leaving the waggons where they stand.’

‘Never yet,’ supplemented Stevens, ‘have I known one to be equal to an emergency—outside the four sides of his waggon.’

Butters did not look like a man who would deliberately sing Gospel hymns, nor did his attitude express any degree of devoutness. He lolled at ease on the hard seat of the waggon, his long legs hanging down over the low dashboard, his felt hat pushed on the back of his head. The sweat rolled down his cheeks and matted his long unkempt moustache. From time to time he struck the plodding horses mercilessly with his long whip, accompanying the act with much profanity. The horses, worn by long miles of plodding, almost crazed by the steady, burning heat, were incapable of any greater effort and only quivered under the strokes of the lash.

On every side of him stretched interminable reaches of yellow sand, with the little blue dots of the cavalry escort pricked out against the yellow sky line. Behind Butters’ waggon the others extended across the waste in a long line, like a gigantic snake. Sprawled out in an effort at ease on the blue boxes of ammunition in the waggon, back of Butters, lay a trooper whose horse had gone hopelessly lame earlier in the day. Ezra had attempted to engage this man in conversation, but he had proved taciturn. Wearily the teamster’s eye roved about the hideously monotonous landscape; not a feature of it changed. The cavalry escort was always just as far away, the next waggon just as far behind. The chances of the speech which Butters craved were as remote as ever.

‘Oh, Beulah Land—’ he commenced.

The trooper behind him rolled over on the boxes with a groan of misery. ‘If you start that again,’ he warned, ‘I’m going to throw you into the desert.’

Butters stared at him weakly. ‘All right,’ he said. ‘I won’t; but if you was to whistle a bit, I dunno’s I’d mind.’

‘Why in blazes should I whistle?’ demanded the trooper angrily. ‘There is no reason for it.’

‘Wells,’ explained Butters, ‘I’ve heard the same sounds now for three days, an’ I’d like a change.’

The trooper grunted and rolled back on to the boxes. Butters looked at him longingly, but the man seemed to have passed again into the state of absolute quiet which he had maintained for hours. Again Butters’ eye wheeled around the glaring circle of the horizon in search of something different—and failed to find it. He was on the point of singing again when he recalled the trooper’s threat. A glance at the angles of the man’s chin did away with the thought of the possible emptiness of the words. Ezra considered calling out in his lonely misery to the man on the next wagon, only to remember that he was as deaf as a post. He looked appealingly at the prostrate cavalryman. The man’s eyes were open. Butters whipped his horses, swore forcibly, relapsed into silence for five interminable minutes, and then said over his shoulder:

‘Was you ever in Three Rivers, Michigan?’

‘No,’ answered the man, drowsily. ‘Why?’

To Butters that single interrogation was worth everything. It meant a break in the monotony—a chance for speech. He crossed his legs and thrust an empty pipe between his teeth to increase his feeling of comfort.

‘Well, sir,’ he said importantly, ‘I lived there. The finest little town you ever saw.’

He waited breathlessly for the trooper to answer. He did not, but he neither closed his eyes nor ordered silence, and Ezra took heart.