

Friends at Court

CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

March 26, Sunday.—Fourth Sunday in Lent.
 „ 27, Monday.—St. Rupert, Bishop and Confessor.
 „ 28, Tuesday.—St. Sixtus III., Pope and Confessor.
 „ 29, Wednesday.—St. John Damascene, Confessor and Doctor.
 „ 30, Thursday.—St. John Capistran, Confessor.
 „ 31, Friday.—Feast of the Most Precious Blood.
 April 1, Saturday.—St. Gregory I., Pope and Confessor, and Doctor.

St. Rupert, Bishop and Confessor.

St. Rupert, a Frenchman, illustrious for his noble birth, but still more so for his many virtues, was Bishop of Salzburg, in Bavaria, the inhabitants of which country he had converted to the true faith. He died about the beginning of the seventh century.

Feast of the Most Precious Blood.

This is one of the many feasts by which the Church endeavors to recall to our grateful remembrance the sufferings of Christ for our redemption.

St. Gregory the Great, Pope, Confessor, and Doctor.

St. Gregory was born in Rome about the year 540. In 590 he endeavored in vain to decline the dignity of Supreme Pontiff, to which he was elected on the death of Pelagius II. In the calamities which befell Italy in consequence of the invasion of the Lombards, St. Gregory showed himself a father to all in distress. He was most successful in maintaining the purity of Catholic doctrine in some of the countries where heresies had arisen. In 597 he sent a number of monks, with St. Austin at their head, to preach the Gospel in England. He died in 604, having by his eminent holiness, great erudition, and illustrious achievements earned for himself the title of 'The Great.'

GRAINS OF GOLD

A PRAYER.

List to my prayer, Oh, Father!
 Be Thou my strength and guide,
 In Life's unending battle
 Be ever by my side.

Guide my faltering footsteps
 On Life's uncertain path;
 Oh, Almighty Father!
 Spare me from Thy wrath.

Fill me with strength, for I need it,
 Help me to work and to pray;
 Be with me, Oh, my Father!
 Unto my dying day.

Help me when nights are lonely,
 Help me when days are gray;
 Oh, Omnipotent Father!
 Be Thou my strength and stay.

Guide me safe through the struggle,
 And when the fighting is done,
 Take Thou my soul in keeping,
 In the name of Jesus, Thy Son.

Christianity in a nutshell is simply 'Love thy God; love thy neighbor.' We can only prove that we love God by loving our neighbor. While we are commanded to fear God, I maintain that love is the most important motive force in Christianity. The great difference in religion is that while the pagan feared and worshipped his gods, he did not love them. They were too far away and too vague. Christ, on the other hand, not only loves and came to save the world, but He loves every man and every woman individually—He loves each of you just as if you were the only person in the world.—Cardinal Gibbons.

All of us at times are afflicted more or less with the feeling that we have accomplished much less in the world than we might have accomplished had we tried harder. We have done nothing to attract the attention of mankind; we are filling, day by day, positions as humble as they are apparently unimportant; we have looked constantly, daily, hourly, for some great work or noble opportunity for brilliant service, and it has not come; we feel that we are almost failures. And yet, if we have not attracted the attention of the world, we have at least, by our care in doing our duty, led the man who has the desk next to us to do his, when otherwise he would probably have failed. Our positions may be humble, but in them we are like pieces of the mechanism of a great machine. If we were not there and did not do our part, then the work of the machine would be imperfect. No man need be termed an absolute failure this side of the grave.

The Storyteller

CRONIN'S DAUGHTER

It was a still, clear, cold night in the heart of the Maine woods. Mary Cronin drew her frayed shawl closely over her head and shoulders as she closed the door softly and stepped out into the night. She was very tired, for the day's work had been hard, and her invalid mother had needed more care than usual.

The dishes had been washed and the table re-set for breakfast, the pail had been filled at the ice-encircled spring on the mountain road, her mother's gruel had been made, her bed smoothed up, and Mary had sung one tune after another, as she held her mother's wasted hand, till sleep came to the sufferer.

The girl stood motionless on the door-stone, and looked eagerly at all the works. Through the windows and doors of the casting-room, which were open this December night, a fiery gleam shone from the red-hot iron running through the moulds. Now and then came a sharp explosion, with a superb play of fireworks around the mouth of the furnace.

The violet, orange, green, and crimson stars did not attract Mary's attention. It was an old story to her, and her heart was too heavy for her eyes to see any beauty in it. She looked above the casting-room up the high brick chimney to the top-house, which was perched on an immense staging just at the mouth of the chimney.

Her father was there—for it was his night on—and he had been drinking when he came home to supper. Fortunately her mother was asleep, and had been spared cruel anxiety. Mary's heart stood still as her father took his lunch can, without his usual kiss or the 'Good-night, Molly; take good care of your mother,' which made her happy every night. He had stumbled over the rag mat, and uttered a curse under his breath. He never did this unless he had been drinking heavily.

Poor John Cronin! His appetite for liquor and his weak will had caused him to drift from one workshop to another, from city to city, and from State to State, carrying with him his wife and only child. The factory quarters of St. Louis, Pittsburg, Newark, and other manufacturing centres are woefully alike, and had it not been for her mother's stories, Mary—the little girl—would have believed the whole world paved and cut into narrow, dirty streets, with a streak of sooty sky above, crossed with clothes-lines.

Her mother came from the Catskill Mountain region, and her nature revolted at the wretched places they had called home. The sunny old brick farmhouse, built in the Dutch way, the fertile fields and crowded barnyard, grandmother's flower garden across the road, the mountains framing the little vale, the peace, the cleanliness, the stability—Mary knew them all through her mother's words and sighs and tears.

A great resolve had crept into the child's heart to try and reproduce that peaceful life. 'To be respectable and stay in one place' was what she lived for. If only her father would not drink.

There came a day to the child when she began to see her way clear. A letter arrived from a man with whom her father had worked before his marriage, in a Penobscot logging-camp. He wrote of an opening for a family at the Katahdin Iron Works, in Maine—fair wages and a comfortable home were ready.

When John Cronin read the letter all his old love for the woods came back to him. He could feel the cold steel of the gun-barrel and the supple rod bend in his hand. Before long the money was got together which carried the family from Boston to Bangor, and from there to the works, sixty miles north.

Six months had gone—every day brought new beauties to Katahdin. Now and then the child left the works, with its black, unsightly buildings, long row of charcoal houses, heaps of purple-tinted slag, the refuse of the iron, and acres of dead trees from the sulphur fumes, and explored Pleasant river, leaping from one flat stone to another, and gathering in the cardinal flowers along the bank. She wandered beside Silver Lake, which reflected old Saddleback Mountain upon its polished surface. Her mother would not let her venture far. Two fierce bear cubs in their cages at the hotel told what the woods contained.

Under Mrs. Cronin's touch the plain wooden cottage grew into a home. There were a few pretty pictures and ornaments she had brought with her—the remainder of better days—and Mary helped to arrange them in the bare living-room. The curtains of the windows were coarse but white, and the new stove shone resplendent with its silver-plated ornamentation and lettering.

'The Star of the East, Bangor Maine,' Mary read on the oven door many times a day.

'Mother,' she said, holding her stove-rag in her hand as she knelt before the range, 'I always give the name an extra polish, for it seems to mean so much to us. This is our first real home. Nobody under us and nobody over us, and such heaps of room all round.'

Mary's intense delight in all she saw, and the deep gratitude she expressed for all that was done for her, made everyone anxious to give her pleasure. She was thoughtful and unselfish, and the whole settlement learned to love 'Cronin's Daughter.'