

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

December 17, Sunday.—Third Sunday in Advent.
 „ 18, Monday.—Expectation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
 „ 19, Tuesday.—Blessed Urban V., Pope and Confessor.
 „ 20, Wednesday.—St. Josaphat, Bishop and Martyr. Ember Day.
 „ 21, Thursday.—St. Thomas, Apostle.
 „ 22, Friday.—St. Deusdedit, Pope and Confessor. Ember Day.
 „ 23, Saturday.—St. Columbanus, Abbot. Ember Day.

Expectation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As we approach more nearly to the great feast of the Nativity, the Church redoubles her exhortations to prepare in a worthy manner for its celebration. To-day she urges us to join in the longing desires and fervent aspirations with which the Blessed Virgin hailed the approach of the happy day when she was to hold in her arms the Incarnate Son of God.

Blessed Urban V., Pope and Confessor.

Before his elevation to the Papacy, Blessed Urban was abbot of the monastery of St. Victor, near Marseilles, and as Pope he cultivated the same qualities which had distinguished him as monk. His virtues were in striking contrast with the corruption of the times in which he lived, and would have done honor to a better age. His pontificate lasted from 1362 to 1370.

St. Josaphat, Bishop and Martyr.

St. Josaphat, a native of Poland, displayed, while still in his boyhood, such piety and fraternal charity as to excite the admiration of all who knew him. After having been or some years a monk of the Order of St. Basil, he was raised to the dignity of Archbishop. The zeal and success with which he preserved his flock from heresy and schism drew upon him the hatred of some sectarians, who compassed his death in 1623.

GRAINS OF GOLD

THE GOLD OF GOD.

Give o'er your search, ye seekers! Ye are vain:
 Pure gold gleams but above,
 The riches that ye view with chill disdain,
 The Gold of God—His love.

Nor toils endure, but lift the lowly heart;
 Wring not the stubborn clod;
 Lo! in a land from death and pain apart
 Ye'll find the Gold of God.

Rev. W. Hendrix, S.J., in the *Ave Maria*.

Sincerity is to speak as we think, to do as we pretend and profess, to perform and make good that which we promise, and really to be what we pretend to be.

There are many roads through life; there is only one road that the wise person will take and keep. That one is the road to righteousness. And righteousness in terms of man's existence in this world, is right living, right thinking, right doing.

If we must know the right in order to do it, it is equally needful that we do it in order to know it. The habit of prompt and unquestioning obedience to whatever appeals to us as duty, puts us into the very best condition for learning more and higher truth.

Envy is rather a dangerous disease, for sometimes it develops into a secret feeling of rancor. Why give so much homage to wealth, power, influence, and luxuries? They are nothing compared with tranquil hours and a sweet little home furnished with harmony and joy. Moreover, envy gets you nothing but misery, of which nearly everyone has a sufficient supply.

The Storyteller

THE TOY AND THE PROPHET

From out the chaos of muddy waggons, shouting circus-hands, and lathered, straining mules, came Killeen's voice, high-pitched and angry. There was an electric crackle in it as if the lightning-flash had parted the lowering clouds that overhung the city.

Grayson!

Grayson lifted his head with a dull start. His eyes, under their heavy black brows, seemed to reach across the mud-coated field and clench hard with the chief's. There was a light of sullen defiance in them, discernible even at that distance, which goaded Killeen to instant fury.

'Can't you see you're wanted, man!' he bel-lowed. 'Bring that elephant over here, and push us out of this mud-hole!'

Grayson's jaws set, and for a moment he did not move. Then he buttoned his coat tightly over his broad chest, and turned quickly to the big elephant standing at his side. With a firm but gentle hand on the animal's trunk, he led him through the sand and water to the imbedded waggon.

'Put him at it here!' growled Killeen, jerking his muddled sleeve away from the waggon-axle.

The man did not once raise his eyes to the thin, arrogant figure of the manager towering above him. He guided the half-blind elephant's trunk to the designated place and, with a low-spoken word or two of encouragement, struck the animal with the prod in his hand. Rajah's mammoth head raised, and the imprisoned wheel came slowly up out of the ooze.

'That'll do,' said the manager. 'And next time don't be so delicate with your good-for-nothing beast!' he added.

The man shut his teeth without retort. Killeen had remounted his horse, and the circus moved slowly towards the smoke-curtained city.

Grayson splashed doggedly along beside the elephant, his coarse clothing mud-spattered even up to the battered slouch hat that he wore. Killeen's treatment meant nothing to him. He had ceased even to curse with his fellow-toilers the disheartening combination of foul weather and the lack of money which was bringing ruin upon the show. It was with the crippled, half-blind elephant, ploughing painfully on through the mud, that the hopes and fears of Grayson rested.

The accident had occurred on the night, weeks before, when the circus-cars, in a nasty fog, had crashed into a stationary engine. Grayson thrown from his berth by the shock, had rushed to the front of the train where the overturned and broken animal-car was slowly beginning to burn in the debris. At the risk of his life, amidst the chaos of panic-stricken animals, he had worked like a maniac to save what he could.

It was Rajah he had assisted last—Rajah, blinded by hot steam and cinders, with a big, ironed timber across him that bit half a foot into the flesh of one leg. Nursed and watched over by Grayson, however, the elephant had lived but there was no hope that he would ever again take his old place in the ring. Half-blind, and limping painfully on the disabled leg, his active career was over.

But the loyalty of his keeper never faltered. Rather, it began to grow and ripen from that day forth. Grayson's trainership in years numbered just those that had slipped by since, as a lad of twenty-one, he had entered into the work. Rajah had come to him last, and it was with Rajah that he had shared fortune and misfortune during these latter seasons.

In many ways, and as far as animal can go with human, the two had nothing left to them but each other. It had been more of a partnership than the man had realised, until the accident struck its crushing blow at Rajah's usefulness. Yet even now, as he led the elephant across the fields to the 'lot,' with his watchful, faithful eyes upon the animal's progress, there was no thought of desertion in Grayson's heart.