

Friends at Court

CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- April 6, Sunday.—Second Sunday after Easter.
 „ 7, Monday.—St. Celestine I., Pope and Confessor.
 „ 8, Tuesday.—Of the Feria.
 „ 9, Wednesday.—Of the Feria.
 „ 10, Thursday.—Of the Feria.
 „ 11, Friday.—St. Leo I., Pope, Confessor, and Doctor.
 „ 12, Saturday.—St. Julius I., Pope and Confessor.

St. Celestine I., Pope and Confessor.

St. Celestine I. was successor to St. Boniface I., and occupied the Papal throne from 422 to 432. He was noted for his zeal in suppressing Pelagianism, and confirmed the decrees of the General Council of Ephesus and the sentence of deposition pronounced by that body against Nestorius. This Pope sent St. Palladius and St. Patrick to convert the Scots and Irish.

St. Julius I., Pope and Confessor.

St. Julius was Pope from 337 to 352. During the violent struggle with Arianism, St. Julius was the strenuous champion of the Nicene faith, and the constant defender of St. Athanasius and other orthodox bishops oppressed by the heretics. The bishops whom the Eusebians had unjustly deposed, were reinstated by St. Julius, by virtue of the prerogative of the Roman See. With the concurrence of the two Emperors, Constans and Constantius, he, in 343, summoned the great Council of Sardica.

GRAINS OF GOLD

MOTHER MOST CHASTE.

O gracious princess of the heavenly courts,
 The poet's pen, the painter's glowing brush,
 Their loftiest inspiration find in thee
 To whom the highest place, save one, is given
 'Mongst heavenly thrones. And men who ponder deep
 Must feel the grandeur of the pure soul depths,
 Of her the gentle maid of Nazareth—
 The Mother who could call her God her Son.
 Alas! that men there be rejecting still
 Aught to her honor. She whom the Most High
 Was pleased to honor. O most blessed one,
 Before whom angels knelt and murmured, 'Hail!'
 Plead till the world grown weary of the night,
 Weary of fruitless groping for the light,
 Sobs at last, 'O Mother, lead us home.'

There is nothing so undignified as anger.

A noble aim faithfully kept is a noble deed.

Better a little well kept than a great deal forgotten.

Self-sacrifice is the law of man's life and development.

We must do the thing we must, before the thing we may.

Better die outright than be all one's life long in terror.

They who wait no gifts from chance have conquered Fate.

Don't judge the value of a book from the beauty of its cover.

In the reward they share a part alone who to the end can endure.

Every thought which genius and piety can throw into the world alters the world.

If there be no enemy, no fight; if no fight, no victory; if no victory, no crown.

The course of life is fixed, and nature admits of its being run but in one way, and only once.

Where we love much we always forgive, for we ourselves are nothing, and what we love is all.

The pity which is not born from experience is always cold. It cannot help being so, it does not understand.

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

(A Weekly Instruction specially written for the *N.Z. Tablet* by 'GHIMEL'.)

THE DATE OF EASTER

The following article is written in answer to a correspondent, who is anxious to know why the time for the celebration of Easter varies from year to year:—

The chief reason is to be found in the connection of the Christian festival with the Jewish Passover, and its consequent dependence on the Jewish Calendar. The Passover commenced on the 15th day of Nisan, but that day might fall in March or April. To explain: 'The Jewish year was a variable lunar year, i.e. it consisted of twelve months, each of which began with the new moon, the full moon consequently falling on the 14th day of each month. The moon completes her orbit round the earth in twenty-nine and a half days, or two orbits in fifty-nine days. The Jewish months, accordingly, varied from twenty-nine to thirty days alternately (Tischri and Nisan having thirty days), it being impossible to commence a month in the middle of a day. Thus the twelve months of the Jewish year make up 354 days. Eleven and a quarter days were required to make up the length of a solar year. Had this discrepancy not been rectified in some way, every Jewish month, and the new year as well, would, in the course of thirty years, have made the circle of the year. For, if in one year, the 1st Nisan coincided with the 1st March, in the next it would fall on the 12th, and so on.'

The discrepancy was rectified to some extent by the insertion of an additional month from time to time, and of an additional day in leap year. In determining these points, the equinoxes were of cardinal importance. Unfortunately the Jews did not carry out this method scientifically. Hence it is impossible to say for certain that such and such a year was a leap year with the Jews, and, what is worse, it is impossible to determine accurately the date of any great event in the past and bring it into line with other calendars.

It was only natural that for some considerable time the Jewish method of reckoning should have been followed in the Church. In the first place, Jewish converts of the earliest days—and in the East they would form the majority of Christians—would be very slow to give up their old customs. In the second place, the slaying of the Paschal Lamb at the Passover was a type of Christ's sacrifice of Himself, and as a matter of fact that sacrifice took place on the 15th Nisan, the first day of the Jewish feast.

But two considerations soon presented themselves to the Christian mind demanding a departure from the Jewish methods of calculation. First, 'from the Christian point of view, the Resurrection and not the day of Christ's death, formed the chief feature of the commemoration; the latter, although a day to be held in remembrance, could not well be kept as a joyous festival. But the Resurrection took place on the Sunday after the 15th Nisan, and so this Sunday came to be the chief day of the Christians' feast.' Secondly, as Christianity spread chiefly among pagans, who for the most part followed the Roman (or Julian) Calendar, it became necessary to fix the celebration of Easter by that calendar.

How was this transference of a day from one calendar to another to be effected? According to Jewish ways of reckoning, our Lord died on the 15th Nisan; what day would that be according to the Roman Calendar? It was impossible to say, for in one year, according to the Jewish calendar, it might fall in March, in another in April; and in any case 15th Nisan conveyed no idea to Christians who had been converted from Paganism. Consequently, the day of our Saviour's Death and Resurrection had to be determined by some other method. There would have been no difficulty in doing that, if the exact day of March or April on which the 15th Nisan had fallen in the year of our Lord's Death could have been discovered.

J. A. COOPER, Hatter, Auckland

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