

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- September 28, Sunday.—Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.
 „ 29, Monday.—Dedication of the Church of St. Michael, Archangel.
 „ 30, Tuesday.—St. Jerome, Confessor and Doctor.
 October 1, Wednesday.—St. Gregory, Bishop and Martyr.
 „ 2, Thursday.—Feast of the Holy Angel Guardians.
 „ 3, Friday.—St. Adrian II., Pope and Confessor.
 „ 4, Saturday.—St. Francis of Assisi, Confessor.

St. Gregory, Bishop and Martyr.

The memory of St. Gregory, who preached the Gospel in Armenia, has always been held in special honor by Armenian Catholics. Though he died a natural death in the time of Constantine the Great, he receives the title of martyr on account of the cruel and protracted tortures to which he submitted rather than abandon the Faith.

Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels.

One of the most consoling doctrines of the Catholic Church is the spiritual union which exists between mankind and the angels who surround the throne of the Almighty. These glorious spirits, with whom we hope to share hereafter the joys of Paradise, are appointed by God to be our protectors during our mortal life. Though not an article of faith, it has always been the constant belief of the Church in all ages that Divine Providence has assigned to each individual a special angel to be his guide and guardian during his pilgrimage on earth. To this doctrine, which is confirmed by many passages of Holy Scripture, our Divine Lord alluded when He said: 'See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the Face of My Father, Who is in heaven.'

GRAINS OF GOLD

WHAT THINGS ARE MINE.

What things are mine shall come to me,
 Somewhere from out the dark unknown,—
 In storm or calm, by land or sea,
 Through deserts wild or fruitful sown.

What things are mine shall come to me,
 Though heart may ache and eyes may weep;
 What things are mine, these I shall have;
 And, having, shall forever keep.

I envy not my fellowman,
 However full his joys may be;
 For this I know—in God's good time,
 What things are mine shall come to me.

—Ave Maria.

Praise makes a wise man modest, a fool arrogant.

If you have faith, preach it; if you have doubts, bury them; if you have joy, share it; if you have sorrow, bear it.

It is consoling to think that our Lord couples humility with rest. Rest is one of the sweetest words he ever used. God grant us rest! The path seems narrow at the beginning, but it broadens out at the end.

Let us never voluntarily dwell upon the faults of others when they present themselves to our minds; instead of dwelling on them let us at once consider what there is of good in these persons. . . . No one should think or say anything of another which he would not wish thought or said of himself.—St. Teresa.

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

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

THE ROMAN CHURCH IN ITS INFANCY—I.

More than one inquirer has lately asked for information about the Roman Church in its earliest days, the persecution of the Church under Nero, the coming of St. Peter to Rome, his martyrdom there, and so on. An attempt will now be made to answer these questions, and to reconstruct the early history of Catholicity at Rome. The material at hand for building up the story is small—a few references in two or three pagan writers, some parts of the New Testament, and some early Christian traditions and legends; but there is enough to lend interest to the story to Catholics, and a simple sketch of the Church's infancy at Rome should serve to draw us closer to the Fisherman who 'keeps ward on his lonely watch-tower among the Seven Hills beside the yellow Tiber, and (who) straining ever eager eyes athwart the waste of waters, tempest-borne and darkling, watches for his Master, and, if perchance he may, to catch the souls of men.'

To commence with, let us try to get a glimpse of the Roman Church in these first days as it must have appeared to an outsider. In his life of Claudius the pagan writer Suetonius tells how that Emperor expelled the Jews from Rome on account of the persistent riots which were stirred up among them by one Chrestus. The only satisfactory explanation of this statement is that the disturbances among the Jews were caused when the Gospel message, especially that part of it which proclaimed Christ as God, was first preached by Christian missionaries in the Jewish synagogues; riots, though perhaps on a larger scale, like those which had broken out when the Gospel was preached at Thessalonica, Antioch of Pisidia, and Lystra.

The date of this expulsion is not given by Suetonius, but another writer, Orosius, assigns it to the ninth year of Claudius, A.D., 49-50—that is, about the same time as the First Council of the Church at Jerusalem.

But what is more important than the precise date, Suetonius's reference to the expulsion of the Jews affords us some insight into the state of Christianity at Rome less than twenty years after its Founder's death. Up to this time, outsiders could see no difference between Christians and Jews: the Christians were a mere Jewish sect. We can understand this view readily enough, when we remember that in accordance with our Lord's command the Apostles felt it their duty to preach first to the house of Israel. Further, we gather that 'the Christian propaganda must have met with considerable success. The huge Jewish community at Rome,' writes F. J. Bacchus, 'with all its multifarious interests would not have been thrown into tumultuous confusion because two or three missionaries gathered round them a small group of converts. If this had been all, the mobbing of a few individuals would have been retaliation enough. Riots that exasperated the Government to such a pitch that it issued orders for several thousands of persons to leave the city must have been excited by a persistent, and to a large extent successful preaching of a new religion. Thus, a casual sentence in a pagan writer reveals to us the existence in Rome of a considerable Christian community before St. Paul had even set foot in Rome.'

The natural result of this order of expulsion was to make the Christians keep away from the Jews, and henceforth spend most of their energy in trying to convert the pagan Romans. So completely did Christians and Jews drift apart, that when, some ten years later, St. Paul came to Rome, the Jewish leaders there could pretend to know nothing more about the sect than that 'it is everywhere spoken against' (Acts xxviii. 22). 'It is everywhere spoken against.' If the Catholic Church of the 19th and 20th centuries had no other means of establishing its identity with the Church of the first century, this description might go