

Friends at Court

CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- October 5, Sunday.—Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost. Feast of the Holy Rosary.
- ✓ 6, Monday.—St. Bruno, Confessor.
- 7, Tuesday.—St. Mark, Pope and Confessor.
- 8, Wednesday.—St. Bridget, Widow.
- 9, Thursday.—SS. Denis and Companions, Martyrs.
- 10, Friday.—St. Francis Borgia, Confessor.
- 11, Saturday.—St. Canice, Abbot.

St. Mark, Pope and Confessor.

St. Mark's youth was passed in Rome in the closing years of the pagan persecutions. In 336 he was elected Pope, but held this office only a few months.

St. Bridget, Widow.

St. Bridget belonged to the royal family of Sweden. From childhood she was remarkable for charity, love of retirement, and a distaste for worldly enjoyments. On the death of her husband she divided her property amongst her children, and withdrew into a convent which she herself had founded. She died in Rome in 1373, at the age of seventy-one, on her return from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

SS. Denis and Companions, Martyrs.

St. Denis, the first Bishop of Paris, and one of the most illustrious writers of the early Church, is believed to have been identical with Denis the Areopagite, converted by St. Paul. He was martyred, with several companions, on the hill of Montmartre, in Paris, about the year 119.

GRAINS OF GOLD

PATHS OF GOLD.

An angel of the Royal Court

Looked down from heav'n's height,

And saw the fair land bath'd afresh

In streams of radiant light.

'Behold,' said he, 'the joyous, rosy birth,
Once more of a pure dawn to mother earth!'

A sound, the tend'rest, softest sound,

Came floating up on high;

The angel smiled, and further lean'd

To hear that wond'ring cry;

Below, a mother stretch'd her arms to take

A tiny child, in this world, scarce awake.

At noon, again, the angel came;

The sun was overcast,

Cloud heaped on cloud until they seem'd

Like mountains grey and vast;

He gazed; he cried, 'Most Potent Lord, my King,

My God! All's well! Thou sees't ev'rything!'

A sound, the wildest, saddest sound

Came floating up on high;

The angel paused and further leaned

To hear that rending cry;

Below, a mother begged Almighty God

To save her son from the avenging rod.

At evening, when the angel looked,

The clouds had rolled away,

And far beneath, the drowsy earth

In tranquil beauty lay;

Then cried that angel pointing west, 'Behold!

The noon-hour mountains are now paths of gold.'

A third time from below a sound

Came floating on the air;

A stricken man the angel saw

Beside a grave yet bare;

The angel spoke, 'Behold, God's vict'ry won!

A penitent now kneels the erring son.'

A. HASTINGS.

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

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

THE ROMAN CHURCH AND ITS BEGINNINGS—II.

The previous article let us see something of the state of the Church at Rome in its infancy as it must have appeared to outsiders: the present article will deal with its origin and composition as seen from the inside.

Its origin was due chiefly to three factors. 1. We know from the Acts of the Apostles (ch. ii.) that among those who listened to St. Peter's discourse on the Day of Pentecost were some who had come to Jerusalem for their annual visit to the Temple from Rome, Jews who had been born outside Palestine and pagan converts to Judaism. If some of these men came to believe in Christ through Peter's preaching—and we may well presume so—they would naturally on their return to Rome tell their friends of the strange things then happening in Palestine. Thus were the foundations of the Catholic Church laid where afterwards the central and majestic pile was to rise.

2. Rome was at this time the centre of the civilised world, and Christians would be attracted to it, for one reason or another as much as others. 'Never in the course of previous history had there been anything like the freedom of circulation and movement which now existed in the Roman Empire. And the movement followed certain definite lines and set in certain definite directions. It was at its greatest all along the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and its general trend was to and from Rome. The constant coming and going of Roman officials, as one provincial governor succeeded another; the moving of troops from place to place with the sending of fresh batches of recruits and the retirement of veterans; the incessant demands of an ever-increasing trade both in necessities and luxuries; the attraction which the huge metropolis naturally exercised on the imagination of the clever young Orientals who knew that the best openings for a career were to be sought there; a thousand motives of ambition, business, pleasure, drew a constant stream from the Eastern provinces to Rome. Among the crowds there would inevitably be some Christians, and those of very varied nationality and antecedents. . . . We may be sure that not a few of his (St. Paul's) own disciples would ultimately find their way to Rome' (Sanday, Ep. to Romans, xxvi.). After arriving in Rome they would soon become known to one another, and they only waited the coming of an Apostle to be formed into an organised Church, for it is impossible to entertain the idea that the Christians would be left entirely to themselves for any length of time.

3. The Apostle came in the person of St. Peter. The year of his arrival in Rome is not beyond question, but the fact is nowadays universally accepted. In his Epistle to the Romans, written about the years 56-58, St. Paul lets us see that the Church at Rome had already been in existence for a considerable number of years. He also informs us that he has not yet visited the Romans, though he has had 'a longing these many years' to do so, because he did not wish 'to build upon another man's foundation,' thus suggesting that the Church had been founded there by some other Apostle—and this immediately makes us think of St. Peter. 'From Jerusalem and around about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ; yea, making it my aim so to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation, but as it is written, "They shall see to whom no tidings of Him came, and they who have not heard shall understand." Wherefore also I was hindered then many times from coming unto you; but now, having no more place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you, whensoever I go unto Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company); but now I go to Jeru-

W. F. SHORT

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