

FRIENDS AT COURT

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

Feb. 15, Sun.—Sexagesima Sunday.
 „ 16, Mon.—Office of the Day.
 „ 17, Tue.—Office of the Day.
 „ 18, Wed.—St. Simeon, Bishop and Martyr.
 „ 19, Thur.—Office of the Day.
 „ 20, Fri.—Office of the Day.
 „ 21, Sat.—Office of the Blessed Virgin.



GRAINS OF GOLD

ROMANCE.

When I was young, my fancy strayed
 In realms enchanted, fair to see,
 Where Love was King, and Love was clad
 In armor, and his eyes were glad.
 He courted perils undismayed—
 I could not think of him afraid—
 He was the perfect knight, and he
 Would deign at last to look on me.

I travelled by the common road,
 My common day-dreams dimmed with time;
 But still the youth within my heart
 Cried out, and claimed some little part
 In high romance—in all that glowed
 And burned, in all that stirred and flowed.
 Not stagnant would I waste my prime,
 I asked that life should be sublime.

Then God made answer to my prayer,
 My days rolled onward as of yore;
 He led me by the beaten track,
 And laid new burdens on my back.
 I glimpsed no vision strange and rare,
 Each trifling task, each paltry care
 Continued changeless as before,
 And yet He opened wide a door.

The dullness of each common day
 He touched with radiance fair to see.
 He showed me Love, but Love was crowned
 With thorns, and beaten to the ground;
 A King, indeed, but One whose eyes
 Shone with the light of sacrifice.
 A King, indeed, but One who prayed
 For strength to meet death unafraid;
 A pilgrim King, who came to bless
 By sharing it, our loneliness,
 And left on earth, since earth He trod,
 The splendid high romance of God,
 The perfect Knight of chivalry
 Hath not disdained to look on me.



DEATH RATHER THAN MORTAL SIN.

When Queen Blanche became the mother of St. Louis, she received him from God as a treasure to be guarded with the utmost care. From his earliest years she kept one great thought before his mind—to love above all things his Heavenly Father, and never to offend Him by sin. Often when the little boy was playing by her side or sitting on her knee, she would say to Him: “My dear child, God knows how much I love you, yet sooner would I see you lying dead at my feet than know that you had offended God by a mortal sin.”

THE STORYTELLER

NORA

Translated from the German by PRINCESS LIECHTENSTEIN
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CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

Nora hardly heard what Landolfo said, nor saw what he did. She mechanically obeyed him, whilst the one dreadful thought kept gnawing at her heart: Had she forced her father to this awful determination? Had she repelled him so harshly that he had been led to think this the only way of escaping from ruin and from shame? Her refusal to comply with his wish now seemed a monstrous act of cruelty to her.

“It has all happened through my fault,” she repeated with tremulous lips. “Father, father, don’t die! In the name of pity, don’t die! I will do anything and everything for your sake! Father, I solemnly swear to do as you wish,” she whispered to the unconscious man, in a persuasive tone, as if she thought he must hear her, and he called back to life again.

Was it only the change of position, or was it the voice of his child and her warm breath, which caused a slight shiver to pass through his body and a gentle sigh to break through his tightly-closed lips?

Nora clasped her hands together in a prayer of thanksgiving and of entreaty.

“Don’t let him die! Oh, my Saviour, don’t let him die through my fault! The sacrifice of my whole life shall expiate this moment, cost what it may!” And as she then spoke, she pressed a little cross which she wore round her neck upon his blanched lips. “I will think nothing too much in order to save you, father.” And, indeed, it seemed to her as if the sacrifice of her own life was the only price with which she could buy her father’s.

Landolfo now returned, accompanied by two or three men with a litter. To Mrs. Karsten he had only said that her husband had sprained his ankle in the wood, and that he, therefore, required help in order to carry him home. To the men, the broken remnants of the bridge rendered no other explanation necessary.

The director was carefully placed upon the litter, and Nora did not let go of his hand. As soon as the slightest movement was perceptible upon his face, she whispered her consent to his wish softly in his ear, as if she feared that his soul might depart before learning that she had accomplished her duty to him as a daughter.

It seemed to her as if a light suddenly shone from his eyes, and as if he had understood her meaning, and once even, she thought, that he had pressed her hand ever so slightly.

The hours which followed were full of anguish to her, and yet Mrs. Karsten was rendered so completely powerless by agitation that Nora was forced to work herself up to the highest pitch of energy and of self-possession. It was appalling to see how calmly she undertook everything, not neglect-

ing the most apparently insignificant directions of the doctor. The latter declared that the director had suffered from a slight attack of apoplexy, and that his state had been made worse by the time he had spent in the water. During a few days he hovered between life and death. Nora never left his side, neither by day nor by night; she did not speak, she did not complain, she did not weep; she accomplished even the slightest of her duties as nurse—but for everything else she seemed turned to stone.

When the consciousness of the sick man had returned, he did not in any way allude to the past, nor did a word about his accident cross his lips. He seemed agitated and pained as his senses gradually came back to him, and his eyes sought Nora’s with a look partly shy, partly anxious. But Nora would not be heroic by halves, so that she sought at once to give the tired brain immediate rest and satisfaction. Kneeling at his bedside and embracing him tenderly, she whispered to him the promise which she had made in the first hour of her despair, and which, since then, she had often repeated inwardly to herself.

It was strange to mark the effect of these words upon the convalescent man. At first he looked sceptically, then wonderingly at her, and at last a childlike joy passed across his wan features. He pressed his daughter’s hand to his shoulder and said, “Then I have not only dreamt this; it was not a mere phantom who came to tell me that you would save me. . . . Nora, Nora: I knew that you would be my own good child, that you would not forsake me in my distress. . . . And now your old father need not give up his beautiful horses—his pride, his fame, without which he cannot live.

“O Nora! that will be pleasant! You will put the other one completely aside; we will be all in all to each other as in the good old times when you were a little girl and enjoyed nothing more than being placed upon a horse by your father. Do you remember that still, Nora? . . . And then they came and tried to separate my little girl from me; but you are like your mother, and will leave everything for me.”

“Everything!” gasped Nora, and there must have lain a deep anguish in the word, for it seemed to awake the sick man out of his joyful trance.

“You would never have been happy with him, my girl,” he went on, smoothing her soft hair compassionately. “You would have been indescribably miserable. I know the world; they would have always hated you for having, as it were, forced yourself upon them, and he would at last have repented of his choice and have neglected you. And that, you know, would have been a thousand times

A. H. O’Leary

CLATHIER, MEROER, HATTER, AND BOOTER.
 MEN’S AND BOYS’ SUITS A SPECIALTY.

Taumarunui