

## FRIENDS AT COURT

- Dec. 28, Sun.—Feast of the Holy Innocents.  
 „ 29, Mon.—St. Thomas of Canterbury,  
 Bishop and Martyr.  
 „ 30, Tues.—Within the Octave (Pre-  
 ceding Sunday).  
 „ 31, Wed.—St. Sylvester, Pope.  
 Jan. 1, Thurs.—Circumcision of Our Lord.  
 Holiday of Obligation.  
 „ 2, Frid.—Octave of St. Stephen.  
 „ 3, Sat.—Octave of St. John the Apostle.

St. Thomas, Bishop and Martyr.

St. Thomas a'Beckett was born in London in 1117. Having embraced the ecclesiastical state, and given proof of singular ability and fervent piety, he was soon called to occupy very important positions in the Church. In 1157 he was appointed Lord Chancellor of England by King Henry II, and in 1162 was elected Archbishop of Canterbury. Though remarkable for humility and meekness, he did not hesitate to boldly defend the rights of the Church against the unjust attacks of the English King. His firmness cost him his life. He was murdered in his Cathedral by four knights at, it is alleged, the instigation of the King, A.D. 1170.

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## GRAINS OF GOLD

## THROUGH THE NEW YEAR.

Through the New Year, whose gate we enter  
 now,

Be near me, Son of God;  
 Teach me in lowliness to walk, where Thou,  
 Going before, hast trod,  
 If my poor heart grow faint, and fear be  
 nigh,  
 And hope depart from me,  
 Dear Heart of Jesus, bear me up, till I  
 Shall gain new strength from Thee.

Worn in the travail of the past sad years  
 Sorely my soul was tried;  
 Yet, when my grief found no relief in tears,  
 Thou, Christ, was at my side,  
 Folding me in Thy breast, as a tired child,  
 Thou soothedst me in my need;  
 O blessed Saviour, merciful and mild,  
 I was Thy child indeed.

New faith, new hope, new strength, for the  
 New Year—

New service in Thy name;  
 Where'er my duty leadeth, far or near,  
 I go, with lofty aim.  
 Yet, in humility, and striving still,  
 Like my Lord sacrificed,  
 Only to do my Heavenly Father's will  
 Through Thee, through Thee, dear Christ.  
 —FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.

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## REFLECTIONS.

Take my heart for I cannot give it Thee;  
 keep it for I cannot keep it for Thee.—St.  
 Augustine.

I find nothing in this world that gives me  
 pleasure, and this is the one thing that gives  
 me supreme pleasure, that I find nothing  
 that pleases me.—St. Philip Neri.

## THE STORYTELLER

NORA

Translated from the German by PRINCESS LIECHTENSTEIN  
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## CHAPTER IX.

After the painful scene which had taken place in the morning, Nora had returned to the room which had been assigned to her—her own old room, which the nun knew she would prefer to any other. Thus she once more sat in that quiet retreat from which she had so often longed to be free, to go out into the wide and agitated world; and now, indeed, there was a great strife being carried on in her breast.

So much had crowded itself together into a short space of time. Since the days when she inhabited that room, she had realised the greatest of all happinesses, the greatest of all miseries, which can befall a young heart. These feelings were struggling within her, and pride—offended pride—was also asserting itself.

One thought, however, was uppermost: "We have met again, and he loves me, and I know that he cares more for me than for anything else in this world."

Amidst a shower of tears, her face was ever and anon lighted up by a bright and radiant smile, and then she hid her face in her hands and shut her eyes, as if she were shy of looking at this wondrous and beautiful secret.

As she sat there and thought, she remembered all the events of that memorable day—it was hardly a fortnight ago, when, standing at the bow-window, they had mutually confessed their love. She had smiled, too, at the mistake he had made in fancying that she had chosen to become a nun. The truth, hidden for months in their inmost hearts, had slipped out so unconsciously, and they had told each other how love had been too strong, and that they had both striven vainly against it. Such a moment is worth a whole life? Certainly they had not ignored the difficulties which stood in the way of their happiness; but these had seemed so small, so easily to be got over! He was his own master, and had only a mother's heart to win for himself and for his Nora; and then the fact is, that when human beings are intensely happy, they feel a great deal and think very little.

But another picture arose before Nora's eyes—her father's return! her father, who knew all before she could tell her own tale. He had been extremely displeased, and had treated the whole thing as a childish folly. How differently the same matter may be looked upon by different people! Her father's objections were the very things she had talked over with Curt; but oh! what monstrous proportions the difficulties had assumed! how immeasurable the abyss which divided them had now become! how threatening the anger of Curt's family, and how complete the destruction of his life's happiness!

Her father had concluded with these dread-

ful words: "They will think that we have caught him by unworthy means. They will say that you used your beauty as a snare in which to beguile his youth and inexperience, through which to gain a name and a position for yourself. They will say that we were low enough to make undue profit out of a moment of youthful giddiness."

Nora had given way to this; her pure and simple mind trembled for her father's reputation. "Write to him that it was a mistake, and that we must part." She herself had added the words we know of with a steady hand. She then besought her father to leave the villa at once. "Here I feel myself treading on burning coals," she said. "Let me never meet him again. Send me far, far away from here, to my mother's land across the seas, so that they may not think I have tried to catch him."

Her father's heart had been moved by the poor child's grief; all the more so that he reproached himself for having allowed matters to come to such a point. He also had thought it better for Nora to leave the Rhineland as soon as possible, and had proposed a visit to her former school, where a decision of some kind might be arrived at. Nora had joyfully agreed to this; it seemed, indeed, a boon to her suffering heart to pour itself out to her old friend, and to claim from her both comfort and advice. Thus it came to pass that the director and his daughter had started that very night, whilst his wife remained at the villa in order to arrange all for breaking up the establishment.

The Superior had received her darling with open arms. Her fond heart grieved to find her exposed so soon to one of the sorrows she had feared for her. She approved of Nora's idea of visiting her relations in the far west; but the director would not hear of such a long separation. Had Curt's visit taken place a few days later, he would probably not have met her.

And now that Nora thought all these things over, she began to see them in another light. She had been ready to sacrifice all her happiness to his; but that word he had spoken in the morning came back to her with renewed force: "Can your love bear with nothing? Is it too weak for a little patience?" Yes! what she had called by the name of sacrifice, seemed now only weakness and want of purpose. She had allowed her pride to take at once the upper hand. After all, her father had made no other objections than those which she and Curt were prepared for. She had given way at once, whilst Curt had so nobly kept up and fought for his love. Would it really be for his happiness if she left him now? What a depth of misery his eyes revealed! Would she not give up everything for him? Then why had she not thought him

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