

'Nonsense! I'm talking straight. What's your line? Going to be worked to death in a foreign country. Even if it had been at home I'd have seen some sense in it. You'd earn a good living if you like that kind of work. But a missionary! Don't be a fool, lad; think over my offer while you are still free to choose.'

'A fool,' thought the would-be missionary. 'And what is more blessed than a fool—for Christ's sake.' Aloud, however, his answer referred to his uncle's previous statement.

'And if I did take your most kind offer, Uncle William?' he said. 'I'd be apprenticed to the hardware business, you say, and perhaps that would lead, some day, to my having a shop of my own. Well, if I did, what then?'

'Then,' repeated the man of business, not quite following his nephew's drift. 'Oh, then you could get married.'

'And then?'

'Then you'd have children, I suppose.' The answer came testily now.

'Who in their turn would be—apprenticed to the hardware,' concluded John.

Uncle William was now completely at sea.

'Well, and why not? It's a clean, honest trade. Of course, if you prefer some other line—grocer or victualler—or with your education I might manage the civil service, if you despise trade.'

'My dear uncle, despise it! I should not dream of despising any honest means of earning a living, only, you don't quite take my point of view. You see, making money is not the end I have before me.'

'What is it then?' asked his uncle contemptuously.

'Saving my soul,' replied the young man flushing, for it is not the nature of young men, even if they are clerical students, to speak much of these things.

'And,' he added almost in a whisper, 'the souls of others, for Christ's sake.'

His uncle's comment on this was short, one word only. It may, and probably did, relieve his feelings, but nothing that he could have said would have been further from the point, or more inappropriate.

Next morning William Lennon walked for the last time down the road he had trodden the previous night with his nephew. He was going to the station, and his bainin-clad brother was now his companion.

'He's an obstinate chap, that son of yours,' he said, almost spitefully. 'Wouldn't listen to a word against this wild plan of his, not though I as good as promised to make my business over to him when I die.'

'Well, well,' said Patrick, anxious for peace. 'that's a long time off, please God—too long to think or talk about it yet.'

'You're nearly as big a fool yourself,' retorted the man of business angrily. 'Why, I'm worth more money this minute than you've ever seen or thought of in all your born days, and yet you do nothing to put that headstrong lad of yours in the way of earning, or anyhow of getting as much or more again.'

Patrick Lennon, accustomed to the wide, silent spaces of bay and mountain, was slow of speech and thought, and to his brother's argument he could think of no reply; not, indeed, that he tried very hard to do so. He knew that John was right and that really settled the matter, only he could not argue over it. Indeed, had he been obliged to make known his thoughts during his brother's short harangue they would have been found to concern the pleasure afforded by such tobacco as that with which his companion had lavishly supplied him rather than any question as to whether or no his son should be a priest. That was settled and done for long ago, he thanked God.

But William, in spite of this rebuff of silence, had one last cut to give upon the subject.

'Well, anyhow, as he is he'll never do much for you,' he said, 'you and your family.'

Then his brother slowly removed his pipe from his mouth and his eyes rested far, far out to sea, towards the infinite space which every dweller on Ireland's western coast connects consciously or unconsciously with the infinity of the world to come.

'I don't know that,' he said slowly. 'We're mighty obliged to you for what you're willing to do for John, but I don't know but having a priest in the family, even one that goes out to be eaten by the heathens, I don't know, after, but that it won't do more than you'd think for us that stop at home.'

And so the brothers parted, each one holding to his own point of view. They could not understand each other completely, for one looked straight before him on the earth, while the view of the other and that of his son was directed Heavenwards.—ALICE DEASE, in the *Magnificat*.

ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

(For the *N.Z. Tablet* by the REV. J. KELLY, PH.D.)

'I served our Theobald well when I was with him:
I served King Henry well as Chancellor:
I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.'

These three lines from Tennyson might be taken as the heading of the three acts in a tragedy of the life of Thomas Becket. Nearly eight hundred years ago it began, and still its events stand out before us as vividly as those historic pictures which Raphael painted on the walls of the Vatican stanze.

In London, on December 21, 1117, St. Thomas was born. From Normandy, the land of old romance, his parents a few years before had come over to settle in England. In after years his humble birth was made the subject of many a taunt. But we can feel that there was no sting for Thomas in such taunts, and that his great mind was never biased by the ridiculous pride of class which obtained even in men who took Christ for their heritage and their chalice. He was well taught in his early years; and from the same humble parents he learned that courtesy and kindness which abode with him in his later years. Some time he studied at Merton Abbey, and thence went to Paris, where he devoted himself to literature and jurisprudence.

When he returned to London he was for a short time engaged in secretarial work, first under Sir Richard de l'Aigle and then with Osbert Huitdeniers, 'Justiciar' of London. We have, preserved in the Icelandic Saga, a picture of him at the period:—'To look upon he was slim of growth and pale of hue, with dark hair, a long nose, and a straightly featured face. Blithe of countenance was he, winning and lovable in his conversation, frank of speech in his discourse, but slightly stuttering in his talk, so keen of discernment and understanding that he could always make difficult questions plain after a wise manner.'

About 1141 he entered the service of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury. He quickly won Theobald's favor and became the most trusted of all his attendants. Through the Archbishop's kindness he was sent to Bologna and Auxerre to study civil and canon law. In 1154 he was ordained deacon, and obtained the archdeaconery of Canterbury.

Now King Stephen died, and Prince Henry became King. Between Thomas and the young monarch there grew a friendship which was the admiration of the ancient chroniclers. They seemed to have but one heart and one mind. They played like two schoolboys. They hunted and rode together, and were like another Jonathan and David. In 1157 Henry made Thomas Chancellor of the Kingdom, next to the 'Justiciary' of London the most powerful subject in all England. And in work as in play their hearts were one. Seeing eye to eye in many things, they devoted themselves to building up the prosperity of the kingdom, the king gladly introducing the reforms suggested by his friend. Not alone in imperial views but also in love of splendor in those days of pageantry they were as one. In 1158 Thomas went to France to negotiate a marriage treaty, and so magnificent was his retinue that the people said: 'If this be but the Chancellor what must be the glory of the King himself?'

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