

Zealous performance of his duties, especially the levying of taxes, and the jealousy of many nobles and ecclesiastics begot much enmity. In military operations Thomas took a leading part, showing bravery and skill whether in leading dangerous attacks or in breaking spears with the flower of French chivalry in the arena. And underneath all that his speech was ever frank and fair, and none, even in those licentious days, could gainsay his purity. He was as ready to draw his sword against foul speech and lying and unchastity as he was against the enemies of England. So far as his conscience allowed him he was wholly the King's man; so far but not a whit beyond.

Theobald died in 1161, and the King would have no one succeed him but Thomas. In vain did Thomas protest that he was unworthy. And more than that, he warned the King that he foresaw in it the end of their friendship—'I know very well that if it pleases God that it should happen, I will soon lose your confidence and favor, and our friendship, now so great, will become a terrible hatred. I know you will exact certain things and interfere in Church affairs in ways I will not stand. And there will be enemies too ready to take occasion to stir up discord between us.'

Finally, Thomas yielded. An old chronicle tells us that in the year 1162 the prelates and princes gathered together at Canterbury to assist at such a memorable function, and that having been ordained priest on the Saturday within the octave of Pentecost, Thomas Becket was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury the next day, Sunday, June 3, 1162. The boy of winning manners and studious habits, son of those two humble London people, Gilbert and Mathilde Becket, the Chancellor, busied about many things and in the eyes of all Europe set apart as the man whom the King delighted to honor, is now Archbishop, and the third act opens.

In two successive days he was ordained priest and consecrated bishop: and with the anointing of his hands and the words of ordination and consecration began a period of new life. Beneath the external splendor of the Chancellor a humble austere spirit lay concealed from the world. Now that he belonged to the Church, he gave himself up to severe fasts and protracted vigils and constant prayers. When the envoy of Alexander III. brought him the Pallium from Rome he went barefooted to meet him. All display was henceforth laid aside, and, contrary to the King's wish, he resigned the Chancellorship. To piety and religion he gave himself wholly. The poor became his children, and of his benevolent charity the contemporary writers are lavish in their praises. But for such charity funds were necessary, and to have them Thomas insisted on the restitution of such Church revenues as had been seized under his predecessors. Naturally the powerful lords, who had seized them, objected, not believing, as few of their class ever did, that to give is better than to receive.

The year following his consecration, Thomas was present at the Council of Tours, at which Alexander III. presided. At Tours both people and priests received the English Archbishop with distinguished honors, which all pleased the King very much. But the Council of Tours—and in this Thomas could say like Aeneas that he was a great part—passed a decree of anathema against usurpers of the Church's property and the violators of her rights; which pleased the King not at all.

Henry was already angry with Thomas for resigning the Chancellorship. Now the Archbishop came back from France to put rigorously into execution the decree of the Council of Tours. The King meantime proposed that a voluntary offering to the sheriffs should be paid into the royal treasury. Thomas openly resisted, and was successful. But this first recorded instance of determined opposition to the royal will strained to the breaking point their relations. Two sees became vacant; the Archbishop protested against the action of the King in allowing them to remain unfilled and in the interval appropriating their revenues. Henry at last saw that his former friend was inflexible where a question of principle was involved, and further experience was yet to confirm this. Thomas boldly in-

sisted on the immunity given to clerics by what are known in canon law as the privileges, *Fori et Canonis*. He suspected that the King designed to strike at the independence of the Church. Henry called the bishops together at Westminster, October 1, 1163, to sanction certain articles which he called 'his grandfather's customs,' one of which was to bring clerics under the jurisdiction of secular courts. Replying in the name of the synod, Thomas pointed out that such a procedure was contrary to canon law. The King's anger grew more and more apparent, and the other bishops showed a desire to give way. Thomas, however, would go no further than to admit the customs in so far as the rights of the clergy were safeguarded. Later, in deference to the prayers of the bishops and to what he thought to be the Pope's wish, Thomas gave a personal undertaking to the King to obey his customs 'loyally and in good faith.' But when Henry tried to have the Constitutions of Clarendon, as 'his grandfather's customs' are known, formally and publicly accepted, Thomas, seeing that he could not do it, was uncompromising in his resistance.

From this on the intrepid Archbishop was bitterly persecuted. On November 2, 1164, he fled to France, where he was welcomed cordially by Louis VII. and by Pope Alexander III. The Pope, on reading the Constitutions of Clarendon, said to Thomas: 'Amongst these detestable articles none are good, but some are endurable by the Church. The greater part, however, are reprov'd and condemned by ancient and authentic councils as directly opposed to ecclesiastical rights.' In his own person Alexander condemned ten of the articles expressly, indicating thus in the clearest fashion how meritorious was the conduct and how undeserved the persecution of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Thomas wished to resign now, but the Pope would not allow him to do so. But he sanctioned his retiring to live in the Cistercian Manastery at Pontigny, where with great joy Thomas gave himself up to severe penances, at the same time striving strenuously to bring about concord in England. The King's wrath continued. Not only the Archbishop himself, but also his friends and relatives were now persecuted and driven out of their country. But nothing could shake his indomitable resolution to spend himself in the cause of the Church.

To save the Cistercians from the persecution, which they too incurred through their hospitality, he left Pontigny to spend four years of exile in various parts of France. The kindness of the Pope and of the French King during these years was cordial and uniform, and throughout Europe the sympathies of all good Christians were with the persecuted Archbishop. In England, Henry went from bad to worse. He treated letters written by Thomas, and even by the Pope himself, with scorn, and went so far as to threaten Alexander that unless he ceased to support the Archbishop of Canterbury's cause he would declare for the Anti-Pope, Paschal III. But the Pope made Thomas Apostolic Legate for England, and ordered all the bishops to obey him. The new Legate proceeded fearlessly to excommunicate many in England who were guilty of grave crimes, and Henry himself, fearing an interdict, appealed to the Pope.

At length somehow a sort of peace was made between the King and the Archbishop in 1170. And on December 1 of that year Thomas landed in England and was received with great enthusiasm. But the peace was of short duration. Fresh trouble arose through the refusal of the bishops to submit to the conditions of absolution laid down by Thomas. The Archbishop of York was the chief disturber now; and but for him, whom in a letter to the Archbishop of Sens the Bishop of Salisbury calls 'a new Caiaphas and an arch-devil,' peace would likely have been permanent. This man stirred up Henry's mind so much against Thomas that in a fury the King began to curse the Archbishop as the cause of all his difficulties and troubles. How far Henry was guilty of what followed we do not know. But four knights, followed by a band of armed men, took the matter in hand now.

They found the Archbishop in his church on the