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THE  
CHURCHMAN

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OCTOBER, 1898.

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ART. I.—LONDON DIOCESAN CHURCH HISTORY LECTURES.

No. III.—THOMAS BECKET, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

THE life of one who is faithful unto death to the principles which he believes to be true and vital must always be interesting and worthy of study. Even when the principles are not such as appeal to the mind of this century, or are such as we now see to be merely partial and transitory, the example of such a life is of the highest possible value; and by translating what does not fit our present circumstances, we may easily learn lessons that our own day could never teach.

Probably few would now be found to deny that the life of Thomas Becket (to give him his true name) is such a life as this. We may think his sanctity somewhat forced and his temper somewhat violent, but at least nobody would now deny his splendid courage, his absolute good faith, and his resolute devotion to what he believed to be truth. If, however, we would learn the fuller lessons of his life, we must endeavour to see something of the times in which he lived, their aspirations, and their ideals. The real importance of the life of St. Thomas of Canterbury must necessarily depend upon that for which he was fighting, viz., the liberty of the Church in relation to the State; and we must therefore begin by asking ourselves what were the relations which existed between them at the time in which he lived.

To begin with, then, the relations between Church and State before the Norman Conquest had been, on the whole, amicable enough. The State, in fact, was to such a degree the child of the Church that the two did not very frequently come into hostile contact. Purely ecclesiastical business was

often discussed in mixed assemblies of Bishops and laymen, held under the authority of the King, not because such business as the making of Church canons was really held to appertain to the civil power, but because there was little or no rivalry between the two things, and because nobody dreamt of doubting then that even Church canons were none the worse for being strengthened with the authority of the civil power. In the same way, the Bishop sat side by side with the Alderman, or later on with the Sheriff, in what ultimately became the County Court; and the two together tried all the cases that came before them, whether they were cases which touched the law of the Church or the King's law. Not, indeed, that anybody thought that the King possessed the authority of the Church, or that the Bishop, in his spiritual capacity, possessed that of the State; the question simply had not arisen. Here as elsewhere, Englishmen were content to let things go on as they were found in practice to work well, without troubling their heads with the question of the basis of theory which underlay the satisfactory practice. But here as elsewhere, it must be added, things did not really work nearly so well as they looked. There was a continual tendency for the two authorities, the Church and the State, to play into one another's hands, and for a conflict between them to be avoided by a distinct lowering of the standard of Church life. We shall not be faithful to the facts unless we bear in mind that this easy-going life tended to be very lax; simony was rife, and the lives of the clergy were often debased to an extent which we should find it hard to realize.

The reign of the Conqueror, however, saw a great and most notable change. There had been a much-needed reformation of the whole Church of the West, brought about chiefly by one great Pope, Gregory VII. And this reformation had proceeded mainly by making a sharp line of demarcation between the ecclesiastical and temporal elements in human life, or, as it was then expressed, by separating the Church from the world. In this there was much that was good: the whole status of the hierarchy was altered for the better. But, on the other hand, the fundamental error had been committed of forgetting the potential sacredness of all human life.

In England the effects of this reformation were soon felt, and before long there was a vast and noteworthy improvement in the whole standard of Church life in England. But perhaps the most striking effect of the reformation, so far as England was concerned, is to be seen in an ordinance issued by William himself, apparently in the year 1086. By this the King declares that "the episcopal laws, which up to my time in the kingdom of the English have not been right, or according to the precepts

of the holy canons, shall be amended. Wherefore I command, and by royal authority decree, that no Bishop or Archdeacon shall any longer hold, in the Hundred Court, pleas pertaining to the episcopal laws, nor shall they bring before the judgment of secular men any case which pertains to the rule of souls; but whosoever shall be summoned for any fault against the ecclesiastical laws shall come to the place which the Bishop shall appoint for that purpose, and shall there make answer before God and the Bishop, not according to the Hundred Court, but according to the canons and the episcopal laws. . . . Furthermore, I forbid that any Sheriff or other officer of the King, or any layman, shall concern himself in any matter of laws which pertains to the Bishop."

This is clearly a very important act. By it the King, or the civil power, has formally separated off ecclesiastical from temporal matters. Henceforward, to use the current language of the time, the Church is not to be contaminated by the profane contact of the world, but is to enforce its own law without let or hindrance; there is to be no further confusion of Church and State. Henceforward there stand side by side in England two distinct powers, in theory separate, yet in practice always conflicting—the Church and the State. For the ordinance has obviously opened up far wider questions than it has settled. Who is to decide what is secular and what is sacred? and what is to be said with regard to that great class of cases which involve consequences both secular and sacred? What, above all, is to be said with regard to temporal offences, if such there should be, committed by spiritual persons? All these questions are clearly left out altogether by the Conqueror's ordinance, and sooner or later they were bound to come to the front. They did so during the lifetime of Thomas Becket, but not until the course of events had greatly enhanced the difficulty. For one thing, the very fact of thus setting forward the Church as a distinct polity in civil life, as an *imperium in imperio*, had emphasized the fact that, thus regarded, the Church was not bound by the bands of national life, but extended beyond the seas no less than here. This, again, threw the English Church more and more into the hands of the Papacy; for the forces of centralization and subjection were at that time irresistible. Once more, the very fact that the Church had been thrown back upon her own laws had compelled her, in England as elsewhere, to systematize her laws; and the result was that presently, whilst the secular courts still administered—so far as they administered anything—a system which was composed of a rough rule of thumb and a number of arbitrary commands of the supreme power, the Church courts, or courts

Christian, were strong, merciful, and just, with a system of law which was fast becoming scientific in its regularity. Of course, all this was not done without consequences that were bad enough. The practice of the Church courts became remunerative in the extreme, and correspondingly sought after. It became no mean worldly provision for a young man to make him an Archdeacon, and to send him off to Bologna or Padua to learn something of law, in order that he might be able to fulfil the duties of his office. Of course, he generally learned a great deal more, which went far to ruin him for all time. In fact, so bad a name did the Archdeacon come to have in England, that people began to ask, as we are told by John of Salisbury (himself an Archdeacon and a saint), *whether it was possible for an Archdeacon to be saved.*

In a word, the reformation under William had left the Church far stronger as a polity, but it had ministered to that dangerous tendency of our nature which leads us to separate off part of life as sacred, and by so doing both to introduce a secular temper into that part, and to let the rest—go to the dogs.

Meanwhile, what of the State? Certainly, if the Church had become stronger, the State had for a while become far weaker; and at length, under King Stephen, the Government collapsed entirely, and the whole realm went to rack and ruin. As the English Chronicle graphically puts it, "every man that could forthwith began to rob somebody else." It was the very Nemesis of feudalism, for the King, the centre of the whole system, had become a mere King Log, and utter disorder prevailed everywhere. In the downfall of institutions one alone survived: the Holy Church of England. First under Bishop Henry of Winchester, the Papal Legate, and then under Theobald, the Primate, all her influence was used, not for one side or the other, but for peace. The wise Theobald did more than this. He realized, if none other did, that the Church was not merely a section of the people, but the whole English people in their ecclesiastical aspect; and in his court were trained a body of learned clerks who were filled with his spirit. Nor is this all. So far as there was any order at all in England during the latter years of Stephen, it came from the English Church as led by him. So that at the time of the death of that King, in 1154, the whole kingdom owed to him a debt which it would be hard to overestimate; and the Church was powerful as perhaps it had never been since the days of Dunstan.

Such was the state of things when the young Henry II. ascended the throne. He was a man of tremendous force of character, bold and energetic and self-reliant; turbulent

indeed in his superfluous energy, but gifted with a clear-sighted purpose as few men are. In his veins, so his contemporaries said, flowed the demoniacal blood of his ancestor, Fulk Nerra, Fulk the Black—that blood which was inflamed at times into actual madness in his son King John, and which degenerated into imbecility in his grandson Henry III. The second Henry, however, was a very different man. He was violent at times; he could be cruel and vicious in private life; he shunned, so one chronicler tells us, he shunned regular hours like poison. His secretary, Peter of Blois, goes yet further, and declares: “Solomon saith there be three things difficult to be found out—yea, a fourth which may scarcely be discovered: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a ship in the sea, the way of a serpent on the land, and the way of a man with a maid. I know a fifth: the way of a King in England.” But, none the less, there was method in it all. The King’s superabundant energy might show itself in many odd ways, but beneath it all there flowed a steady, strong purpose: the organization of his empire on a sound basis of law and government. This was his life-work, and it was his own doing. Justinian, it may be, owes the greater part of his fame to his Ministers, and the work is at least as much theirs as his. Our English Justinian was not less fortunate in his Ministers; but of all that was done, the merit is his, not theirs.

Henry found himself, whilst still little more than a boy, the lord of territories which included not only England, but the greater part of France, together with the overlordship of Scotland. It was therefore of the utmost importance that he should find a Minister at once—one whom he could trust as himself, and who would fulfil all that was in his mind. Where was such a man to be found? where but in the household of Archbishop Theodore? and where but in the person of his favourite pupil, Thomas Becket?

Let us now follow out the details of his life. Thomas Becket, or Thomas of London, as he was almost universally called until he became Archbishop, was a typical Londoner, like Colet and Milton and Lamb, born, as Colet himself was, under the shadow of St. Mary Colechurch, where the Mercers’ Hall now stands, just off Cheapside. His parents were neither Saxon, as one legend says, nor was his mother a Saracen, according to another very picturesque story. Gilbert and Rohesia Becket were simply sprung from respectable families in Normandy, the one from Rouen, the other from Caen. But they had settled in London, and their son Thomas never forgot that he was a Londoner and a man of the people; and when, in later days, people spoke of the Archbishop of

Canterbury's lack of noble birth, he only answered that in this respect at least he was like the Apostles of his Lord.

His parents, however, were people of some mark. His father had been Portreeve of London, and the house was well known to some of the noble-born knights about the Court. Thomas was well educated, at a time when the standard of education was by no means low, first at home in London, then by the good monks of Merton Abbey, and then at Paris; conquering his distaste for books, and checking his strong inclination for an outdoor life, for the sake of his mother, whom he tenderly loved. Owing to a reverse in the fortunes of his parents, we next find him seeking employment in the City, possibly in the business of the Sheriffs, but more likely in the counting-house of the merchant. Thence, however, he passed to be one of the clerks about the court of Archbishop Theobald, and now his fortune was made. Theobald at once saw what manner of man he was, took him for his favourite pupil, trained him in all the learning of the day, and filled him with the same lofty conceptions as he himself held as to the nature of the Church, its spiritual life and power, which is from within, its work in the whole sphere of human existence. In course of time he ordained him deacon and gave him the Archdeaconry of Canterbury, the most important office that it was in his power to bestow.

And now it was that Thomas was sent for to serve the King as his Chancellor and chief Minister. It was, of course, in those days the usual thing for the royal Ministers to be found in the ranks of the clergy. Where else could the requisite learning and devotion and probity have been found? But the effects were in many ways bad, in that there inevitably followed a secularization of all men's ideas as to the Church, and a further approximation of the ways of the Church to the ways of the world.

Thomas then, a young man of five-and-thirty, became the chief Minister of the young Henry. The most tender friendship at once sprung up between the two. Thomas "threw off the deacon," as his biographers say, and entered with all his soul into the life that lay before him. In the King's business none was so eager or so capable as he. If there was a difficult embassy to be despatched, he was the man for it; if there was some great reform needed in England, as the institution of scutage—that commutation of military service for money which did so much to break down the evils of feudalism—Thomas was the man to see it through. He was as much at home at the head of an army or hunting in the King's train. Meanwhile he vied with the King not only in his capacity for work, but in his magnificence of life and his

capacity for mirth. When work was over, the King and the Minister were, as it was said, just like two schoolboys at play. The emoluments of his office, according to the universal custom of the day, alone made this possible; and when they failed it mattered not, for the two young men had but one purse between them. One significant point was noticed, however, where Thomas could not go with the King. Men wondered at his profusion and his magnificence, but whilst the whole Court was given up to luxurious living, no word was breathed against the Chancellor's personal purity. Foul conduct or foul speech, lying or unchastity, were hateful to him, and he never failed to visit them severely. And once, at any rate, when Henry, with his usual disregard for the laws of the Church, was proposing to bring about a political marriage which was contrary to those laws, the Chancellor withstood him to the face, and apparently the evil thing was not done. Still, this did not affect their personal relations, and the great work of quelling the pandemonium which Stephen's reign had created, and restoring the English State, went steadily on.

But now there came the crux of it all. The King saw clearly that if his realm was really to be one, if there was to be anything of real government, the power of the Church—that power which had flourished and grown in the time of anarchy, that power which had been the one saving feature of English life—must be checked once for all. An *imperium in imperio* was really unendurable. This great polity of ecclesiastics included, it must be remembered, not merely Bishops, priests, and deacons, but monks and nuns, and a great host of clerks in minor orders—nay, it included pilgrims and widows and orphans, and sham pilgrims and wanderers, and anybody and everybody who could manage, by hook or by crook, to claim “benefit of clergy.” Could this great mass of people be allowed to remain practically outside the power of the King? Was it endurable that clerks who had committed some crime, for instance, should be tried by the lenient Church courts and condemned to mere spiritual censures, and then set free to do the same thing again? Crimes of this sort were all too frequent. No; Henry felt that the royal supremacy must be vindicated, the King must have his own, if there was to be anything in England that could really be called order. So he set himself to work to curb the temporal power of the Church, both by the operation of law at home and by the checking of interference from abroad. He did not propose to repudiate the spiritual authority of the Pope—of course, no Englishman did in his day; and few things are more deplorable and misleading than the ignorant nonsense



which is sometimes put forth on this subject. But, in the interests of his realm, he would curb appeals and references to Rome. Every such thing had a temporal side and no slight temporal consequences; he would, therefore, place a check upon them, and only allow them to be made in exceptional cases, when it suited the royal policy or convenience.

And who was to help him in all this? The King, of course, was quite clear that it was to be done by the great Minister who had helped him hitherto—by Thomas of London. Just then, too, the way seemed to have been made clear, for on April 18, 1161, the good old Archbishop Theobald died. Thomas should succeed him: so the King was resolved. He, too, like the Emperor in Germany, would have a Chancellor who should also be Primate, and so the double work might be done without any of the friction that there must otherwise be.

And now let us see why Thomas did not fall in with the King's plans. It is easy enough at the present day to perceive that the King was striving for what was really essential. It was clearly absurd to allow evil-doers to escape the due penalty of their misdeeds because they happened to be clerks, a fact which should have deterred them from their misdeeds. But this was not all. In the long run it is impossible for two independent powers to exist in one kingdom; sooner or later one or the other must succumb. Either the law of the realm must have its course over all men, and all men must obey that law or take the consequences, or else the civil power must become a mere administration subject to the ecclesiastical; and history shows what that involves.

But we see all this so clearly that we are apt to forget the other side altogether; and yet in the twelfth century men did not forget it. The one great power which received the reverent devotion of all men was the Church. The King, after all, was but such an one as themselves, holy as his election and calling were; but the Church is the mother of us all. Could it be right that the sacred persons of her ministers should be subjected to secular handling? Could it be right that Divine things should be harassed by secular restraints and polluted by secular defilement?

Then, again, there was a very real danger lest the Church should have been caught in the trammels of the State, and degraded into a sort of *ex-officio* ally of the secular administration; and we know, from our own experiences of Church life in the eighteenth century, what a detestable bondage that means. It was the very office of the Church to admonish and guide and warn the secular power from without. Could this be done if she were reduced to the level of the rank and file

of English life? Above all, the evils of the late reign had shown what she could do, and men could not readily believe that they were doing right if they tried to fight against this great power of God.

We can see that both causes were right. The one, however, was doing its work, the other had its work yet to do; the one must increase, the other must decrease. God is not tied to one means.

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

We can see this now; but there were few good men in that age who would not have thought that when it came to the question it was better, more holy, more safe, to side with the Church in its struggle with the King; with the Church, as they would have put it, against the world. Yet even as they did so there may have been many who felt what was said by one of Becket's most faithful friends, Herbert of Bosham: "Both parties had a zeal for God; which zeal was most according to knowledge, His judgment alone can determine."

And so, when the King told Thomas, one fine day in Normandy, just as he was coming to England, that he would have him to be Archbishop, Thomas at once drew back in fear, tried to turn it off as a jest that a man in his gay clothing should sit in that holy seat, and then warned the King, in all seriousness, that such a step must needs be the end of their friendship. "I know your plans for the Church: you will assert claims which I, if I were Archbishop, must needs oppose." So far his way had been clear. Thomas was a man who could see good wherever it was. He could see the true grandeur of the King's aims, and as his Minister could loyally second them where they did not come into flat conflict with his obligations as a son of the Church. But he had never felt it his duty, perhaps, to look at the question from the other side. As Archbishop, he would be the guardian of another heritage even more precious. What might be in the future was not his business; it would be his bounden duty to hold fast that which the Church had. Thomas was a man who could see both sides, but, like many other men who can see both sides, he could only see one side at a time. He was the kind of man who would be as strenuous for one good work as for another. If it was the work of the Church, it must needs come first with him; and then the tenderly valued friendship would be at an end.

However, it was to be. Thomas resisted long and earnestly, and it was only when it was pressed upon him on all sides as his duty that he at length gave way. The monks of

Canterbury duly elected the King's nominee, as they usually did. Thomas was duly ordained priest, and then consecrated and enthroned in St. Augustine's chair, first receiving from the King's officers a quittance in full for all the moneys and the secular business which had passed through his hands.

He at once gave himself up to the duties of his new life. Henry was disappointed in his plan of an archiepiscopal Chancellor, for the Archbishop at once resigned the office of Chancellor. He changed his whole manner of life; began to wear the monastic dress and the hair shirt under his robes, gave himself to prayer and study and deeds of mercy, and, indeed, roused the wondering awe of his clerks by the sanctity of his life. His devotion, indeed, never entirely lost something of awkwardness; his answers were often harsh and hasty, and in Thomas there is never anything of the sweet reasonableness of Anselm. Still, his earnestness and reality were above reproach, and the man himself remained as attractive and as lovable to his fellow-men as he had ever been.

But the inevitable conflicts with the King began almost at once. I do not propose to go into details; they can be obtained from any biography of the saint—Robertson's, Thompson's, or Freeman's essay, or better still, perhaps, from Miss Norgate's "England under the Angevin Kings." For our purpose, it is more important to secure a right interpretation of the facts than to recapitulate details which are already well known, and I have therefore thought it well rather to dwell upon the subject in its larger aspects rather than to spend time over these.

It must be pointed out, however, that in the first great conflict between the King and the Archbishop, Thomas made himself the champion of the whole English people. The ancient impost of the Danegeld, a memorial of England's shame—of that tax which was levied in order to bribe off the Dane—had continued to be paid to the Sheriffs, not by law, but as a sort of voluntary rate for their services. Henry, who had a keen scent where money was going, proposed that this money should be turned into a formal tax, and should make its way into the Treasury. It was at Woodstock, in the summer of 1163. Thomas declared that the payment was a voluntary one, given to the Sheriffs so long as they did their duty well, and that it must not be turned into a tax. "By the eyes of God," swore the King, "what right have you to contradict me? I am not hurting you." "Then by those same eyes," swore Thomas, "not a penny shall you have from my lands, nor from any lands of the Church." The story breaks off, as stories have a way of doing, just at the most

interesting point, but the inference is clear that the Archbishop won; for the Danegeld, name and thing, disappears forthwith from the Pipe Rolls.

However, other questions soon followed. A chief tenant of the King had been excommunicated by the Archbishop, without previous notice being given to the King. This was contrary to ancient custom, which forbade any such thing, apparently lest the King should be contaminated by contact with excommunicate persons. Henry commanded that the excommunication should be removed. Thomas refused: it was not for the King, he declared, to say who should be bound or loosed.

Soon there arose again the old question of the criminous clerks. The King complained that such persons were not adequately punished by the penalties imposed upon them by the courts spiritual, and that, in any case, they were answerable to the courts of the realm. Thomas did his best to satisfy both the King and his own sense of justice. Of course he could not, consistently with his principles, think of allowing them to be punished by the civil court; but he was willing that clerks who had been deposed for one offence should for a second offence be answerable to the King's courts. He even overstepped the penalties recognised by the canons, and caused one criminous clerk to be branded, as well as degraded, and actually trenced so far upon the royal prerogative as to banish another from the realm. But even this did not satisfy Henry, for he, too, had a principle at stake. He was willing to let the Church courts try the man and depose him; but then, said he, let them hand him over to the temporal courts, that they might punish him for his crime against the laws of the realm. No, answered Thomas; that would be to punish him twice for the same offence, which, of course, was perfectly true. And so the dispute went on in a vicious circle. It does not seem to have occurred to Thomas that he was fighting for the least defensible point of the whole Church position, and thus weakening a cause which, after all, was in its essence of priceless value to mankind. He did not distinguish between what was vital and what was of secondary importance. To him the whole matter was perfectly clear; like many people of the present day, he could put it "in a nutshell." Here was a claim that was against the rights of the Church; therefore he must resist it in the name of God. But some people can see that a nutshell will not hold the whole of the truth: to these the matter has always seemed more complicated.

So far, however, the Bishops were heartily with him, and in fact the whole Church party held the same view. At length Henry endeavoured to bring the matter to a head. At a

Great Council of the realm held at Westminster in October, 1163, he demanded bluntly whether the Bishops would obey the royal customs; whether, as he understood it, they would be loyal subjects or not. The answer of the Bishops was "Ay, saving our order;" that is, they were loyal subjects, but they made a reservation of all that concerned their duties as Churchmen, as of course they were bound to do. But by so doing they were, in effect, begging the whole question—at least, from Henry's point of view. The King broke up the assembly in furious anger, with a displeasure against Thomas which distressed him beyond words. But a conference between the two at Northampton led to nothing. The tempers of both parties were now roused, and it was a question between the demoniacal blood of the Angevin and the blood, hardly less hot, of Thomas of London.

Then another council was arranged, to meet at the royal manor of Clarendon, near Salisbury, in January, 1164; and here the demand was repeated that the Bishops should bind themselves to accept the customs of the realm. Our accounts of the conference are confused upon some points, but it is clear that Henry was so furious that his courtiers were nearly frightened out of their senses. The Bishops, "not pillars of the Church, but reeds," were "like a flock of sheep ready for the slaughter"; they dared not speak or act, but looked helplessly towards their leader, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Thomas alone held out; but at length there came to him two knights, who solemnly assured him that the demand that they should obey the customs of the realm was only persisted in for the sake of the King's honour, and that a verbal submission would end the quarrel, since there was no design of making the Church subject to any new laws. Thereupon, though not without considerable hesitation, he gave way, and publicly promised, with the Bishops, to obey the King's laws and the customs of the realm.

But whether or not the King was aware of it from the first, Thomas had been deceived. A verbal submission was not what Henry wanted, and the question was at once raised, what were these ancient customs. Thereupon the oldest and wisest of the barons, of course chosen for the purpose by the King, were bidden to search them out and write them down. The speed with which the work was done rouses the suspicion that they had been prepared beforehand; but however this may be, the Constitutions of Clarendon, when ready, were such that Becket could only feel that he had been tricked, and the Bishops too.

There are few constitutional documents that better deserve study than the Constitutions of Clarendon, and few which are

of more permanent interest, dealing as they do with the whole range of the points of contact between Church and State at the time when they were drawn up; but although in many respects they fairly represent what had actually been done at an earlier time, they are really rather an attempted settlement of the questions in dispute than a simple statement of fact. And this settlement is of such a character that in every single instance the King has his own way.

To give examples: All cases arising out of advowsons and presentations are to be tried in the King's courts; Bishops and other great persons may not leave the kingdom without the royal permission; nor may tenants *in capite* be excommunicated without due notice; and rustics may not be ordained without the consent of their lord. If a clerk be accused of any crime, he is to be tried in the King's court for whatever that court decides is within its cognizance, and then anything that is left of the poor man may go and be tried in the ecclesiastical courts. And as to ecclesiastical cases, an appeal is to lie to the Archbishop's court, and is not to be carried further without the consent of the King.

Such were the constitutions which Thomas was called upon to set his hand to; and it is not to be wondered at that he felt that to do so would be to give up everything. "Never! by the faith which I owe to God," he exclaimed; "never, whilst there is a breath in my body!" He left Clarendon humbled and full of remorse, yet resolved that the Church should not come to harm by his act, and at once wrote to the Pope, begging for absolution for the breach of his plighted word.

And now, as Thomas could not be gained to his purpose, the King was resolved to ruin him. Friendship was something, but Henry's friendship was now turned into hatred; besides, if the Archbishop stood in the way of the good order of the realm, he must be crushed. This was made easier by the fact that the Church party was now divided against itself. A few of the Bishops still held, with Becket, that there could be no compromise, and that the cure of souls itself must suffer in behalf of what was, after all, a secondary issue. Others, again, worn out by the struggle, had now fallen away entirely, and were ready, in impotent fear, to consent to anything that the King wanted. And a third and larger party, led by Gilbert Foliot, the learned and powerful Bishop of London, whom no man could ever have cowed, saw that the only thing to be done now was to make the best of a bad business, and acquiesce in the customs which they had unknowingly accepted. That, at any rate, was likely to be more profitable for the Church than fighting any longer: let them, therefore, bow their heads before the blast and hope for better things. Enlightened

Churchmanship and crafty policy for once pointed in the same direction; and Gilbert is a curious mixture of the two.

It therefore seemed an easy thing for the King to crush the Archbishop. He was summoned in ignominious wise to a Great Council of the realm, held at Northampton in October, 1164, and on his arrival found that all sorts of frivolous accusations were brought against him, the apparent object being to vex him beyond endurance. At last the monstrous demand was made that he should render his account for all the money that had passed through his hands as Chancellor. Such a thing was utterly unheard of; and besides, he had already obtained a quittance in full when he resigned the seal at the time of his consecration. Now, if not before, it was clear that the King meant to ruin him; although the common people were with him and remained so throughout, the barons and the Bishops were against him almost to a man. The Bishops in vain besought him to throw himself on the King's mercy; and Gilbert Foliot, after a last attempt to move the Archbishop, left him to his fate, exclaiming angrily: "A fool you always were, and you are now, and so I see you will be till the end of the chapter."

The Archbishop believed that he was about to lose his life; but he did not flinch. By the sheer force of his personality, and the sacredness of his office, he silenced those who came, in the name of the King, to pronounce judgment upon him; and then at length he left the Court, and the kingdom too, whilst Henry was still hesitating in anxious doubt as to what was best to be done against him.

Thomas left England on the night following All Souls' Day, November 2, and was an exile for over six years. The events of this dreary time of banishment need not delay us now. Negotiations were continually going on between the King and the Archbishop, the one aiming at securing the return of a foe who was more dangerous abroad than at home, the other trying in vain to secure the reversal of the King's ecclesiastical proceedings. The dispute was complicated and intensified by the encroachments upon the Archbishop's rights which, from the King's point of view, it inevitably made necessary. It was further aggravated by the bitterness which grew upon the two combatants, if only on account of their former close friendship, though it is clear that Becket never ceased to yearn for a reconciliation with Henry. But above all it was complicated by the fact that wherever he went Becket became the centre of political intrigues on the part of the Emperor, the King of France, or the Pope. Indeed, as it has been said, throughout the period of the exile the dispute between the King and the Archbishop is a mere side issue of European politics.

At length Henry became convinced that, at any cost, Thomas must be brought back to England. A hollow truce was patched up between them. The King managed to evade giving the kiss of peace to the Archbishop, as the latter earnestly wished, and as in fact it had been agreed; and Thomas landed at Sandwich on December 1, 1170.

The rest of the story we know well: how the Archbishop was met by enmity on all sides, and how his angry measures in reply provoked the hasty words of the King, which in turn led to the murder in his own Cathedral church on December 29, 1170. It would be a rash thing to describe it again after Dean Stanley's matchlessly picturesque account; but it is not necessary for our purpose to do so. Let it suffice to say that the murder of the Primate of All England in his own Cathedral not only roused universal horror, but helped men to realize that, after all, the struggle was a contest between the Church and the world. Thomas the Archbishop at once became Thomas the Saint in the estimation of all men; and as such, but for a comparatively short period, he has been regarded ever since.

We can see, no doubt, that Thomas was compassed about with many human imperfections. We can see that he jeopardized a great cause—the cause of religious liberty—by the rash and unwise means with which he endeavoured to defend it. We can see, as Gilbert did, that it might have been far wiser to give up a cause which was not really defensible and to strengthen the substance by the surrender of the shadow. And yet it is Thomas, and not Gilbert, who is counted as the saint. And it is right that this should be so, for assuredly the vital question with regard to every man is rather what he aspires to be and to do than what he attains to. And as long as we recognise that motives are greater than acts, and that what a man *is* is more than what he does, so long, assuredly, we must see that the popular discrimination is just, and that we rightly speak of the Archbishop as Saint Thomas of Canterbury.

W. E. COLLINS.

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## ART. II.—THE SUPPLY AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CLERGY.

THE New Sustentation Fund is a fresh proof of the vitality and the faith of the Church. A few years ago, when assault gathered around her, she showed no alarm, but with quiet and unobtrusive fidelity pursued her career, did her daily