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EDITORIAL

THE CRISIS, so called, now passed into history, brought to light some paradoxical reactions among the people of this realm. Of these perhaps the most striking was the contrast between the apparent sympathy exhibited towards King Edward by many Catholics in the matter of his proposed marriage with a divorcée and the wide antagonism aroused in non-Catholic circles, an antagonism which even the universal popularity of the King could not overcome. It is indeed a matter of some significance that the project of a king's marriage with a woman twice divorced should arouse less impassioned indignation among Catholics than among many who approve in practice, and through their Parliamentary representatives, the legalizing of easier divorce. The simple resolution of the paradox would seem to be that these Catholics faced the objective facts of the situation, whereas others preferred to be swayed by a sentimentality which has under the circumstances all the appearance of hypocrisy and cant.

It is common knowledge that we Catholics will not yield a fraction in our refusal to recognize the validity of divorce; nor was it our desire that the King should take a divorcée to wife. We earnestly hoped that some solution would be found whereby this might be avoided. But we could not see why people, who through their chosen representatives required the King to sign the divorce laws, should hold up their hands in scandalized horror when he announced his wish to marry, in a private capacity, one who had availed herself of those laws. We did not feel called to pass judgment on the private life of the King, a professed Protestant; but we did feel greatly concerned about his public life, which had already shown itself consonant in notable ways with our view of what Kingship should mean.

Many Catholics saw in King Edward a ruler who was keenly alive to the needs and the rights of the working man and of the poor, one who might be expected to put into operation some of the demands of *Rerum Novarum* and

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Quadragesimo Anno. It is not without a certain tragic irony that the abdication should have preceded by so little the inspiring joint Pastoral Letter of our English Hierarchy. The Bishops have united to sound the urgent call to Catholic Action. They emphasize the urgency of the Communist menace and the essential importance of Catholic social doctrine for the true remedying of those abuses which Communism pretends to cure. We may regret the loss of a King who seemed able and willing to help us in this cause (his visit to the South Wales coalfield was not unreasonably interpreted in this light), but the cause is not lost in his loss. By right of our better equipment we Catholics must be in the van of the opposition to Communism, and our great weapon of attack and defence must be the acceptance and broadcasting of Catholic truth. One of the most potent means to this end is, as our Bishops have pointed out, the more careful reading and wider dissemination of Catholic periodicals, whose urgent business it is to provide their readers with the instruction they look for and need. In this context we venture to suggest to our own readers the particular usefulness of BLACKFRIARS, to which so many of them have paid generous testimony, and to urge upon them the desirability of bringing our review to the notice of others. The greater financial support thus forthcoming will enable us the more effectively to assure a high degree of excellence in production, and to extend our campaign over a wider field. Our publishers enclose forms with this issue which will explain themselves and which, should you not require them, we would earnestly ask you to pass on to your friends.

While we may lament the loss of our former King, it is not to be supposed that we do not owe and offer unqualified allegiance to his successor, King George VI. He will find that the Catholics of this realm are, as always, among the most loyal of the King's subjects. We take our stand by the "notable and worthy lesson and charge" given by Henry VIII to Thomas More: "First to respect and regard God and afterwards the King, thy master." As with that great Englishman and Saint, His Majesty will find in each one of us "the King's loyal servant, but God's first." *God save the King.*

EDITOR.