

EDITORIAL

IT is an act of necessary piety, in its old Roman sense, to open this number by wishing God-speed to Fr. Bernard Delany, first and almost sole editor of BLACKFRIARS from its beginnings in April, 1920, to his election to the Provincialate in September of this year. For a brief period (1923-1925) Fr. Edwin Essex edited the review, but Fr. Bernard Delany soon returned to the editing of it and has carried it on till now. Like Mussolini, he can look back cheerfully on his decennium. It ill beseems us, his subjects, to praise him : we can only do our best to imitate him. That is the sincerest form of praise we know. In his first editorial (his charming editorials were all too rare) he spoke of BLACKFRIARS and what it aimed at. He spoke diffidently of himself, as is his wont, but confidently of his ideals : 'not unmindful of the perilous nature of our enterprise.' 'We shall try,' he said, 'to tell relevant truths, and insist on those truths that are either unknown or neglected or in danger of being forgotten.' He claimed that BLACKFRIARS 'should not be looked on as an intruder . . . one does not intrude on a battlefield.' You would have known, anyway, that it was an Irishman who wrote that.

We have, then, the hope that we may continue this perilous tradition, followers of St. Thomas in his royal thinking, under the Pope's guidance in this difficult, perplexing, bewildering age. With his fearless encyclicals to inspire us, we shall be the Pope's men.

Especially we hope to inspire amongst our laity the need for action. The Pope calls on them for action ; he has laid down the principles with which to meet the present troubles. We, the priesthood, must echo those principles, the laity must apply them. Principles are

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of faith, policies are of action. The Pope calls for action; at the present moment no single Catholic body of laymen has been moved to unfold a programme? Why?

It is dangerous to lay down a policy to-day? There is the danger that by so doing you may divide the Catholic body? Believe us when we say that there is a greater danger in doing nothing; and that the Catholic body is already divided. The Catholic youth of the industrial cities and of the farm lands, because it has failed to receive any other leadership, goes by hundreds into the Communist ranks. Perhaps this will leaven Communism with some faith? Maybe, but in the meantime these thousands are lost to us, and lost to us because we have been afraid.

We shall hope to continue this work of helping the Catholic laity to think their way through their problems, to plan correctly and courageously; further, we shall try to echo in as many ways as are possible to us the Pope's cry for action; at present we see little but inaction and reaction. We challenge the Catholic laity to come and lead us as the Pope would have us led—after the teaching he has given us and in submission to the Bishops set over us to hold us to the Faith.

We venture this, knowing that many feel the need for getting their thoughts clearly and rightly expressed and set in order, and for finding and giving to the world that waits for it the true remedy for its ills.

Primarily this must be a moral remedy, but secondary remedies are also needed, namely the wise policies that should be pursued. We are not politicians, but priests; we shall repeat to those that will listen the teaching we have ourselves received; we shall ask them to apply it prudently, but boldly, to this distressed and troubled world.

One day men will look back to this age of crisis to see what the Catholics of England did to answer the

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call of the Supreme Pontiff : ' The task We propose to them is truly difficult, for well do We know that many are the obstacles to be overcome on either side whether amongst the higher classes of society or the lower The world has now-a-days sore need of valiant soldiers of Christ who strain every thew and sinew to preserve the human family from the dire havoc which would befall it, were the teachings of the Gospel to be flouted and a social order permitted to prevail which spurns no less the laws of nature than those of God Let, then, all men of good will stand united under the pastors of the Church. Let them seek not themselves but the things that are Christ's. Let them not urge their own ideas with undue insistence, but be ready to abandon them, however admirable, should the greater common good seem to require it, that in all and above all Christ may reign and rule.'

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NOTES ON THE MONTH

THE SIGNATURE.

The original Jacobins were the Dominicans, so named from their great Paris house, Saint Jacques. Apart from legal claim to the title, there is a likeness of temper between the Order and the Club. Lacordaire in the Assembly, remember, took his seat on the Mountain. Catholics are not lacking who speak for the conventions of our time. These notes will air a side of things in danger of neglect. They will not define. They wear the cap of liberty, not the master's biretta. And so if they sometimes venture with temerity, let the signature serve as excuse. It is meant at least as a hint to reduce them to a proper proportion.