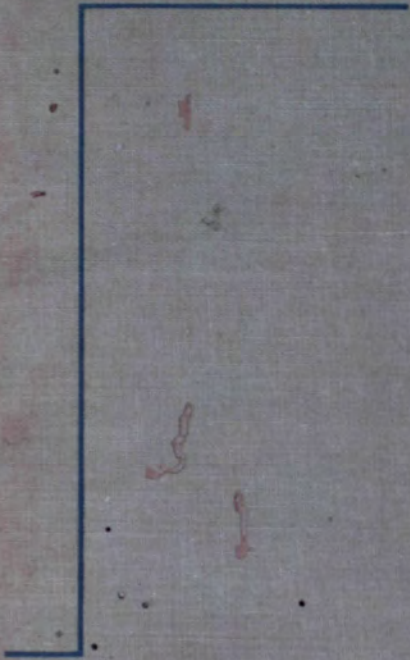
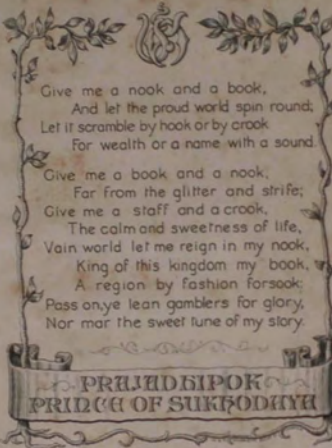


HIS WAS  
THE KINGDOM



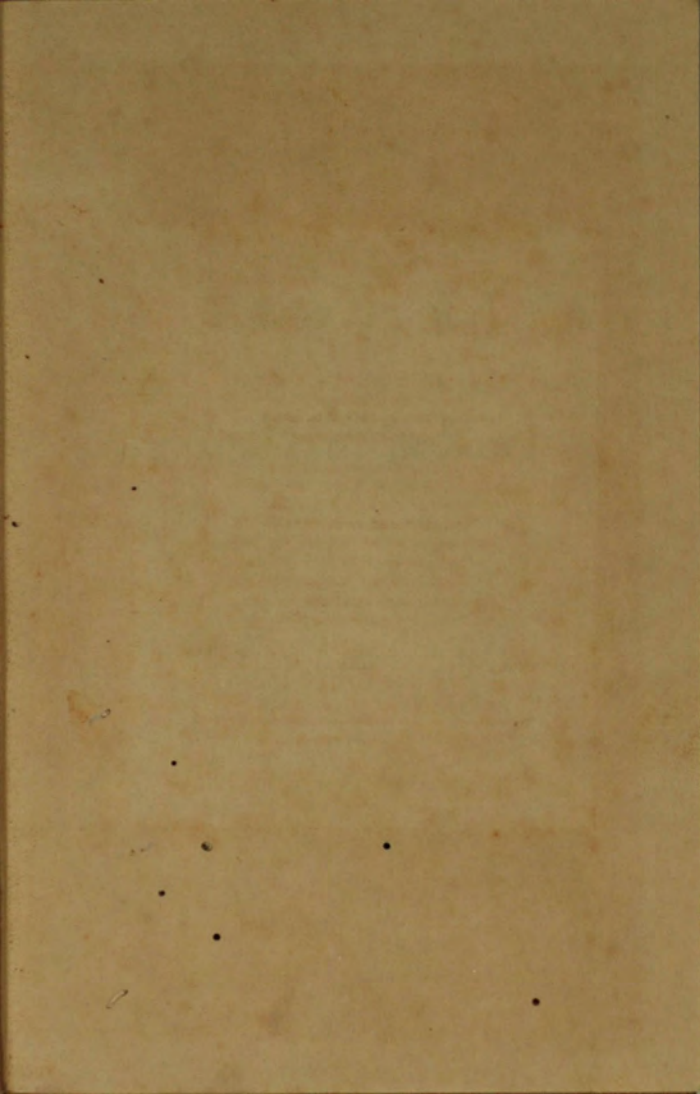
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R.J.Thompson

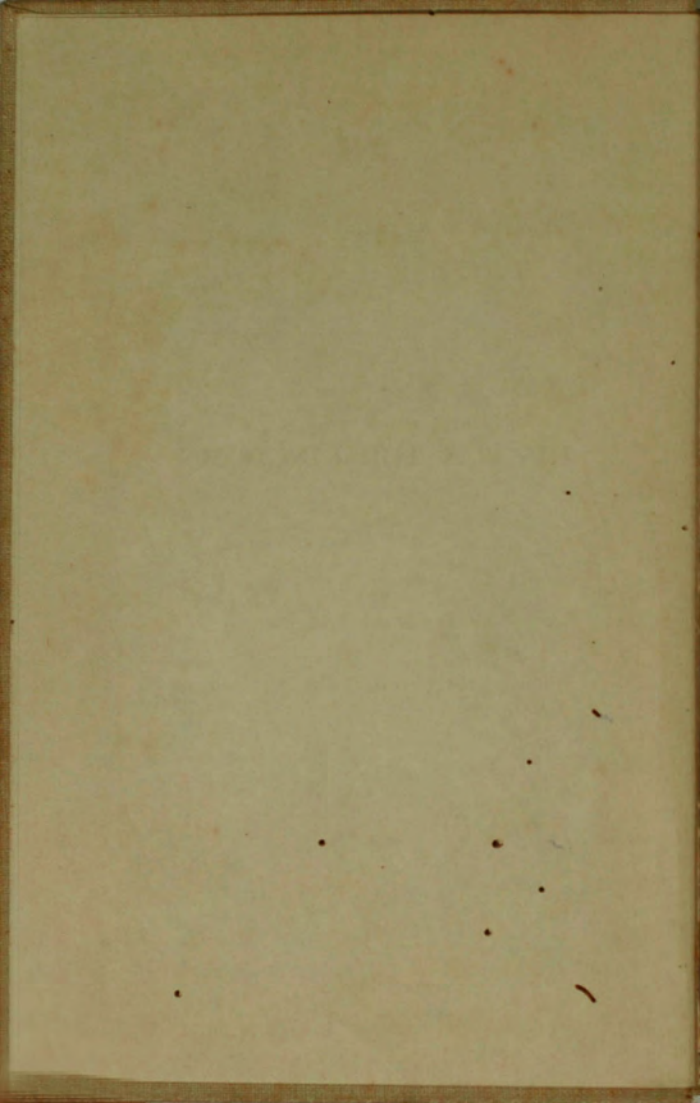


Give me a nook and a book,  
And let the proud world spin round;  
Let it scramble by hook or by crook  
For wealth or a name with a sound.

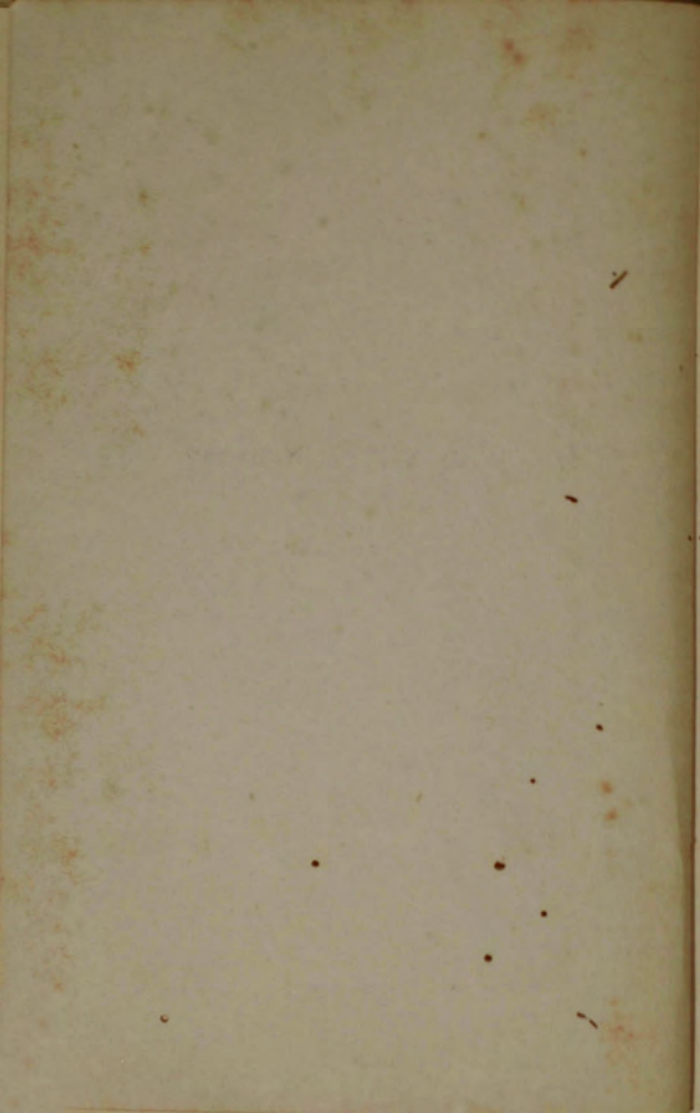
Give me a book and a nook,  
Far from the glitter and strife;  
Give me a staff and a crook,  
The calm and sweetness of life,  
Vain world let me reign in my nook,  
King of this kingdom my book,  
A region by fashion forsook:  
Pass on, ye lean gamblers for glory,  
Nor mar the sweet tune of my story.

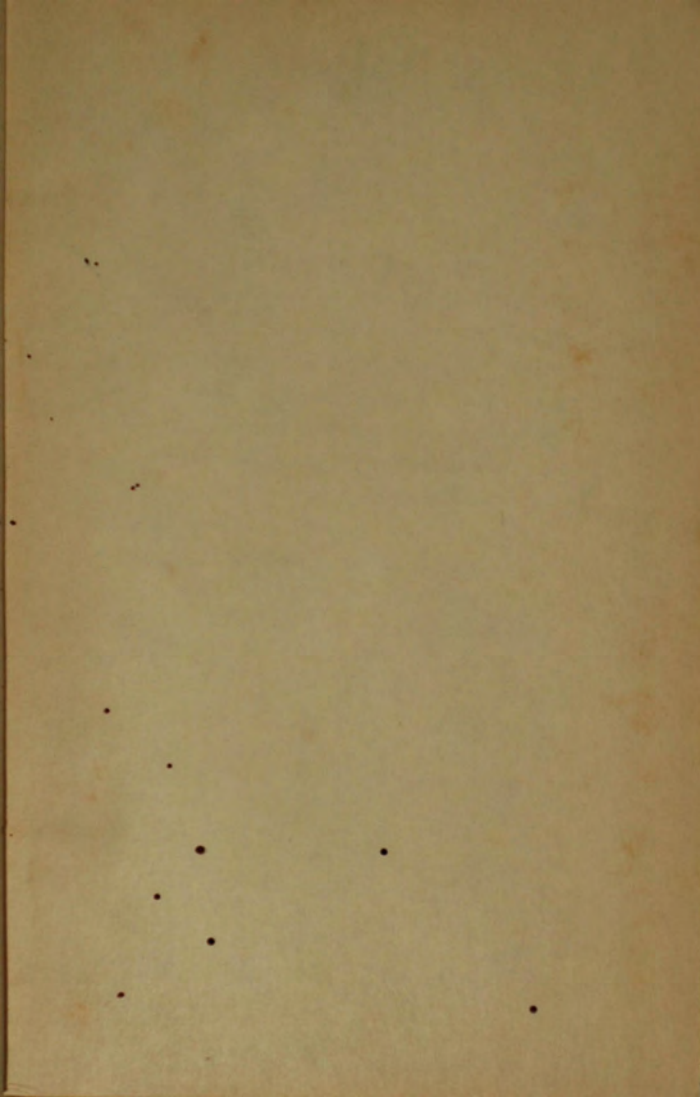
ПРАВДБИРОК  
PRIDE OF SUKFODITYA





HIS WAS THE KINGDOM







INSTRUMENT OF ABDICATION

I, Edward the Eighth, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Emperor of India, do hereby declare My irrevocable determination to renounce the Throne for Myself and for My descendants, and My desire that effect should be given to this Instrument of Abdication immediately.

In token whereof I have hereunto set My hand this tenth day of December, nineteen hundred and thirty six, in the presence of the witnesses whose signatures are subscribed.

SIGNED AT  
FORT BELVEDERE  
IN THE PRESENCE  
OF

*Edward VIII.*

*Albert*

*Henry*

*George*



# HIS WAS THE KINGDOM

*by*

Frank Owen

*and*

R. J. Thompson



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## FOREWORD

"I am convinced that where I failed no one could have succeeded."

MR. STANLEY BALDWIN.

*December 10, 1936.*

"Let there be no boasting in our pride."

HIS GRACE THE  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,  
Post-Abdication Broadcast.

*December 13, 1936.*

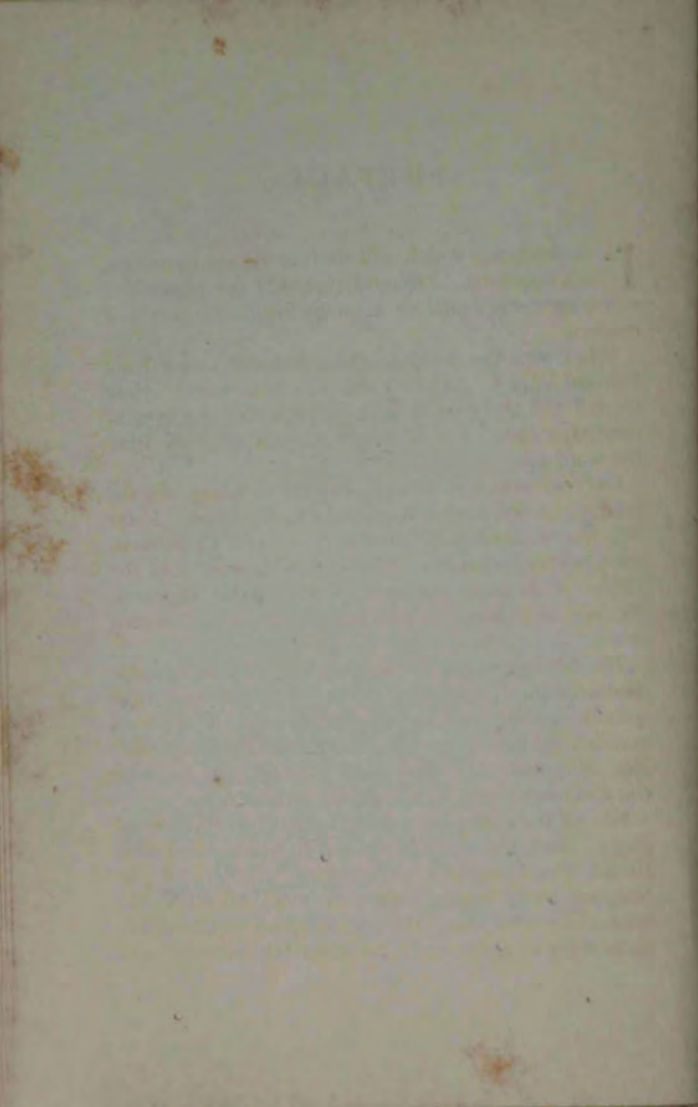
"Who can doubt that in all the events of these memorable days, God has been speaking?"

SAME SPEAKER, SAME SPEECH.

"In August the Prime Minister found it necessary to take a complete rest. For nearly three months under medical advice he laid aside his duties, and the whole vast process of British affairs at home and abroad floated majestically forward unguided by human hand, eye, or brain. . . . It was not in October, but in August or earlier that the first serious advice should have been tendered to King Edward VIII.

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL,  
in the *Evening Standard*.

*December 28, 1936.*



## PREFACE

**I**T is the press which will destroy future dynasties, said Napoleon. He estimated that the power of a newspaper was equal to as many bayonets as it had readers.

What was the weapon which brought down King Edward VIII? And how was the thing done? Here we tell the story as it took shape under the eyes of newspapermen. For it was a newspaper story from the word go.

Only when it was all over, bar the shouting, did the principal actor, the ex-King, turn to the radio. Later still, the Archbishop of Canterbury. As for Parliament, our ancient forum was dumb until the day that the Bill of Abdication was read over to it for approval. Mr. Winston Churchill, who tried to speak, was howled down.

The newspapers of the country played a remarkable double rôle. Their part began with an open conspiracy among editors to protect the King from scandal, by saying nothing about his friendship with Mrs. Simpson. It ended with a secret plot to force the King to give up Mrs. Simpson or his throne.

Not all the newspapers acted together in this second phase. But the "restraint" with which the entire British press handled the opening chapters of the Simpson story made only the more effective the vehemence with which the anti-Simpson section drove home their final demand. So effectively had the facts

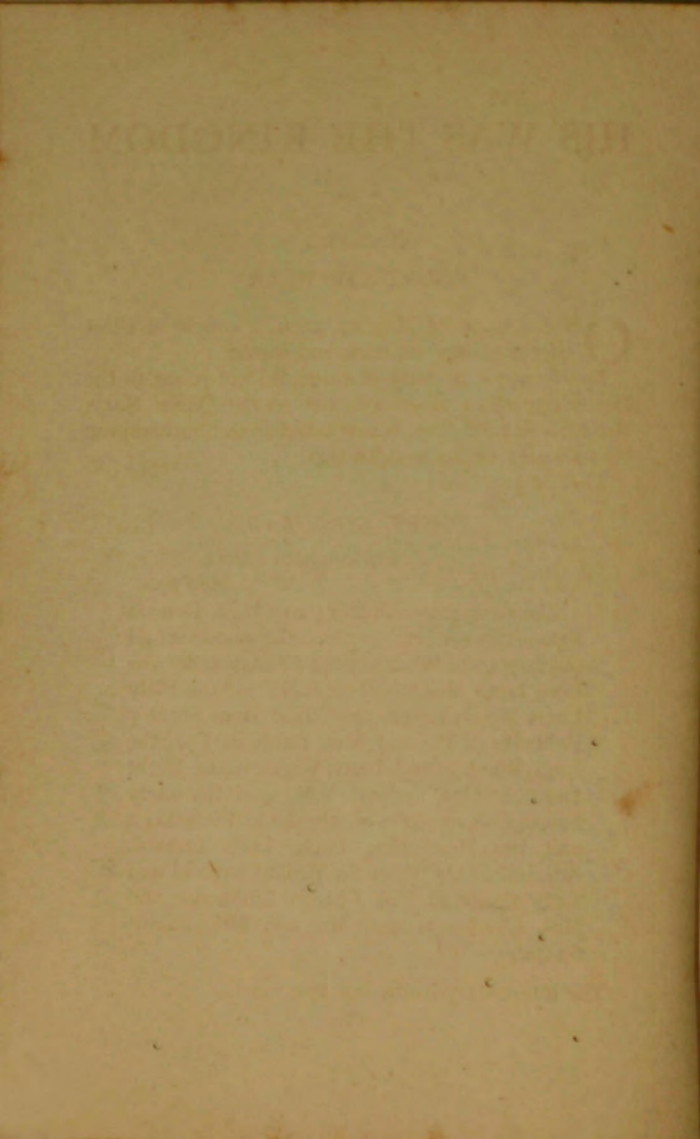
been withheld from circulation that the vast majority of the British public were dumbfounded when they were informed that there was a crisis over the King's intended marriage with an American woman.

From the morning when the British public read the first intimation that trouble was upon them, only ten days passed until they learned that King Edward had abdicated the throne.

But for newspapermen the story had begun ten months before, though none of them foresaw the end. To the beginning we now lead you.

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# HIS WAS THE KINGDOM

## CHAPTER I

### COURT CIRCULAR

ON the night of May 27, 1936, a couple of Fleet Street editors sat back and stared.

The "copy" in front of them did not relate to the Derby, run that afternoon, nor to the Queen Mary, Britain's wonder-ship, which sailed from Southampton that evening on her maiden trip.

The "copy" said :

#### *COURT CIRCULAR.*

Buckingham Palace,

*May 27.*

The King gave a dinner party at St. James's Palace this evening, to which the following had the honour of being invited : Commander the Lord Louis Mountbatten, R.N., and the Lady Louis Mountbatten, the Right Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P., and Mrs. Baldwin, Col. the Lord Wigram and Lady Wigram, the Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., and the Lady Diana Cooper, Lt.-Col. the Hon. Piers Legh and the Hon. Mrs. Legh, Lady Cunard, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Ernle Chatfield and Lady Chatfield, Col. Charles Lindbergh and Mrs. Lindbergh, and Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Simpson.

The interest lay in the last five words.

At the time of the Proclamation, however, Fleet Street knew Mrs. Simpson only as a close friend of the ex-Prince of Wales. In 1934 she was on the Riviera when he was there, and in 1935 in Budapest he danced the rumba with her a number of times.

Printing these and other stories with columns of items about the Prince's habits, dress, tastes, etc., one American editor reminded his readers of the story of George IV who married Mrs. Fitzherbert while he was still Prince of Wales. George really loved her, and defied his father and the ministers in marrying her. You must allow that editor a certain measure of prevision.

(It will be remembered, incidentally, that Prince George's union was subsequently set aside as being forbidden by the law of 1772 which requires the King's consent to the marriage of his sons. So George, who had been once well and truly wedded, at least according to the Church of England, if not the State, was then rewedded to a German princess who later ascended the throne as Queen Caroline without demur from the Archbishops. The rest of the story is that George very soon left his princess and went back to live in sin (?) and comparative happiness with Mrs. Fitzherbert.)

Let us return to Mrs. Simpson. The Budapest incident got her no more than a couple of lines in the British daily press and a photograph or so in the Mayfair tittle-tattlers. The Jubilee was the big royalty story in the summer of 1935, in October the Duchess of Kent popped in and out of the news with a baby, and then in November the third of King George's sons, the Duke of Gloucester, got married to a Scottish lady.

The Court Circular of May, 1936, started the American news-hounds back on the trail of Mrs. Simpson. The news-magazine *Time*, wrote on June 8 that she was "known to the world press as King Edward's favourite dancing partner, his companion on numerous holiday excursions."

On July 9 a new sudden electric current shot through British editorial chairs. Again the Court Circular was laid on the desk. It read :

Buckingham Palace,

July 9.

The King gave a dinner party at York House this evening, at which the Duke and Duchess of York were present. The following had the honour of being invited :

The Marquess and Marchioness of Willingdon, the Lady Diana Cooper, the Earl and Countess Stanhope, the Countess of Oxford and Asquith, Major the Hon. Alexander and Mrs. Hardinge, the Right Hon. Winston Spencer-Churchill, M.P., and Mrs. Spencer-Churchill, the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Hoare, Bt., M.P., and the Lady Maud Hoare, the Right Hon. Sir Philip Sassoon, Bt., M.P., Capt. the Right Hon. David Margesson, M.P., Sir Edward and Lady Peacock, Lady Colefax and Mrs. Ernest Simpson.

The interest on this occasion was not so much in the names of those present as in the name of one absent.

On July 13 *Time* quoted insurance rate at Lloyds against the King's marriage as shortening from 11-1

to 5-1. The next week the same news-magazine reproduced two pages of pictures of Mrs. Simpson and her house.

On July 21 Mr. Ernest Simpson stayed at an hotel at Bray with a woman who was not his wife.

CHAPTER II  
MAN—AND KING

"AN ill-omen for the new reign," people murmured at the funeral of King George in January, 1936.

As the gun-carriage bearing the coffin crossed the tramlines at the corner of Theobald's Road, the ball of diamonds, topped by a sapphire cross, fell from the Imperial Crown and rolled from the coffin to the roadway.

Once before there was a similar mishap. At the Coronation of George III one of the largest jewels in the Crown came loose and fell out. George III lost America from the British Empire.

Far back as 1903 the Hon. Ralph Shirley made prophecies that King Edward VIII would not come to the throne or that, if he did, he would be rapidly succeeded by the Duke of York. Some of these prophecies were printed at the time in a periodical called *The Horoscope*.

In Angus, Scotland, a gipsy read the hand of the Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, daughter of the fourteenth Earl of Strathmore, and foretold that she would be Queen of England.

Cheiro, famous clairvoyant and palmist, who had a vogue in London before the war (his real name was Count Louis Hamon, and he died in New York at the age of 70 in October, 1936), wrote this in his "World Predictions," reprinted in 1931 :

"It is well within the range of possibility, owing to the peculiar planetary influences to which he is subjected . . . that the Prince will give up everything, even the chance of being crowned, rather than lose the object of his affections."

The Prince became King, then gave up his crown for a woman. But did he give up anything that he really cared for? Did he ever want to be King? While he was Prince he was not known to display the least enthusiasm for the prospect. When King George V was dying his son expressed to ministers his repugnance to succeeding. If King George's last illness had been long drawn out like his illness in 1928 it is possible that Edward would have brought himself to the point of renouncing the crown in advance.

Edward did not like "the job" because he felt himself unfitted for it by temperament. In that his feeling was shared by his own father.

The Archbishops were wise after the event, and *The Times* newspaper, which lavished praise upon Edward at his accession, wrote the day after the abdication, quoting Tacitus on the Roman Emperor, Galba, "*All would have deemed him worthy of the throne, if he had never ascended it.*"

Edward was wayward. He was not 21 when war broke upon Europe. He held a commission in the Grenadier Guards, and demanded that he should go overseas with his regiment in the first days of September, 1914. Kitchener objected. "If I am killed," said Edward, "there will be three of my brothers left." Kitchener replied: "What if you are made prisoner?" Edward managed to get to France, serving on the staff of the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir John French. When he was able to enter the fighting line he terrified

and delighted his aides by his contempt of prescribed precautions. In after years he stood out as the especial champion of the ex-serviceman. A thousand stories of him in France were recounted. It does not matter that many were invented by the tellers.

Battle troops, visited by brass hats, in those days stood sullenly and silently. But to this brass hat they shouted: "How's it going, Teddy?" He encouraged the same familiarity in his tours after the war. Reproached by his family and compared critically with Lord Lascelles (now the Earl of Harewood) who married Princess Mary, he answered: "Lascelles gets royaller and royaller. I get commoner and commoner."

He attended boxing matches, races and night clubs. After a war in which boys were introduced brutally to life—and death—no bishops considered themselves called upon to offer homilies on the conduct of the heir to the throne. As for the public they said "Young Teddy is a chip of old Teddy." King George in 1918 was a respected, but not a loved figure.

Edward toured the Empire, urging trade. He was the best of the commercial travellers, British Bagman No. 1. He added to the freedom of soldiers' talk, the freedom of commercial travellers. The flattery of newspapers said that his public utterances were penetrating. In fact he has seldom voiced an original idea. But he phrases ideas with freshness and vigour, and the words are his own; all the more odd because his private conversation is commonplace.

His tastes are simple. He likes dancing, and Mrs. Simpson danced better than any of the others. He likes whisky strong (the Windsor family have not been teetotal. Gladstone tells how Queen Victoria

mixed *whisky* with her port). Edward prefers films to theatre, has no music in his soul and reads the same number of books as Mr. J. H. Thomas. Not even the literary recreation of Britain's Prime Ministers, detective thrillers (Mr. Baldwin) or Wild West romances with happy endings (Mr. Lloyd George) interest him.

He picks up all his ideas through conversation. When you say something to him his mind works like a recording machine.

The royal memory may fail, with persons. Enemies who rejoiced in his fall were some with whom he had dined and drunk, and passed without a sign a month later. However, at this time of day there is no need to discuss the myth of Great Men Who Always Remember. Napoleon forgot few things, but everyone knows that when he inspected the Guard he stopped at the eighth man and said: "Weren't you at Marengo?" Sure he was, and that was why he was told to stand eighth in the line.

Is Edward capable of sincere personal loyalty? He gives intense and single-minded devotion to the person who holds his affections at the moment. By that person his opinions upon a multitude of subjects are governed. A clever adviser will guide him by suggestion, for his likes and dislikes are violent, and his obstinacy can be compared with that of a drove of mules.

After Edward fell from his high estate some said that he was pushed from his throne because he cared too much for the poor. The Catholic press in traditionalist style presented him, in violent columns, as the King of the Beggars.

Did Edward feel for the poor? Yes, most certainly. He expressed frequently the desire to help "those



poor devils." Mrs. Simpson, an intelligent woman, encouraged him in this, and perhaps urged him to overstep the bounds which politicians have considered proper. The sympathies he displayed are those of any decent liberal minded citizen. The vast forces that moved society and caused acute misery in the midst of actual plenty he comprehended no better than most of his people. Trade slumps and trade booms were "Something Bad or Something Good." Why they happened, or *how* he had no notion.

Edward had a charm to overcome many of his limitations. When he mingled with India's "untouchables," or kissed the wounded soldier so frightfully disfigured that he was put apart from his fellows, these were acts that sprang spontaneously from a generous heart. This Prince was entirely honest to his own emotions. The most attractive personality of all the Hanoverians, he reminds you of the last of the Stuarts, Bonnie Prince Charlie. In an age when the strength of monarchy resides in dull monarchs you may sometimes wonder with Colonel "Josh" Wedgwood how many will toast in coming days "The King" and mean another than the one that wears the crown.

Happily, perhaps, for his fame, Bonnie Prince Charlie never became King Charles III. So he lives on in Highland hearts as the gallant and chivalrous hero of a thousand legends. Edward, Prince of Wales, took on the title and dignity of King Edward VIII. He is judged here as King, not Prince, for as King he will be remembered.

Was he a good King? Two stories they tell. The first is that he was too much of a King. They say that he interfered unduly with his ministers; that he called up government departments by telephone

demanding to see certain State papers at once; that he summoned ministers to his presence and said: "I won't have this, or that!"

When as King of Britain he visited his old principality of Wales and viewing the fearful wreckage of ruthless industrialism, exclaimed: "Something will be done," while derelict Rhonddha took hope, Whitehall took panic. Said the government secretariat: "This man is overriding constitutional government."

The *Daily Mail* in a vigorous leader praised the King's initiative, comparing his energetic intervention with the lassitude of the government in tackling the problem of mass distress. Next day *The Times* ponderously rebuked the *Daily Mail*, hinting that government by King was the least desirable of all things in the most perfect of (democratic) worlds.

When the crisis broke, this sinister conception of Edward VIII as a potential Charles I was exploited among certain sects of the Socialist party. They fell for it—with a bump.

Now the other story: Edward was too little of a King! They say—Crown Ministers, Ambassadors and Court Officials—that when they submitted important State documents to him he forgot, mislaid, or put off answering them. Days the Foreign Office were delayed in answering one or the other of Hitler's rude replies, telling Mr. Anthony Eden that he would get the German demands eventually. Sometimes the documents were held up at Fort Belvedere, sometimes nobody in the Diplomatic Service knew where to find them.

A story was circulated that Edward was pro-German and that Mrs. Simpson was the Nazi missionary. Mr. William Gallacher, the Communist M.P.,

gave expression in the House of Commons to this suspicion. It derived solely from Edward's natural affinity for the race of his origin, his respect as soldier for a valiant enemy, and Mrs. Simpson's private personal friendship with the German ambassador, Herr von Ribbentrop, and his friends. It was powerfully used, *sub rosa*, to influence trade union circles against King Edward.

Edward lost friends. He behaved brusquely to old faithful servitors of his father. At Sandringham especially he "fired" old retainers with a high speed American efficiency that could hardly endear him to the neighbourhood. He brought American chefs into his household—and at the end of a month he pitched them out.

Edward read the newspapers, not only *The Times* and *The Telegraph*. He reacted to the slick, quick suggestions of the popular press. And he thought that he understood the English people. He never appreciated the immense hidden strength of the English middle class. He despised their canons of "respectability."

They brought him down as they brought down Parnell and Dilke. All the ballyhoo of forty years—and he was Prince Charming all the way—did not survive ten days of full-blast calumny. Mothers who had seen in their own sons a replica Prince of Wales, were offended by the sudden knowledge that HE was about to marry a woman who had divorced two husbands, and was an American.

Wrote Arthur Brisbane before he died, America's premier editorial columnist, bitterly: "Had Edward chosen an Abyssinian princess descended from Solomon, she would have re-invigorated the stock of Windsor

with her blood. Also she would have been 'royal,' so no complaints on that score. Finally she would NOT have been an American."

In that sentence you may see part of the tragedy. No English King, and no English man has ever been more popular in the United States than King Edward VIII. Had things gone otherwise he might have helped to re-unite two English-speaking nations.

### CHAPTER III

#### MRS. SIMPSON

**W**AS she a Baltimore landlady's daughter? English society said it, 1936.

Did her people come over (to England) with the Conqueror, 1066? American genealogists were ready to affirm it.

Bessie Wallis Warfield was born on June 19, 1896, at Monterey, Maryland. Her mother, Alice Montague, belonged to a Virginian family. She married Teackle Wallis Warfield, a Southerner, also of old stock. Years later, when both mother and daughter had become figures in a larger society they spent a lot of money excavating for ancestors.

It was discovered that Richard Warfield, coming from England in 1662, had founded a family and settled in Anne Arundel country. It was claimed that this successful colonist was descended from Pagan de Warfield, a Norman knight who followed in the train of William the Conqueror. His share of the loot of England was a manor near Windsor. Domesday Book records it as Warfield's Walk.

Just before the "crisis" broke, Mrs. Simpson asked an uncle in Baltimore to send on the documents relating to her ancestry and copies of the Warfield crest. He wrote back refusing, and said that if she was in America, where she should be, she would not be needing them.

Teackle Wallis Warfield did not live long after his

marriage to Alice Montague. At his death he left her almost penniless. That is where the Baltimore boarding house episode comes in. Widow Warfield took in paying guests. Some biographers of her daughter have explained that the paying guests were relatives, which apparently casts a mantle of gentility about an honest method of making a living.

A relative who was good to Wallis in those days was Uncle "Sol" Davies Warfield, President of the Seaboard Air Line Railway. He sent her to the fashionable schools and launched her in Baltimore society. In 1916 he gave her away at her wedding to Lieut. Earl Winfield Spencer, of the U.S. Navy Aviation Corps.

Her first marriage lasted for eleven years, but long before the law courts broke it they had parted company. To Shanghai the Lieutenant went. To Europe Mrs. Spencer, sightseeing.

She divorced him at Warrenton, Virginia, in 1927, on the ground of desertion, and returned to Europe. On July 21, in the following year, she was married in Chelsea to her second husband, Mr. Ernest Aldrich Simpson, beating Lieut. Spencer to it by a short head. He was united to his second wife on September 4, 1928.

Lieut. Spencer, however, led in the next divorce stakes. Mrs. Simpson obtained a decree against her second husband in Ipswich Assize Court on October 27, 1936. Lieut., now Commander Spencer, was divorced by Mrs. Miriam J. Spencer on June 16.

Mr. Ernest Simpson had not escaped marital troubles. *His* first wife, Dorothea Parsons Dechert, had divorced him. He was born in America of British parentage. In the war he enlisted in the Brigade of Guards and was a brother officer of the Prince of Wales. He came to live in England and engaged in shipbroking.

The Simpsons set up house in Mayfair. Mrs. Simpson is attractive in appearance, brown hair, grey-blue eyes, a generous mouth with a square smile. Her figure is slim, her feet pretty and her ankles neat. She dresses in things to suit. Biography, the primrose path through history, is her favourite reading. The voice is strident Yankee, no southern soft tone in it, but what she says is often shrewd when she forgets about wisecracking. King Edward VIII liked the wisecracking.

Mrs. Simpson shakes clever cocktails. Her bridge is indifferent, and her golf. She understands what to order to eat.

In 1931 she was presented to King George and Queen Mary.

Report said that it was Thelma, Lady Furness, an American, who introduced her to that circle.

By the summer of 1933 Mr. and Mrs. Simpson were frequent visitors at Fort Belvedere, the Prince of Wales's country retreat near Sunningdale. Mrs. Simpson, who decorated her own apartments with taste in flowers, discovered new delights in the Prince's hobby of flower gardening.

In London the Simpsons drew into a circle of friends that included Lord and Lady Louis Mountbatten, the Hon. Piers Legh and the Hon. Mrs. Legh, Lady Cunard, Lady Oxford, Lord and Lady Brownlow, Lady Colefax, Sir Philip Sassoon, Lady Mendl, Mr. Duff Cooper and Lady Diana Cooper, Mrs. Evelyn Fitzgerald, Mr. "Chips" Channon and Lady Honor Channon. Among those who visited the Simpson's home at Bryanston Mansions were Viscount and Lady Halifax. There were also American writers such as Alexander Woolcott and John Gunther ("Inside Europe").

In 1935 Mrs. Simpson appeared at Aintree and Ascot with the Prince of Wales and was snapped by press photographers in the usual way.

In 1936, when he was King, and the story of a great love affair was the talk of every newspaper office no photographs of them were used by the press until seven months of the reign had run.

Then in August came the cruise of the "Nahlin."



#### CHAPTER IV

### THE CRUISE OF THE "NAHLIN"

**J**ULY. Fleet Street's taverns (there are eighty within the mile) hummed with the kind of "news" that Fleet Street's taverns ever dispense.

"There was a divorce coming." "The Archbishop had refused to crown the King." "Mr. Baldwin had talked plainly to the King. Edward had replied: 'If you're not careful I won't attend your coronation!'"

Mr. Baldwin, as all the world has been told, never reads the newspapers.

(You should go one day to the chess room beyond the Members' smoking-room in the House of Commons. There you might see Britain's Prime Minister thoughtfully studying the Rothermere and Beaverbrook press. *The Times* is delivered at home.)

However, Fleet Street has its friends in the Government. Did nobody report in the right quarters what the reporters were saying? Can it be the fact that Mr. Baldwin knew nothing until he returned from his holiday in mid-October and "found that there was coming to my office a vast volume of correspondence expressing perturbation and uneasiness at what was then appearing in the American press?"

If Britain's Prime Minister is really three months behind the news (even though it is unprinted) perhaps he should cultivate the acquaintance of newspaper men if not their newspapers.

Maybe it is that Mr. Baldwin studies the British

newspapers only too closely? In Britain they still held their peace about the big story, though the Americans and the French were long since in full flight.

July 30 the *Daily Mirror* told that King Edward had chartered Lady Yule's 1,500-ton yacht "Nahlin" for a cruise under sealed orders. She was described as a miniature luxury ocean liner and was built at a cost of a quarter of a million pounds in 1930 by John Brown & Co. who built the "Queen Mary."

On August 3 the *Daily Telegraph* gave a list of guests. Among them, said that newspaper, are Lord and Lady Louis Mountbatten, the Earl of Dudley, Lady Cunard, Mr. Duff Cooper and Lady Diana Cooper, Lord and Lady Brownlow, Sir Godfrey Thomas and Sir John Aird were mentioned elsewhere. Mrs. Simpson's name appeared nowhere. The destination of the ship was concealed by a silly subterfuge that she was bound for the Baltic.

On August 9 the King flew from Heathbrow Aerodrome, Middlesex, a private ground, to Calais. Wing-Commander Fielden, Captain of the King's Flight, was the pilot. At Calais the King entered the Orient Express and travelled to Sibenik on the Yugoslav shore of the Adriatic.

He was incognito, as Duke of Lancaster.

At Salzburg, on the way, a press photographer snapped him with Mrs. Simpson. The camera was seized by the police, subsequently released. The picture was reproduced in the British press, cutting out the lady. From Sibenik it was reported that the King left the train smoking "a large Baldwin pipe."

On August 11 the *Evening Standard Diary* announced that Mrs. Simpson was in the party.

At Novigrad a Belgrade photographer disguised himself as a fisherman and took snaps of the King sunbathing. The King laughed at the trick. On August 16 the *Sunday Referee* reproduced on its front page a ten inch picture of the King and Mrs. Simpson.

The *World's Press News*, a periodical for journalists, the same week told how two official requests had been made asking that as little as possible should be published of the King's holiday.

The *Sunday Dispatch* (Lord Rothermere) on its front page told "Why there are no pictures of the King."

"His Majesty . . . like many of his subjects, is on holiday. Photographs and stories of his shore excursions on the Dalmatian coast are being sent to English newspapers in great numbers.

"Unless these contain matter of proper national interest—such as the whereabouts of the King—the *Sunday Dispatch* will not publish them, believing that its readers realise and respect the King's natural desire for occasional respite from the public attention focussed upon his movements by responsibility and tradition.

"The *Sunday Dispatch*," the declaration concluded, "makes this announcement in fairness to other Sunday newspapers which may be contemplating a similar decision, but which might be deterred if there were no agreement."

Next day the *Daily Express* published a picture of the King rowing a dinghy round the "Nahlin." He appeared alone. The American papers showed that Mrs. Simpson was sitting in the stern. She had been blotted out from the British pictures.

Some newspapers at this time printed pictures of Princess Catherine of Greece, hinting at possible

marriage with England's King. William Hickey, *Daily Express* columnist, wrote on August 20 between the lines for those who knew "Girl whose name has been most often mentioned as queen-to-be denies truth of story indignantly. Well, maybe it's someone else. . . ." Edward, in fact, was driving through the streets of Athens with Mrs. Simpson by his side. The pictures were not printed by any British newspaper.

The King inspected the Greek Navy and passed on to Istanbul, where Kemal Ataturk fêted him, treating Mrs. Simpson with marked attention. It was reported back to Whitehall that the King had invited Ataturk to visit London without consulting the British Government. To the officers of the Turkish Navy he gave the presents he had bought for the officers of the "Nahlin." The crew of the "Nahlin" liked the King, called him "Yon queer fellow." Mrs. Simpson they did not like.

Edward travelled homewards in the Turk dictator's own train. Private reports from journalists covering the story said the King had never been in better temper. The change was confidentially ascribed to his absorbing interest in Mrs. Simpson.

The *News-Chronicle* declared that the King's visits to the heads of the Greek, Turk, Bulgarian and Yugoslav and Austrian States was a political move to restore confidence in Britain after the collapse of sanctions against Italy.

By now English readers of the American magazine *Time* and the alert British weeklies, *News Review* and *Cavalcade*, shared with newspapermen and Mayfair the "low-down" on the cruise of the "Nahlin." For Fleet Street's special edification a sailor from the yacht dictated a log of proceedings. The dog-eared copy made the rounds of the clubs and pubs.

On September 14 the King, flying from Zurich, landed at the airfield from which he set out. He went almost immediately to Balmoral.

Now, for a change, you may turn to the newspapers to see what happened next. The dynamite, as before, was not exploded by the "sensation-mongering press." It was fired by the King's own order. The Court Circulars tell.

Balmoral Castle, *September 19.*

The King arrived at the Castle this morning from Buckingham Palace.

Balmoral Castle, *September 23.*

Mrs. Ernest A. Simpson and Mr. and Mrs. Herman L. Rogers have arrived at the Castle.

Balmoral Castle, *September 30.*

The King left the Castle this evening for London.

The Duke and Duchess of Kent, Commander the Lord Louis Mountbatten, R.N., and the Lady Louis Mountbatten, Lieut.-Commander and Mrs. Colin Buist, Mrs. Ernest A. Simpson and Mr. and Mrs. Herman L. Rogers have also left.

Something not told in the newspapers was that on September 23, after deputing the Duke of York to open Aberdeen's new Royal Infirmary, the King muffled up, smoking a pipe, waited outside Aberdeen Station in his car to meet Mrs. Simpson and her companions. She took her place by his side, the Herman Rogers's took the back seat.

At Balmoral, in Good King George's day, the arrival of the Royal Family was a day of pain and duty for the tenants. The lairds were summoned to dine. They arrived, their ladies kid-gloved to the shoulders, and took their places in a line according to rank. The King and Queen entered, followed by the other members of their family, and then the bobbing began as the procession passed. After dinner the Queen retired to her drawing-room with the ladies. In turn each one was led to her by a lady-in-waiting as she sat knitting and given ten minutes conversation, consisting of a series of well-aimed queries. The King and the gentlemen appeared for a few minutes general talk and then everyone went thankfully home.

Under Edward the folk arrived and were rushed after a quick drink into the cinema where a couple of American films were shown, followed by a "home-made" production of the "Nahlin" cruise. Then the King, appearing in the gallery, shouted: "Come on! Dinner!" and the party trooped to the table. Afterwards, as they hung around, one who knew him intimately said: "Would you like us to go now, sir?" To which he replied gratefully: "Well, I would rather," and then ran himself to the front door to order the car.

Discontent spread when it became known that King Edward intended to cut down the Balmoral staff. When he returned to London a few days later the legend of Bonnie Prince Edward was dead.

CHAPTER V

IPSWICH

*The Times*, November 25.

LEADER: "THE KING'S DEPUTIES"

*"It is the position—the position of the King's deputy no less than that of the King himself—that must be kept high above public reproach and ridicule, and that is incomparably more important than the individual who fills it. . . . The King's deputy, like the King himself, should be invested with a certain detachment and dignity, which need not at all preclude his contact with all sorts and conditions of people, but which are not so easily put on as a change of clothes."*

NINETEEN minutes at the Ipswich Assizes on October 27, 1936, filled pages of the American newspapers on the following day. In that space Mrs. Wallis Simpson, of Beech House, Felixstowe, and Cumberland Terrace, Regent's Park, London, secured a decree nisi of divorce, with costs, against her husband, Mr. Ernest Aldrich Simpson.

The suit was undefended, and there would have been nothing to make it different from the usual run of such cases save the invasion of newspaper and camera men, British and American. So great was the crush that tickets of admission were issued.

Photographers attempted to take pictures of Mrs. Simpson entering the court. They were hustled away

by police, who had been assembled in numbers unprecedented for what was, on the face of it, an ordinary divorce case. Movie cameramen were forbidden to set up their apparatus near the court, and an enterprising section who had installed themselves the previous day in a room overlooking the court found the door opened to them by a polite police inspector when they arrived.

One American, representing a New York newspaper, arrived in England and was unable to get a ticket at the last minute to admit him to the courtroom. A little before 2 o'clock in the afternoon he climbed over an eight feet wall into the precincts of the court. He landed in the arms of a policeman.

In the court itself there were left vacant a number of seats; these were the seats which Mrs. Simpson had to face while giving her evidence. The reporters, about thirty in number, could see only her back.

It was at 2.17 that Mr. Justice Hawke arrived, with the customary flourish of trumpets without, a ceremonial survival which made a deep impression on the Americans. The case of "Simpson versus Simpson" was then called, and heads craned forward as Mr. Norman Birkett, K.C., rose and said:

"I appear in this case with my learned friend, Mr. Walter Frampton. I call the petitioner at once."

New York newspapers printed a verbatim report of the evidence.

Some British newspapers sent reporters who took a verbatim for the information of their editors. The news was not passed on to the public.

Even if the newspapers had wished to break down their self-imposed censorship at this point it would have made no real difference. The ten-year-old



Judicial Proceedings (Regulation of Reports) Act forbids the publication of "unsavoury" evidence.

This Act was bundled through Parliament in a hurry at the end of 1926. It is styled "An Act to regulate the publication of reports of judicial proceedings in such manner as to prevent injury to public morals." The excuse given for this restriction of the freedom of the press was that the newspapers were indulging in a degrading competition by featuring the pornographic aspect of divorce suits.

This is all that the British newspapers could say, and they placed it in a modest position at the bottom of the column on an inside page :

"The marriage took place at Chelsea Register Office in 1928. There are no children. Mrs. Simpson gave evidence, and servants from the Hotel de Paris, Bray, testified to misconduct by her husband in July with a woman whose name was not disclosed during the proceedings."

The Judge showed the greatest distaste for the proceedings. He plainly indicated his belief that the case was brought in an Assize Court to avoid publicity.

Mrs. Simpson was ushered at once from the court as a second case was called. The newspaper men also started to leave, but the scraping of feet and general jostling caused the ushers to call loudly for silence. The reporters complained afterwards that the doors had been locked until Mrs. Simpson's car had gone.

As soon as they were released they surged into the street, bowling through a staring crowd of townspeople. In a reserved room of a neighbouring shop a telephone line to New York was being held open. Within a few moments the story was crackling through the Atlantic ether.

Meanwhile Mrs. Simpson had been hurried to her car. Photographers who had planned to follow found a police car swung across the street. The only picture they got was of each other trying to get into the court : it was sent by radio, appeared with the modest caption : " Police restraining the curious outside Ipswich Assizes yesterday."

In a message from its London correspondent sent the following day, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* said :

" Mention of Mrs. Simpson for the first time in all London newspapers this morning gave a fillip to the gossip about the 40-years-old American woman and her friendship with King Edward VIII of England, a friendship which, on a word from the strong Newspaper Proprietors' Association here, most London editors have barred from print."

The gossip was still mainly in the West End. Millions of English people had never heard of Mrs. Simpson, and the publication of the divorce case on the back pages of provincial newspapers, under such discreet headings as " Undefended divorce case at Ipswich Assizes," aroused no curiosity. American correspondents in this country, looking at the meagre reports in the London newspapers, said : " Not one reader in a thousand will guess there is anything unusual in this case."

They were surprised by the absence of descriptions of the scene at Ipswich, how Mrs. Simpson looked in court, or how she behaved while testifying ; for the American public had been treated to all these particulars.

All the same, the more observant began to note a rising tide of indignation against the American press for giving attention to Mrs. Simpson and her friendship

with the King. This anger grew as the demand increased for American and French newspapers. Letters began to pour into Downing Street. They asked whether a stop could not be put to the "libels" in the American press. They protested against the fantastic announcement "over the air" from radio stations in the United States, that King Edward would marry Mrs. Simpson as soon as her decree nisi was made absolute.

Many of the letters came from Canada, where the people were genuinely shocked and bewildered. "What truth is there in these stories?" they asked.

The appetite for American editors for matter about the personal life of the King was such that some called upon their European correspondents not to relax their efforts even at the height of the Presidential election. Others ordered that all members of their English staffs were to concentrate on this one subject.

The campaign extended to reputable United States journals and even to some Dominion newspapers, and it reached its climax with the divorce.

In the United States it was firmly believed that an official censorship had been placed upon the British press. This conviction grew with the news that copies of *Time*, the New York news-magazine, had been circulated in this country with pages taken out.

A question or two was asked in the House of Commons to discover whether such a censorship existed. The suggestion was denied, the fact being that the cutting was done by the distributors of the magazine.

The *Morning Post* has given this explanation of the British silence:

"It is no part of the function of the press to publish gossip possibly injurious to such an institution as the

monarchy. At the time when the King's friendship for Mrs. Simpson passed from the region of vague rumour for that of substantial fact, the friendship seemed to be a matter of private rather than of public life. It concerned the man rather than the King.

"The British press very properly ignored it. It was not prompted to do so by any influence outside. It was not—and could not have been—compelled to do so by any form of censorship, official or unofficial. The reason was to be found in the general sense that the King, who must bear a greater public burden than any man, was of all men most entitled to have his private life kept private. This general sense was reflected in the British Dominions."

There were other considerations. The British monarchy had been built up to a dangerous eminence. The King might have faults like other people, but it was considered bad manners to mention them. The average reader of newspapers resented comment unfavourable to royalty; and Edward enjoyed such personal popularity that it would have been the height of audacity for any single newspaper to quote the American gossip.

The only sign that anything was going on under the surface of the British reticence was an occasional covert comment in *The Times* leaders towards the end of November.

The one quoted at the outset of this chapter is an example. *The Times* were supposed to be discussing the appointment of Mr. Duncan to be Governor-General of South Africa.

The "heavy of the heavies" fired another salvo on the day after the *Daily Mail* had praised the King above his ministers for his interest in South Wales.

It plainly intimated that the business of governing rested with the King's Government and not with the King.

On November 30 *The Times* delivered its third warning. This time in praising Parliament, it said :

The House of Commons " has shown the power of democratic institutions to give a country steadiness and balance, and at the same time the capacity to act in difficult times. Given the continuance of this spirit—and it shows no sign of weakening—the House of Commons may well prove itself what the country has often required in similar times during its long history, but has seldom been given—namely, a council of state which is able to demonstrate its solid strength in any crisis that may arise, whether foreign or domestic."

These occasional rumblings alone impaired the peace that reigned over the land. Nevertheless the calm was felt to be loaded with thunder. In every newspaper office it was said that the hour was coming when the battle would be joined.

Where would the signal flash ? When ?

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SILENCE THAT SHOUTED

BRITISH newspapermen are as convinced as any others that all news that is news should find a place in a responsible newspaper's columns. The voluntary suppression of the case of Mrs. Simpson was an experiment that, in the light of its consequences, may not be repeated.

For it failed in the first place to suppress.

The representatives of the American newspaper over here are enterprising, but they could never have maintained the flow of information and misinformation cabled on the subject save with the co-operation of the British elements involved in the situation.

The conspiracy of silence first made the Simpson case a court secret, which is no secret for long, and then assured that it would be fought out by the disastrous methods of rumour and counter-rumour.

The process, said the Conservative New York *Herald-Tribune*, accumulated political and constitutional implications that otherwise might have been evaded in time. It exploded in a governmental crisis that might never have been allowed to develop if the British press had treated Mrs. Simpson by sounder standards of news values. The British democracy was abruptly presented with a grave issue on which it had been equipped to pass judgment only by unsubstantiated word-of-mouth reports.

The *Herald-Tribune* commented: "It is a lesson worth remembering."

"Red Ellen" Wilkinson, M.P., reported that her fellow members were being showered with cuttings from American newspapers, most of which promptly went into the library fires.

Silence of the British press fostered the general impression in the House of Commons that "this is just the American yellow press doing its stuff." Some of the best elements in the House, said legislator Wilkinson, stood firmly by this attitude. When they found out that they had been fooled they were furious.

Meantime the Americans went at it hard and often. Early in October the *San Francisco News* reported that the two Archbishops had declined to attend a function at which Mrs. Simpson was due to be present.

On October 18, nine days before the divorce, Mr. Baldwin, according to his own account, got so worried that he telephoned the King to ask if he could call and see him. The meeting took place at Fort Belvedere on the 20th. Mr. Baldwin talked to Edward like a father, pointing out the dangers of the divorce, the chief of which appears to have been that it could no longer be kept quiet and tongues would wag.

Wag they did. For weeks past the American front pages had been enquiring: "Will the King wed Wally?" On October 26, the day before the divorce, Mr. William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* was able to inform the Transatlantic public categorically in headlines an inch and a half deep: "KING WILL WED WALLY." The news, written with restraint, was by the hand of the newspaper proprietor himself, who visited King Edward at Fort Belvedere and got the story for himself. It was unsigned.

Hearst wrote :

" Within a few days Mrs. Ernest Simpson, of Baltimore, Md., U.S.A., will obtain her divorce decree in England, and some eight months thereafter she will be married to Edward VIII, King of England.

" King Edward's most intimate friends state with the utmost positiveness that he is very deeply and sincerely enamoured of Mrs. Simpson, that his love is a righteous affection, and that almost immediately after the coronation he will take her as his consort.

" It is stated definitely that King Edward is convinced that this is both the right thing to do and the wise thing to do.

" He believes that it would be an actual mistake for a King of England to marry into any of the royal houses of the Continent of Europe, and so involve himself and his empire in the complications and disasters of these royal houses.

" He believes further, that in this day and generation it is absurd to try to maintain the tradition of royal intermarriages, with all the physical as well as political disabilities likely to result from that outgrown custom.

" His brother, the Duke of York, has been extremely happy and fortunate in his marriage to a lady of the people, a commoner, so-called.

" King Edward believes that the marriage he contemplates would be equally happy, and that it would help him to do what he wants to do—namely, reign in the interests of the people.

" Finally, he believes that the most important thing for the peace and welfare of the world is an intimate understanding and relationship between England and America, and that his marriage with this very gifted



lady may help to bring about that beneficial co-operation between English-speaking nations.

" Primarily, however, the King's transcendent reason for marrying Mrs. Simpson is that he ardently loves her, and does not see why a King should be denied the privilege of marrying the lady he loves.

" So, in all human probability, in June, 1937, one month after the ceremonies of the coronation, will follow the festivities of the marriage of King Edward VIII of England to the very charming and intelligent Mrs. Ernest Simpson, of Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A."

The Boston *Record* went five inches deep with headlines the same day, announcing " KING SETS JUNE FOR WEDDING TO MRS. SIMPSON."

On November 2 the " greatest story in the world " took a new sharp turn. For the first time the word " abdication " appeared in print. The Chicago *Tribune* said that the King would offer to go unless his wish to marry was respected. The New York *Daily News* reported Mr. William Gallagher, Communist M.P. for West Fife, as saying in the lobby of the House of Commons: " Whatever he does no workers' representative need worry."

The New York *Daily Mirror* (November 9) discovered that the wedding was fixed to take place in Buckingham Palace and on November 14 that she was going to be " The King's wife, but not the British Queen."

On November 20 Mr. Baldwin thought it time to go and see the King again.

## CHAPTER VII

### "SOMETHING WILL BE DONE"

IN the autumn of 1936 a strange moving took place among the British people. Everyone began to march.

The men of Jarrow marched to plead the case of their derelict town before the Prime Minister. The bishops blessed them.

The men of Clydeside and South Wales marched—under Communist auspices. The bishops did not extend their patronage to these "hunger marchers" who protested against the Means Test, nor did the Labour leaders in Transport House.

The Blind marched.

Sir Oswald Moseley marched—and the Jews, Communists, I.L.P.-ers, Socialists and Liberals marched against him.

Out of these confused and confusing perambulations there arose one plain thing. The mind of the country was turned to the distress of the forgotten men in the "Special Areas." And in the midst of all this the King went dramatically to South Wales.

With him travelled stocky, bull-voiced Ernest Brown, Minister of Labour, and perky, cherubic Kingsley Wood, Minister of Health. Two Socialist M.P.s wrote to the *Daily Herald* to say that they found it not in their hearts to meet His Majesty. Their constituents found it otherwise.

The King travelled overnight and woke in a railway siding to a glorious blue sky and brilliant clear cold morning. South Wales hung out their banners and their brave rags to cheer the man who had been their Prince for 25 years.

Five times the police cordons were broken. It started in Pontypridd. In Merthyr police, ex-service-men and ambulance workers joined hands vainly against the delirious crowds. In Aberdare 20,000 people surged about the King's car and sang till they were hoarse.

In one village the King stepped from his car and looked on the scene of desolation, long, twisted pipes, rusting engines, broken down pit-head gear, grass growing over the slag, and he stepped back, appalled, and deeply moved. From the winding gear of deserted pits hung tattered Union Jacks and the Red Dragon flag of Wales. The crowds pressed about him to touch his shoulder.

In one case when he was seen by the crowd a dead silence fell, and then the tension was broken by a group of voices lifted up into the hymn "Crugybar," a Welsh dirge that begins with a wail and ends on a note of triumph.

Groups of miners trudging home from the pits wearily stood to salute the King like soldiers. At the end of the long day, after a sixty miles tour, the King passed by the night shift at Abercwmboi, just going down. They waved their miner's lamps in the dusk as the King drove up to the gates of the colliery.

Edward was profoundly affected. "Something will be done for you," he said, a message that will be remembered long after the valedictory denunciations of the Archbishops are forgotten. Several times during the

day the King turned to the people and said: "I am going to help you."

There was a King's party in Wales that day.

At night the King dined in his train with Captain Geoffrey Crawshay, the Commissioner for South Wales, and with Sir George Gillett, the new Chief Commissioner for the Special Areas. He summoned to that meal the late Chief Commissioner, Mr. Malcolm Stewart, whose memoranda to the Government on what could be done had been consistently shelved.

The next day the newspapers leaped to the story. With one voice the leader writers praised the King. They could do no other, reading the moving accounts elsewhere in their newspapers by the reporters who had accompanied the King.

A fortnight later, when it was all over, a stunned and sullen South Wales received the news that the King had gone. Some said: "They pushed him out because he tried to help us." More bitterly others, "We've been used."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE STORM BREAKS

IT was on Monday, December 1, that the threatening clouds began to form over Fleet Street, and the executives of the newspapers were warned to be prepared for the biggest story since the war.

Fleet Street knew on this Monday that the Cabinet Meeting so hurriedly called the previous Friday had been concerned not with the situation in Spain, but with the King and his determination to marry Mrs. Simpson.

It was said that *The Times*, under famed Geoffrey Dawson, personal friend of the Prime Minister, was preparing thunderbolts. A leading article had been set up and held for several days, printers told in the Salisbury Club, the printers' home-from-home.

The *Morning Post* were pleading in high quarters for the first authoritative revelation of what was happening . . . so rumour reported.

Nevertheless, it was understood that the story would not break for another 24 hours . . . if then.

There was a great deal of talk. It was said that there had been a private meeting of bishops at the House of Lords. At the Cabinet Meeting on Friday, Mr. Baldwin had revealed the whole position to his colleagues. He had advised the King against the intended marriage. The King had refused the advice.

The crisis had reached an acute stage. Mr. Baldwin had been asked to go to the King again, and to say

definitely that the Cabinet would give up office if the King insisted on his action.

Elaborate precautions had been taken to ensure that Mr. Baldwin's visit to the King that Friday night was kept secret. No mention was made of the audience in the Court Circular—a most unusual procedure.

It was given out that he was staying in Town that night to attend a "private dinner." Late in the evening he called his car and was driven to Buckingham Palace.

There he entered the Palace through a little-used door and was taken through the long corridors to the King. The interview lasted, so it was said, two hours, and it was a frank one on both sides.

The King had said that he was determined to go on with his project, that he had as much right as anyone to a private life. Mr. Baldwin had replied that in that event the Cabinet had authorised him to say that they could not continue as the King's advisers. Then he took his leave without any definite reply from the King.

That was the story that Fleet Street heard. Mr. Baldwin made no reference to any such interview in his narrative of events in the House of Commons when the crisis ended. Some recalled that the Sunday papers had printed several pictures of the Duke and Duchess of York in their happy domesticity, with the little Princesses and their dogs. Others remembered the enthusiastic welcome given to the Duke and Duchess in Edinburgh the previous week, and a specially fervent leader in *The Times*. Said waggish political pundits: "There is a Yorkist Party again. Where is the Popish Plot?"

At 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 2, news-editors

in Fleet Street were springing from their chairs and shouting: "It's begun! Look at this!"

The Press Association tape machine was flashing through the news that the Bishop of Bradford had publicly uttered words of reproof to the King—such reproof, said the *Birmingham Post* next day, as nobody, whether cleric or layman, had thought fit to address to the King of England for many a long day.

The Bishop who thus fired the first shot in a campaign which was to have such dramatic results was Dr. Alfred Walter Frank Blunt, the only bishop in England who had openly identified himself with Anglo-Catholicism. There can be little doubt that he did it unwittingly, for he said himself later that he meant to deal only with the King's churchgoing. An enterprising newshawk discovered that it was not until November 17 that the Bishop first heard the rumours about the King's friendship with Mrs. Simpson, and his speech had been prepared before that date. Further, he was in the habit of preparing his speeches well in advance and of learning them by heart.

This one was delivered to the Bradford Diocesan Conference. Dr. Blunt opposed a suggestion by Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, that certain changes should be made in the Coronation service.

Dr. Barnes had suggested that the Coronation rite be "reshaped," and added: "Many Church people would prefer that the Coronation should be independent of the Communion Office, and that the Sovereign could make, quietly and unobserved, such personal religious preparation for the Coronation as he deemed right."

He pointed out that there were a vast number of people "for whom the sacrament of Holy Communion

was something alien," and asked whether it was not desirable to make the Coronation service an occasion of worship which would invite the spontaneous co-operation of the greatest possible number of religious citizens.

Dr. Blunt's reply was that such a severance would go far towards weakening the religious significance of the Coronation ceremony. And then he said :

"The benefit of the King's Coronation depends, under God, upon two elements—first on the faith, prayer and self-dedication of the King himself—and on that it would be improper for me to say anything except commend him, and ask you to commend him, to God's grace, which he will so abundantly need, as we all need it—for the King is a man like ourselves—if he is to do his duty faithfully. We hope that he is aware of his need. Some of us wish that he gave more positive signs of his awareness."

The fact that the King went to church much less often than his father had been the subject of much comment in Church circles. As far back as March 30 *Time* had told of editors getting letters asking when the Court Circular would announce that the King had been to church. Posed *Time*: "Who'll be the unknown clergyman to bring *that* up?" The name turned out to be Blunt. But in every newspaper office his words were interpreted as going far deeper than an admonition to go to kirk.

Nevertheless Fleet Street hesitated that night, and the London press went no further than to carry reports of the Bishop's speech. Towards midnight thunder was heard in the north as the tapes began to unload voluminous extracts from leading articles in the big provincial dailies. The battle had opened.



Wednesday, December 3, found thousands of His Majesty's subjects beyond the Trent extremely puzzled as they noted the comment in their newspapers about the Bishop's speech.

The *Yorkshire Post*, traditionally Conservative and pro-Baldwin, said outright that Dr. Blunt must have had good reason for so pointed a remark. Certain statements which had appeared in reputable American journals had too plainly a foundation in fact. Deep disappointment must result if there should develop a dispute between the King and his ministers such as must almost inevitably raise a constitutional issue of the gravest character. This leader was distributed over the tape at 8 o'clock at night for the use of all newspapers taking the Press Association service. It was now plain that the mine had been sprung.

As the night wore on quotations from other northern newspapers' leading articles rolled in. Said one news-editor: "Our civil war has begun—like Franco's in the farther parts of the kingdom. The garrisons are rising everywhere."

To us it now appears plain that an understanding, maturing into a plan, had long been in existence between certain powerful leaders in the community to bring the King into a more subservient state. The view was expressed that unless his wings were clipped now there would be more serious trouble later. It is impossible to believe that all the implications of the wing-clipping business had not been thoroughly thought out. The situation was studied—and the man. The plan went forward.

Did the *Yorkshire Post* know that the Bishop of Bradford was going to make that speech? Why did all the other northern papers leap to arms on the

same issue and at the same time? It is answered that the Bishop of Bradford's speech was known to colleagues in the Church weeks before it was delivered, that it was seized upon as providing the necessary spark, and that its contents were made known in good time. The *Yorkshire Post* is regarded as the mouthpiece of the Government in the north. Mr. Anthony Eden formerly wrote notes on politics for this newspaper. By marriage he is related to the Hon. Rupert Beckett, Chairman of the *Yorkshire Post*.

In four newspapers—the *Birmingham Gazette*, the *Yorkshire Observer*, the *Northern Echo* and the *Nottingham Journal*. the articles were identically worded. The *Birmingham Post* referred to the gossip about one particular phase of the King's private life, but there was no mention of the marriage project; and people who had never heard the rumours or the name of Mrs. Simpson had to work out for themselves what it all meant. The general strain of the leaders was "affirmation of the occupant of the Throne to give a lead according to standards which could be generally observed and publicly acclaimed." Such phrases sounded odd to the ears of citizens fresh from cheering the cinema news-reels of His Majesty's visit to the depressed area of South Wales.

The London evening papers of Wednesday did not pursue the matter beyond printing in early editions summaries of the provincial newspaper comment, and the situation did not develop until the early afternoon, when the city editors of Fleet Street began ringing headquarters with the news of a fall of prices on the Stock Exchange. The stock markets are more sensitive to rumour than any other place on earth, and there is none where rumour has such swift feet. On

this afternoon the markets heard rumours that the King and the Cabinet were at loggerheads, and that the Ministry were threatening resignation. British Government securities fell one and a half points, and some of the industrial favourites lost several shillings. As one City editor put it: "Sellers came into the markets and attempted to deal with unwilling buyers." In the insurance markets the rate against postponement of the Coronation jumped from 20 to 25 guineas per cent., double what it was a few days previously.

The tension decreased as the Prime Minister went to the Palace at 6.45 p.m. to see the King. That night the "national newspaper" presses roared with the first news of the crisis given to the English people. Even then the subject was approached with a curious timidity. In some cases the early editions referred only to a "grave issue" which had arisen between the King and his ministers. In later editions the issue was explained as "the King's desire to marry."

And only one newspaper mentioned the name of Mrs. Simpson.

Why this hesitation? The explanation is that up to midnight it was believed that there were possibilities of a solution, that the King might have given way. The talk between the King and Mr. Baldwin that night was known to have been critical.

This was the story.

Mr. Baldwin argued with the King for an hour. Once more, the King flatly refused to alter his decision. The Prime Minister appealed to him to consider the possible results of his action. The King asked for a little more time to think things over—but held out no hope that this would lead to any change in the situation.

Hurrying back to the House of Commons, Mr.

Baldwin had another conference with ministers, snatched a dinner—which was interrupted three times by the arrival of papers and messages for him—and then crossed to Downing Street, where he conferred until late at night with Sir John Simon, Home Secretary, and an authority on Constitutional law.

In the Parliamentary lobbies it became known that the crisis had suddenly become acute, that the King's abdication was a possibility, that the alternatives were the King's abdication or the immediate resignation of the Cabinet.

The editor of the *Daily Herald* sped to the House of Commons and was in conference with Mr. Attlee, Socialist leader, for hours. Mr. Baldwin conferred with Mr. Attlee and with Sir Archibald Sinclair, leader of the Opposition Liberals.

Possibilities, probabilities and improbabilities of the political situation were excitedly canvassed.

What would happen if the King dismissed the Cabinet? Could the King carry on alone, without a Government? Would Opposition leaders accept office—and could they survive a meeting with Parliament if they did?

From "authoritative" quarters came the answers to the queries.

The King *could* carry on alone, but, as only Parliament could raise taxes, he would soon find himself unable to pay for the public services—the Army, Navy, Air Force, Social Services, the Law Courts, a hundred and one others things paid for by the Treasury.

No, Opposition leaders would not accept office. They stood behind the Government on the issue.

If they did accept, they would find that the majority of the House of Commons were opposed to them.

So the rumours grew in volume and wealth of circumstantial detail.

It was true, but not generally known that that day a minister who was an intimate friend of the King had lunched with him, in private, and had tried to persuade him to change his mind. He refused even to consider this.

As the hours passed we heard that the resolution of the King to persevere with his plans had strengthened rather than diminished. He is said to have expressed that determination to Mr. Baldwin at the Palace that night. He banged his fist on the table. "I am the first man in the land," said His Majesty, "and apparently the only man in the land who is not permitted to marry the woman of his choice."

At 3 a.m. when the last decisions had been made and the presses were going at full speed to turn out the thousands of extra copies which would be needed, one of the authors of this book wrote in a diary: "The latest news is that King Edward will abdicate within a week, and that the Duke of York will succeed to the throne.

"The New York correspondents are busy cabling extracts from the American papers, which are naturally hitting the news up to the ceiling. Arthur Brisbane, celebrated columnist of the *New York American*, bursts out in condemnation of the outbreak of 'middle-class hysterics' in England.

"In the normal way every newspaper sends out a variety of contents bills. To-night there is only one: THE KING; GRAVE ISSUE.

"The Press Association have already supplied a fully detailed account of the King's short reign of just under a year. On looking through it one noticed

that memorable bulletin which so profoundly affected all Fleet Street on the night of his father's death: 'The life of the King is moving peacefully to its close.' It seems to me this night that the reign of his son is moving to its close, although not peacefully."

## CHAPTER IX

### ZERO

ON Thursday morning, December 3, the insurgent artillery thundered all along the line. Now at last it was possible to discern the array of the forces in the field. The newspapers that one might have expected to defend the King whatever came, the very household troops, were ranged against him, *The Times*, *The Telegraph* and the *Morning Post*.

Boomed *The Times*: "A remarkable address by the Bishop of Bradford let loose a flood of comment yesterday in most of the newspapers of northern England. . . . One or two of them hinted, clearly without full knowledge, at a grave Constitutional issue to be raised by a conflict between the King's intentions and the advice of his ministers. But nearly all of them saw that the real justification of Dr. Blunt's remarks lay (in the words of the *Yorkshire Post*) in 'certain statements which had appeared in reputable United States journals and even in some Dominion newspapers, and which cannot be treated with indifference.' It is a remarkable fact that the American campaign of publicity so long and so widely ignored in this has now reached a point at which it goes far beyond that side of His Majesty's life which may justly be held to be private."

The newspaper did not mention the name of Mrs. Simpson. It will be noted that *The Times* comments on the lack of "full knowledge" on the part of pro-

vincial papers, implying that *The Times* itself had the advantage of such knowledge. Then again there was no "grave Constitutional issue." That was to be made clear later by Mr. Baldwin in his narrative to the House, and it might be asked whether, since throughout all this the King was behaving in Mr. Baldwin's words as "a great gentleman," he should not have been protected from the barrage of insult and contumely that from this day was fired at him, and grew more unrestrained as it continued.

The *Morning Post* "shrank from believing that there was solid foundation for the current gossip, because if it were true the gravest injury to every national and imperial interest must result." Was the *Morning Post* the only newspaper in Fleet Street denied knowledge of what had happened?

The *News-Chronicle* surprised everyone by putting forward, in a leader covering a column and a half, a suggestion that the King should marry Mrs. Simpson, but in his capacity as the Duke of Cornwall, the result being that she would be neither Queen of England nor Empress of India. The *News-Chronicle* laid it down that it was for the King to say, like every other man, who should be his partner for life; but it was for Parliament to say who should be Queen of this country and to regulate the succession. The leader went on to say that "the public would wish the King to marry, if possible, an Englishwoman, and many would not desire as Queen of England a woman who had previously been married."

The *Daily Express* gave the news prominence, but abstained from comment.

The *Daily Mail* besought the King to do his duty to the high conception of the Throne.



The *Daily Herald* said nothing. It just printed an article—a very good article—about the Crown and the Constitution, written in one hour by Professor Harold Laski.

And what is the Constitution? It consists of the King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. Or, in other words, the King in Parliament.

Nominally the supreme executive power in the State resides in the King. In fact executive acts are decided by the Cabinet, which recommends these to the King. By constitutional usage the King is obliged to act upon the advice given to him by his ministers.

Therefore in the case of Mrs. Simpson, the two courses before the King seemed perfectly clear.

If he took the advice of his ministers, he would renounce the marriage project and continue to rule.

If he did not accept it, he would either have to abdicate or dissolve Parliament. The question whether Parliament could depose the King was already occupying the minds of many. The Statute of Westminster would make that matter difficult, for it raised a position of which our ancestors never dreamed.

Since their time the British possessions abroad have grown into nations. They are now independent states joined to the mother country by one common bond, allegiance to the Crown. This bond is a symbol of their free association.

The Statute of Westminster passed in 1931 recognised their independence. And it states that any alteration in the law touching the succession to the throne or the Royal Style and Titles shall require the assent of the Parliaments of all the Dominions as well as of the Parliaments of the United Kingdom.

Here might be the first test of this act which created the British League of Nations.

. . . . .

All the morning papers sold out. Everywhere there was the most intense excitement. With the evening papers the flood fairly broke. Every paper came out with pages of pictures, life stories of the King and Mrs. Simpson, chronological records of the crisis. The photographs showed the King and Mrs. Simpson together at Ascot, at restaurants, in the yacht "Nahlin." They had been stored in every office and the public gasped at them.

All this produced a boom in the sale of evening papers which astonished even their shockproof publishers. People walked along the streets reading them, bought new editions as from the street news-stands the sellers intoned again and again: "New statement, new statement." Clubs, cafés, pubs and trains were filled with controversy, families were divided, and old friends parted in angry disagreement. Even in the offices of newspaperland there were bitter arguments, and in the taverns the gossip flowed as fast as the ale.

This afternoon Mr. Baldwin was the centre of interest in tense scenes when the House of Commons met. The House was crowded, Mr. Baldwin strode in smartly, looking pale, strained, but smiling. His entry caused a striking demonstration. A large group of Conservatives raised a cheer, and this was taken up spontaneously all along the Government benches; to a small extent, on the Opposition side.

After all, the Prime Minister had not long recovered from his illness, and everybody had been reading in

the papers how he had been at Buckingham Palace late at night and holding constant consultations at 10, Downing Street. The cheers were, therefore, a tribute to his toughness as well as to the man who has to bear public responsibility.

But Mr. Baldwin had only one thing to say that mattered, and it was this (it was in answer to a pre-arranged question of Major Attlee, leader of the Socialist Opposition): "There does not at present exist any Constitutional difficulty."

There was a stir of interest as Mr. Churchill, loyal and devoted friend of King Edward for many years, rose and asked: "Would Mr. Baldwin give the House an assurance that no irrevocable step would be taken before a formal statement had been made to Parliament?"

The Prime Minister said guardedly that he would consider that question. He then left the House, followed out by Cabinet Ministers, junior ministers, Whips, secretaries, and private members. In five minutes there were not twenty members left on the seats where lately they had been so crowded.

### LATER

We hear news of the beginning of a movement on behalf of the King. At a big non-party meeting in the Albert Hall this evening attended by Winston Churchill and Sir Walter Citrine, the T.U.C. chief, among other notables, a voice calls out: Long live the King! and there is round on round of cheers.

In the House of Commons Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, most independent of Labour members (he won't even belong to the Independent Labour Party), puts down this resolution:

"In the opinion of this House, the oath of allegiance which they have already taken to King Edward VIII is unaffected by any form of Coronation ceremony, or by the presence thereat, or absence therefrom, of any dignitary or personage whatsoever; nor will they substitute any other for the King of England."

The King has spent the day at his country house, Fort Belvedere, but this night he returns to Buckingham Palace. There is a bit of flurry caused by the news that the Duke of York has called to see him. Mr. Baldwin has another audience, and the Archbishop of Canterbury is also noted as a visitor. The reporters say that Mr. Baldwin looked grave as he left, and that Edward and the Archbishop haven't got along too well.

There has been a secret meeting of Bishops at the House of Lords to discuss the position of the King as head of the Church of England. Among the proposals was that the ceremony of anointing the King at his Coronation with consecrated oil should be dispensed with. Told that the King would abdicate rather than give up Mrs. Simpson, one prelate burst out with "Let him abdicate!"

At the Dominions Office the High Commissioners of Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand sit around waiting to hear the news. . . .

At midnight the King comes out from Buckingham Palace in his big saloon. The cameramen are waiting, and the flashes of their Sasha lights produce a series of blurs and streaks which do credit to the yarns that the royal car was travelling at a speed near 70 miles an hour. The cameramen didn't know it was the King till the plates were developed.

Mrs. Simpson slips out of London, where gaping crowds have been looking at her windows all day, in a car piloted by Ladbroke, the King's own chauffeur, is reported early in the morning at Newhaven, boarding the Dieppe boat . . . a mysterious veiled lady, wrapped in furs.

CHAPTER X  
WHICH WAY?

*Friday, December 4.*

TO anyone acquainted with the facts, Mr. Baldwin's statement the previous day would have been clear evidence that if any difficulty was being raised the King was no party to it. Yet this day was chosen by *The Times* to give the monarch what the Americans call "the works."

The one objection, said the newspaper, and it was an overwhelming objection to the marriage which His Majesty is believed to have projected, "is that the lady in question has already two former husbands living, from whom in succession she has obtained a divorce, on the last occasion at a recent date and in circumstances which are matters of fairly common knowledge. That is a formidable objection, as many will think—but for reasons which no doubt are not universally regarded as convincing in the case of any man. It is an overwhelming objection in the case of the Sovereign—if only because it would scandalise a very large proportion of the nation and empire and therefore do infinite harm to the whole institution of the British monarchy."

Meanwhile the lady whom *The Times* disliked so much was rushing through France in her large black Buick car, hotly pursued by other cars carrying journalists.

In Fleet Street, commented the New York *Herald-*

*Tribune*, "the most significant event of an exciting day was the swing-over of Lord Beaverbrook's and Lord Rothermere's papers to what is being alluded to everywhere as 'the King's side.'

"Lord Beaverbrook's *Evening Standard* straddled the fence to-day, but his *Daily Express* showed a definite swing of the balance to that section of the press which is crying that the greatest possible disaster to the British Empire would be the abdication of the King."

In fact, the struggle had now reached its apex, both on the open battlefield of the press and behind the scenes in council and corridor.

The *Daily Telegraph*, leader of the powerful Berry group of newspapers—they were prominent in the opening skirmish in the north—wrote the King a brutal ultimatum. It was titled "Awaiting the King's Decision." That decision, declared the *Telegraph*, must be irrevocable and cannot be long delayed (this within 48 hours of the first revolt). The leader threw a couple of stones at Mrs. Simpson and introduced the word abdication for the first time in the British press. "Abdication is in the background; the depth of the background depends on His Majesty himself."

The New York newspapers, including the Conservative *New York Times*, devoted practically their entire front pages to news of the crisis. The *Post* extended an invitation to the King and Mrs. Simpson to come to America to live in case Edward decides to abdicate. Enthusiastic lady partisans began to form "Wallis-for-Queen" clubs.

The House of Commons met at 11 o'clock in the hope that Mr. Baldwin would have something to say; but he had nothing. He explained in curt language that

he had just come from a Cabinet Meeting, and it was clear that this Cabinet Meeting had been adjourned for only a few moments while Mr. Baldwin hurried to the Chamber to postpone his statement until the afternoon.

Mr. Churchill at that early hour was in his seat, and he repeated his question of Thursday—whether the Prime Minister would assure the House that no irrevocable decision would be taken before a full statement was made to the House.

Mr. Baldwin, who seemed touchy that this point should be repeated, retorted that he could say nothing more. For this he had a round of hear-hears from Conservatives; clearly their sympathy was not with Mr. Churchill.

When the House met in the afternoon Mr. Baldwin was in a position to disclose how the situation lay. The statement was the outcome of his audience with the King on Thursday night. At this audience the King had drawn attention to the suggestions made in certain newspapers, and sought Mr. Baldwin's opinion as to the possibility of a marriage with Mrs. Simpson after the passage of an Act of Exclusion. Such an Act would have excluded her from the status of Queen and any children of the marriage from succession to the Throne.

As soon as Mr. Baldwin had returned to Downing Street the Dominion High Commissioners had been summoned to the Dominions Office to be informed of what had transpired at the audience. They had been in communication with their Governments overnight.

At 10.30 a.m. the following day, Friday, the Cabinet had met in the Prime Minister's room at the House. They then had before them the replies of the Dominions



Governments to the proposal which had been submitted to them.

So this afternoon, Mr. Baldwin was able to tell the House that there was no such thing as a morganatic marriage known to our law; that the Government were not prepared to introduce legislation dealing with a particular case; and that he was satisfied from inquiries he had made that the Dominions would not assent to such a change.

This statement shut the door on any further negotiations. If the King adhered to his resolve, it appeared that either the Government must resign or the King must abdicate.

Mr. Baldwin had a firm ring in his voice, and he received cheers from every side of the House. Mr. Churchill sat with frowning, downcast features a few yards away. . . .

As members hurried out of the Chamber the situation was this: the Government had two-thirds of the House behind them. The remainder, scattered over all parts of the House, was made up of those who thought there was no difficulty about the marriage, and those who did not like it, but were not prepared to risk abdication or a conflict with the King over it.

The minority were threatening war on Mr. Baldwin. They seemed likely to rally behind Colonel Wedgwood's pro-marriage resolution, which appealed to those of the Left who detested the idea of an ecclesiastical veto on the marriage. Late that night their numbers were reported to amount to 70. Sir Arnold Wilson was protesting that the King should not be forced in a blaze of publicity, to make a hasty decision. The political clubs, normally deserted at the week-end, were crowded.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE "3-P. ALLIANCE"

THE bogey of a King's Party was now brought into full and gratifying operation.

It scared the Labour Party, who have lived with the ghost of Fascist dictatorship so long that they cannot discern the very substantial form of Mr. Baldwin's dictatorship. He now permitted them to terrify themselves with talk of a Constitutional crisis, and conjure up frightful visions of absolute monarchy, the Star Chamber and all that.

When it was all over and the King was out—without Parliament saying one word—he blandly informed them that there never had been a Constitutional crisis—and they have hardly realised yet that simple Mr. Baldwin has dished them once again.

For 48 hours this week-end, to a superficial observer, it seemed that a division of the country was possible. In London Winston Churchill was credited with seeking to organise a party of King's friends, and the issue of a manifesto over his name pleading for time for the King to make up his mind coloured this legend. In reality, there was no party of King's friends. There was only a party of King's enemies.

They held the superior power in the press, the parliament and the pulpit, a mighty "3-P. Alliance." Almost unitedly the provincial press denounced the marriage, and they were well supplied with ammunition by *The*

*Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*; the third leg of the popular press front was the *Daily Herald*, which made the point that the King was bound to abide by the advice of his ministers. For this attitude the *Herald* received bouquets from *The Times*.

Said Labour's newspaper on the Saturday: "The present impact of the King's personal desires upon public affairs is not the fault of the Government. He is as free as ever to choose a Queen or to change his advisers. No pressure was put upon him by his ministers, any more than by the press of this country, to bring the matter to a head."

This is simply not true. The anti-King press, metropolitan and provincial, had been pounding away for three days, and as we have seen had almost got to the point of issuing him a time-limit for surrender. The pro-King press had so far only feebly replied, begging for delay. It was plain that those who had launched the attack still held the initiative. For as soon as M.P.s had arrived in their constituencies that week-end they discovered an overwhelmingly strong wave of opinion hostile to the marriage. Even in South Wales the King's popularity had gone. Cinema audiences saw in cold silence the films of his recent visit to the valleys where they had all cheered themselves hoarse. Lancashire and Yorkshire members found those counties solid against the marriage, and even indifferent whether the King abdicated or not. Scotland was dead against the King.

The *Express* newspapers and the *News-Chronicle*, fighting for time, urged that the King should be allowed to marry the woman of his choice. Laws were man-made, they could be changed. Why was the morganatic marriage out of the question? Mr.

Baldwin should tell why. He should take the nation into his confidence. How had the issue been put to the Dominions? Lord Rothermere's *Daily Mirror* gave the whole of its front page to "Tell us the facts, Mr. Baldwin."

All in vain. The flood tide of antagonism was too strong, and all that the King's flatterers had once said he meant to the nation, his services, his individuality, his leadership, his common touch with the workers, was forgotten. "Puritanism and Parliamentarism still remain dominant in England," said the *New Statesman*.

It should have mentioned first before these, and in a category all its own, *the Press*. For never before has the press demonstrated its power over the other two. It had the field to itself as it has not had since the radio came in. This time the B.B.C. issued only official statements. No one could form any sort of opinion from what their announcers gave out. The only source from which the public could glean information was the press. Remember that four days previously 95 per cent. of the nation had not heard of Mrs. Simpson. It may be true that it was the people who made up their minds this memorable week-end. But they made them up on facts presented by the press. In a modern battle victory goes to the side which has the heaviest weight of artillery. And here almost all the big guns, and all the field artillery, were ranged against King Edward.

This is an objective statement. It does not presuppose that if the circumstances had been different the verdict of the country would have been otherwise. The position was that the King had been left with no alternative but abdication, and as the Prime Minister's

own account afterwards showed, the gunning could have been called off.

The King could not speak for himself, and the field lay open for anyone who at this week-end desired to add to the bitterness. The Archbishop of Canterbury urged silence from the pulpits of the Established Church. But the pastors of the Free Churches had no such injunction, and the reputation of Mrs. Simpson gained nothing at the hands of those whom God hath called to preach the gospel of faith, hope and charity.

At 3.25 on Saturday afternoon Mrs. Simpson arrived at Cannes to stay with her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Rogers. "The King is the only judge," said she.

Lord Rothermere gave an interview. Said the newspaper magnate, whose *Evening News* that day broadcast on all its placards the words "WE WANT OUR KING":

"You cannot smuggle the greatest living Englishman off the Throne of England during the week-end. A concerted effort is being made to do this. The present haste is giving rise to unpleasant rumours affecting high political and other personages."

On Sunday the two camps renewed battle. The *Sunday Times*, stable companion of the *Daily Telegraph*, and recognised mouthpiece for the Government, threw overboard all pretence that there should be no pressure on the King. It said:

"Decision cannot, once the issue has been thus thrust before the public, be delayed or compromised. It must be made now.

"It has been suggested in some quarters that the King might disavow his intention of marrying Mrs. Simpson for the present without disavowing it alto-

gether; that he might speculate on the chances of time's modifying public opinion: and might even seek to promote for that end a party of 'King's Friends.'

"We hope that he will firmly close his ears to any advice so out of keeping with the duties and realities of the British Monarchy."

Thenceforward, up to the moment of abdication, the *Daily Telegraph* followed this line relentlessly, that the King must not delay in making up his mind. But why was the King to be hurried and hustled? Why was he not to be allowed any sympathisers?

The *Sunday Express* generalised the other side. It said:

"Opinion favourable to the King's marriage on a morganatic basis should seek by every permissible opportunity of expression to impress on the House of Commons its approval of such a policy.

"And the object of such expression should be either that the present Government changes its attitude to the question or that a new Government comes into office, supporting the marriage project, and sustained by a majority of the present House of Commons." The *Sunday Express* added a plea for reason, that no violence should be shown in the controversy, and that it should be prevented from becoming an issue dividing the nation.

The *Sunday Times* printed the first news from the Dominions, a cable from Sydney. The last paragraph ran:

"In no country has the King been more popular than in Australia, where the Royal Family has been highly respected as a model of dignified family life. It is not that Mrs. Simpson is an American, but the fact that she has twice been in the Divorce Court,

*and the circumstances of the Ipswich trial, which was reported verbatim by cable, make a very bad impression."*

The heading was "Australia solidly behind Mr. Baldwin." But was it? For next day, Monday, the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* said:

"Cable messages arriving from London seem to suggest an altogether disproportionate importance is being placed on the views of the Dominions.

"As far as Australia is concerned the people have had no chance to express their opinion and it is impossible to say whether or not they support the attitude of the Federal Government.

"What is certain is that Australia has a lively memory of the endearing personality of the King, and there is a widespread feeling that he should not be rushed into a position which might result in the loss of a King for whom there is the greatest love and respect."

Mr. Churchill saw the King on Friday night at Fort Belvedere, with Mr. Baldwin's permission, and on Sunday night he issued his appeal for time and patience in the crisis. He put forward these considerations: The fact that the King's projected marriage could not take place until the end of April surely stripped the matter of constitutional urgency. There was the human aspect; the King could not speak for himself, and for many weeks had been under the greatest strain, moral and mental, that could befall a man; even if the King's ministers thought it their duty to engage all their power and influence against him, still he must remain silent.

But "power and influence" had been engaged against Edward already, and was to be continued without remission.

Why were not the press attacks called off?

Why did the Cabinet find it necessary on Sunday night to issue an informal statement denying that any form of pressure had been put upon the King, and why did *The Times* harp on this on the Monday morning?

Did Mr. Baldwin agree with the editor of *The Times* that "pressure comes from the facts of the case, not from the action of ministers?"

Did the Prime Minister hold the view that *The Times* suggested: "The Government recognise that it is most desirable that the present state of uncertainty should not be allowed to continue longer than is absolutely necessary. They feel that it is holding up the business of Government and undermining confidence, and that because people are uncertain as to what will happen workers are being thrown out of employment and depreciation is taking place in investments?"

Could not the British Monarchy, 1,000 years old, wait for a week on account of Christmas shopping?

Last, did Mr. Baldwin not know what the *Daily Telegraph* reported, that the King had all the newspapers delivered to him at Fort Belvedere, and that he read them every morning in his office-like study? Didn't Mr. Baldwin recognise "pressure" on the King in every line of the menacing pronouncements of the Government press?

On the Sunday night opinion as to the possible trend of events was still uncertain. While the Cabinet were in session in Downing Street a crowd outside sang "God save the King" so loudly that the ministers heard it. Later 3,000 people demonstrated in front of Buckingham Palace, crying: "Long live the King."



By three o'clock on the Monday morning when the reports from the provinces had been seen, the situation in the eyes of Fleet Street was something like this: There is no real magnitude in the London demonstration; and there will be insufficient support for the King in the House to give him any chance of further time to make his decision. After Monday he must either renounce his project or abdicate. As for that, the odds are even.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE DUMB PARLIAMENT

MONDAY morning, December 7, public interest temporarily transferred itself to the Test Match. England, after a shaky start, played skittles with the Australian wickets. We needed the tonic, and it put the affair of the King in a more clear perspective. Even if the King goes the Empire won't fall to pieces, and if he wins and Mr. Baldwin goes we shall not plunge to ruin either.

Speaking at a luncheon in London that day Mr. Churchill said: "I have known His Majesty since he was a child. I can tell you that you may be sure that neither in the letter nor in the spirit will he be found to act in a manner contrary to the British Constitution." The *Evening Standard* ran a rather depressed leader which again advised that the whole issue should be deferred until a calmer time was reached, and, in a diary note, rebuked the Government press.

But they had done their work with deadly skill, as a few hours more would show. From the beginning of questions in the House there was hardly a vacant seat, and both the side galleries contained an unbroken rank of anxious members. The Peers' Gallery was filled in a twinkling directly the doors were opened, and there was the most unusual spectacle of peers standing four and five deep in the narrow gangway between the door and the benches.

The House was keyed-up. Earlier answers were lost in a continuous murmur of conversations. And as soon as Mr. Baldwin entered all other sounds were swamped in a full-throated cheer which was claimed by *The Times* to have lasted a full minute.

Colonel Wedgwood asked for a discussion of the motion placed by him on the order paper. "No!" replied Mr. Baldwin. More loud cheers.

At a quarter to four Mr. Baldwin made his expected statement, which was simply that with the exception of the question of morganatic marriage, no advice had been tendered by the Government to the King. These matters had not been raised by the Government, but by the King in conversation with the Premier some weeks previously. It was for His Majesty to arrive at a conclusion, and when he had done so it would be for the several Governments to decide what advice should be tendered.

Mr. Churchill had been leaning forward in his corner seat below the gangway with set and flushed face. As the Prime Minister finished he rose. The House turned impatient. "As," said *The Times*, "Mr. Churchill uttered the first mystifying and familiar words of his now usual request that 'no irrevocable steps should be taken,' there were cries on all sides of 'No,' and 'Sit down.'"

Mr. Churchill was taken aback by the strength of the opinion against his view which had formed during the week-end. He stammered and shouted. But for *The Times* to describe it as the most striking rebuff of modern Parliamentary history is stuff and nonsense.

The reasons for this abrupt swing of opinion against the critics of the Government have already been outlined. During the week-end a mass of letters had

accumulated for M.P.s and these were waiting when they arrived at the House. As for Mr. Churchill he was suspected, unjustly, of having played an intriguer's part. All that he endeavoured to do was to reconcile his friendship for the King with loyalty to Parliament. All that he feared came to pass. The irrevocable decision was taken without any consultation of Parliament.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., subsequently wrote an article in the *Sunday Referee* in which she claimed :

*"The crisis has been a House of Commons affair from the start. . . . M.P.s had even before the story broke a general idea of what was really happening."*

To understand what people can do with words you have to read that again, and then see what actually happened.

The Bishop of Bradford spoke on **Tuesday**, December 1. Next morning, **Wednesday**, the press carried the report and first "broke" the big story to the public.

*On that day four Members of the House of Commons gave notice of motions.*

1. Mr. Gallacher called attention to the urgent need for pit baths.
2. Mr. C. Gibson called attention to distress in the Highlands and islands of Scotland.
3. Mr. Daggart called attention to the Distressed Areas.
4. Lord Apsley called attention to the weather.

On **Thursday**, December 3, Mr. Attlee, Leader of the Socialist Opposition, asked the Prime Minister whether any Constitutional difficulties had arisen and if he had any statement to make.

Mr. Baldwin had no statement to make.

On **Friday**, December 4, asked again by Mr. Attlee, the Prime Minister "had nothing to add," and pressed by Mr. Winston Churchill that no irrevocable step would be taken before a statement was made to the House, still had "nothing to add."

Said back bench Socialist Tinker: "Can the Prime Minister give us an indication when we *will* have a statement from him? Will it be Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday?"

Answered Baldwin: "I regret I can say nothing more at the moment." On the adjournment of the House he rose to explain that as morganatic marriage was unknown to British law, the King's wife would necessary become Queen unless a special law was introduced. The Government would not do it. Nor would the Dominions, according to answers received. He had nothing else to say.

Hearing his cue, Mr. Attlee then agreed that it would be best for nobody to say anything.

On **Monday**, December 7, Colonel Josiah Wedgwood put down his motion of loyalty to Edward and asked the Prime Minister if he would give the House an early opportunity to discuss it.

"No, sir," said Mr. Baldwin.

The Speaker refused to accept any supplementary question. The next business on the Order Paper was an enquiry by Mr. Harry Day, that related to deaf and dumb juveniles (after careers).

Later in the afternoon, in reply to a private notice question by Mr. Attlee, the Prime Minister said that it was the earnest desire of the Government to give the King full opportunity to weigh his decision, but at the same time to prolong the suspense would injure the

national interest. Mr. Baldwin suggested that supplementary questions could not do much good at this point.

Mr. Churchill, who tried to get a word in, was howled down.

Mr. Gallacher (Communist) asked whether this crisis did not express the deeper crisis in the economic system. Mr. Bellinger (Socialist) hoped that in view of the dislocation of trade (making Coronation mugs) the Prime Minister would try to get an early reply from the King.

On **Tuesday**, December 8, a week after the nation had awakened to the biggest sensation since the war, the Commons discussed expiring laws.

On **Wednesday**, December 9, Mr. Baldwin, questioned by Mr. Attlee, was still not in a position to add anything nor even to gratify Mr. Bellinger's desire to get the King's mind made up soon because the Coronation mug question was becoming acute. The House passed to the subjects of recruiting, national parks, and the Sheep Stocks Valuation (Scotland) Bill.

**Thursday**, December 10, the King abdicated.

CHAPTER XIII  
AGAINST THE KING

**S**HARP at eight o'clock on Monday night of this last week of struggle, Lord Brownlow, Lord-in-Waiting to the King and his close friend, came through the door of room 105 at the Hotel Majestic, Cannes. In the room were a few high-backed chairs, and in those chairs were assembled thirty newspaper men and women, representing the world's press. From a leather despatch case the likeable young man who had acted as Mrs. Simpson's escort in her flight to Cannes drew a typewritten statement, which he read.

"Mrs. Simpson throughout the last few weeks has invariably wished to avoid any action or proposal which would hurt or damage His Majesty or the Throne.

"To-day her attitude is unchanged, and she is willing, if such action would solve the problem, to withdraw forthwith from a situation that has been rendered both unhappy and untenable."

Unsmiling, very worried, and official, Lord Brownlow added no word of his own, went out and disappeared into his car before anyone could speak to him. The statement was flashed round the world and was generally accepted as an offer of renunciation by Mrs. Simpson. Reporters at Cannes spoke privately to their offices of long telephone conversations from the villa where Mrs. Simpson was staying. But even if the King

knew about the statement, the decision remained his alone.

Next day, Tuesday, *The Times* lumbered up its assault engines and launched a series of attacks even more ferocious than its previous efforts.

On Mrs. Simpson: "The Constitution is to be amended in order that she may carry in solitary prominence the brand of unfitness for the Queen's Throne."

On Lord Rothermere, for advancing the proposition: "A foolish and deplorable product of misguided ingenuity."

On the *Evening Standard* for printing on Saturday a satire by George Bernard Shaw "which offended against every canon of taste."

And indirectly on the King himself. In a defence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the newspaper said it seemed to be a fact that the Archbishop had on no occasion so much as discussed with the King the matter which must be uppermost in his thoughts. "He may well have thought that any intervention on his part would do more harm than good, both because of his position at the head of the Church of England and because of his known friendship with King Edward's father, whose closing days were clouded by anxiety for the future."

*The Times* treated Mrs. Simpson's statement with such contempt that they printed it in small type following the descriptive summary of the Parliamentary debate on Monday. It was as follows:



## A STATEMENT BY MRS. SIMPSON

" WILLING TO WITHDRAW "

*From our Riviera Correspondent*

Cannes, December 7.

Lord Brownlow made the following statement to a specially convened meeting of press representatives at the Hotel Majestic in Cannes to-night :

What I have to say to-night is divided into two sections, separate and distinct. First, a denial ; secondly, an official statement from Mrs. Simpson, which she has signed. The denial is as follows :

Mrs. Simpson has given no interviews of any sort or kind or made any statement to the press whatsoever other than the statement I now make on her behalf.

The following is the signed statement by Mrs. Simpson : (The statement followed.)

Thelma, Viscountess Furness, arrived at Southampton in the liner " Queen Mary " yesterday from New York.

It was Lady Furness who was supposed to have first introduced the King to Mrs. Simpson. The alleged circumstances of the meeting had been related in the American press with snooping gusto and exaggeration by their gossip writers. But the British public knew nothing of this, and even the readers of *The Times* must have been baffled to understand the reason for the paragraph. It was dropped from the second edition.

Tuesday opened with optimism. Partly responsible was Mrs. Simpson's statement, and her offer of renunciation, because it was felt on all hands that the King

knew of it. As the lady appeared willing to give up the King, would he be willing to part with her?

Even the Stock Exchange recovered its nerve. Tension slacked all round. One thousand divorced women of Vienna sent a congratulatory telegram to the King. Again the vast majority of members attended the House of Commons, but they seemed much more cheerful and carefree than on the preceding days. During the question hour they laughed heartily at each other's jokes.

Mr. Baldwin was not in the House. Where was he? Fleet Street knew before the House did; he had gone to Fort Belvedere to see the King.

From this time shadows fell. The Cabinet, said the lobby correspondents, were not pushing out the King exactly, but they were not making it easy for him to stay. In Fleet Street it was suspected that the last act of the play was being staged behind the glimmering windows of the King's fort. The Duke of York and the Duke of Kent had arrived, but the stage was held by two men only: Stanley Baldwin, English yeoman of Welsh descent, with the face of Cromwell and some of his character, and his King, Edward the Eighth of that name, modern, restless, worried, loyal and in love.

One or more of the old warriors, pausing for private reflection, hummed a few lines of that song so popular in the mess when the boy Prince of Wales wore khaki with the rest:

*But it's when he thinks he's past love,  
'Tis then he meets his last love,  
And he loves her as he never loved before.*

To the generation as old as the King himself there was a great deal of truth in that, for in the years

between 1914 and 1918 life had been cheap, and love, too. The permanencies came with calmer times, and many men to whom the family circle had meant nothing settled down under the care of women who understood them.

The hours passed. . . . Mr. Baldwin had stayed to dinner . . . Mr. Baldwin was believed to have left . . . reckonings showed that he had been five hours with the King . . . he was back in Downing Street. . . . A news agency flashed "The King's mind not yet made up. . . . Journalists who had waited all that time at "Pneumonia Corner" (Downing Street) for the BIG NEWS could only telephone their offices that any statement the following day was unlikely. . . . In the House members are getting very unhappy. . . . American correspondents report that the news has gone out to the States that the King had decided to abdicate . . . abdicate . . . abdicate . . . the word began to beat like a muffled drum across the wires of Fleet Street.

. . . . .

On Wednesday *The Times* headed its leader "A Lull," and began it by snubbing Mrs. Simpson for what it scornfully quoted as her "dramatic offer"—but the only lull, as we all knew, was the period necessary for formalities accompanying the King's decision. For an hour or two the precedence in the news is taken by a disaster to a Dutch air liner which crashed after taking off from Croydon; the dead included Don Juan de la Cierva, the genius who invented the autogyro. Had it not been for the Test Match victory, England winning by 322 runs, and the great Don Bradman out for a duck, we could have put the day down as

one of the most miserable from every point of view, including the weather.

As night fell signs of the impending end of the crisis accumulated. Ministers were holding a special meeting at the House of Commons again, presumably to hear Mr. Baldwin's account of his long talk with the King. It is unusual for the Court Circular to give away secrets, but this night it disclosed the news that King Edward had slipped out of Fort Belvedere by a little used route, and through the mists covering Windsor Great Park had joined the Queen Mother and his brothers at Royal Lodge, the Duke and Duchess of York's house.

This conference related to the succession, and it was now that the Duke of York's scruples were overcome, and that he agreed to the general wish that he should succeed his brother.

Even at this eleventh hour there were efforts to dissuade Edward from his resolve, but he had made up his mind in his talk with Mr. Baldwin. Not for one moment did he give cause for doubt that he would hesitate. The Duke of York looked pale and tired as he returned to his Piccadilly House that night, in the knowledge that before another 24 hours had passed he would be King.

Thursday morning. "The path grows dim," knells the *Daily Express*. "Twenty-four hours have brought changes that may alter the way that King and people might have walked together. Pray for the King, to give him guidance and strength in the dark hour. Because he is a man above all, and one who has given infinite service to the people, he needs, as he deserves, the human affection of all good men and good women in the realm."

Said the *Daily Telegraph* on the same day, under the heading "Decision must not be delayed":

"There is a growing impatience with the protracted delay. . . . The reasons for an early, indeed for an immediate, declaration accumulate every hour. The plans of millions may be affected. The doubt is holding up business in a thousand forms, direct and indirect. . . . There is fear of tarnish on the Imperial Crown. A decision is needed now."

The stockjobbers need not have worried. The decision *had* been taken; three words on the tapes that afternoon gave it: "THE KING ABDICATES." It was odd to watch history coming into a newspaper office that afternoon. "THE DUKE OF YORK TO BE KING," added some more. And then the full speech by Mr. Baldwin, a narrative which was to earn him bouquets of enormous size, and two rude cartoons by Low.

## CHAPTER XIV

### KING BREAKER

OF all the drama of a nation's crisis crowded into one hour in the House of Commons, the most dramatic words came from Mr. Baldwin as he ended his moving narrative. These words, in a sentence, told the story of the Prime Minister, an old man and a mid-Victorian, attempting at one interview after another to dissuade the King from marrying Mrs. Simpson.

Mr. Baldwin looked up from what he called his "scrappy notes" from which he pieced together his unprepared, but intensely emotional account, and said:

"I am convinced that where I failed no one would have succeeded."

In other circumstances these words might have appeared bragging and boastful. In the temper of the House they seemed appropriate, more so when Mr. Baldwin added: "Those who know His Majesty personally will know what that means."

Jostling M.P.s crowded away from him as he walked to the bar which marks the extremity of the Chamber, turned, and bowed low to the Speaker, Captain FitzRoy, saying:

"A message from His Majesty the King, signed by His Majesty's own hand."

Advancing through the House, he bowed and handed to the Speaker the few sheets bearing a message

such as no King has ever before sent to Parliament in the annals of our long history.

"After long and anxious consideration I am determined to renounce the Throne to which I succeeded on the death of my father, and I am now communicating this my final and irrevocable decision.

"Realising as I do the gravity of this step, I can only hope that I shall have the understanding of my peoples in the decision I have taken and the reasons which have led me to take it.

"I will not enter now into my private feelings, but I would beg that it should be remembered that the burden which constantly rests upon the shoulders of a Sovereign is so heavy that it can only be borne in circumstances different from those in which I now find myself.

"I conceive that I am not overlooking the duty that rests upon me to place in the forefront the public interest when I declare that I am conscious that I can no longer discharge this heavy task with efficiency or with satisfaction to myself.

"I have accordingly this morning executed an Instrument of Abdication . . ."

The House heard the message with silence unbroken save for a sigh.

In silence equally solemn Mr. Baldwin rose to make his speech, which he prefaced with the words: "No more difficult—I may almost say repugant—task has ever been imposed upon a Prime Minister."

In August and September he had been ordered a complete rest. Before the middle of October he came on half-time, as it were; and for the first time since the beginning of August was in a position to look into things.

He found two things to disquiet him—a flood of correspondence (from the Dominions chiefly) in his office about what was appearing in the American press, and a divorce case coming on. The results of that divorce case made him realise that possibly a difficult situation might arise later.

Feeling doubly bound, as counsellor and friend, to talk the matter over with the King, Mr. Baldwin arranged an audience by telephone from a friend's house near Fort Belvedere, where he was staying.

On Tuesday morning, October 20, he saw the King at Fort Belvedere. They had a frank talk for an hour. Mr. Baldwin expressed his anxieties. He pointed out that if a verdict was given in the divorce case which left the matter in suspense for some time, that period of suspense would be dangerous, "because then everyone would be talking, and when once the press began, as it must at some time in this country, then a most serious position would arise for him and for me."

There might be sides taken, and factions grow up in this country where no factions ought to exist.

Glad that the ice had been broken, Mr. Baldwin left the King after begging him to consider all that he had said. He told four ministers about the conversation; the whole Cabinet was not brought into the matter.

The next audience was on Monday, November 16, at Buckingham Palace, after the decree nisi had been pronounced in favour of Mrs. Simpson. The King sent for the Prime Minister. Mr. Baldwin then gave him his view on the possible marriage. He said he did not think it was one that would receive the approbation of the country, as it involved the lady becoming Queen; and he told the King that though he might



be "a remnant of the old Victorians," his worst enemy would not say that he did not know what the reactions of the English people would be to such courses.

The position of the King's wife was different from the position of any other; in the choice of a Queen the voice of the people must be heard.

Then the King said: "I am going to tell you something that I have long wanted to tell you. I am going to marry Mrs. Simpson, and I am prepared to go."

"Sir, that is most grievous news," said Mr. Baldwin. "It is impossible for me to make any comment on that to-day."

That night the King told Queen Mary of his decision, and next day he told his brothers.

Queen Mary, in a message the day after Mr. Baldwin's speech, said: "I need not speak to you of the distress which fills a mother's heart when I think that my dear son has deemed it to be his duty to lay down his charge, and that the reign which had begun with so much hope and promise has so suddenly ended."

On Wednesday, November 25, the King sent again for Mr. Baldwin, and asked him what he thought of the compromise suggestion that had been made, that the King should marry Mrs. Simpson, and that Parliament should pass an Act enabling her to be the King's wife without the position of Queen.

Mr. Baldwin said his first reaction informally was that Parliament would never pass it, but he consented to put it formally before the Cabinet and the Prime Ministers of all the Dominions.

On December 2 he told the King that inquiries had gone far enough to show that there was no prospect of such legislation being accepted, either in the

Dominions or here at home. For those reasons it was impracticable.

The King took the answer with no question. "He said no more about it. He behaved as a great gentleman. He said the matter was closed," added the Prime Minister. "Friendship, so far from being impaired, bound us more closely together than ever, and will last lifelong." Mr. Baldwin went on to explain that no formal decision had been made. From that time Mr. Baldwin drew a picture of the King sitting at Fort Belvedere debating in his mind the conflicting loyalties—abandonment of the project on which his heart was set, and remaining as King, or going "and later contracting that marriage if it were possible." He sketched the conversation in those dramatic final hours on the night of December 8, when in the circle of the King and his brothers, Mr. Baldwin and his Sovereign went over all the aspects of the limited problem.

"I honour and respect the King for the way in which he behaved at that time," said Mr. Baldwin. The King told him over and over again that if he went he would go with dignity, with as little disturbance to his ministers and people as possible, in circumstances that would make his brother's succession as little difficult for the Duke of York as possible. Any idea to him of a King's party was abhorrent. He stayed down at Fort Belvedere "because he said he was not going to come to London during the dispute because of the cheering crowds."

Mr. Baldwin here read a pencilled note which he had received that morning from King Edward. "The Duke of York and I," the King had written, "always have been on the best of terms as brothers, and the

King is confident the Duke will deserve and receive the support of the whole Empire."

The House greeted this with cheers ; on which Mr. Baldwin added a remarkable tribute to the frankness of His Majesty's character which led him to declare his project to the Prime Minister when he did, instead, as it would have been perfectly possible for him to do, of withholding it "for some months to come." The King did so, Mr. Baldwin said, because he realised the damage that might be done to the moral force of the Crown by gossip and rumours and talk in the interval.

"There is not a soul here to-day," Mr. Baldwin said in his conclusion, "that wants to judge. We are not judges."

Mr. Churchill spoke in the short debate that followed, and unreservedly accepted the Prime Minister's explanation that the King had taken his decision freely, voluntarily and spontaneously in his own time and in his own way.

"What has been done or left undone belongs to history." By now deeply moved, he recalled that it was his duty as Home Secretary, a quarter of a century ago, to stand beside Edward and proclaim his titles on his investiture as Prince of Wales amid the sunlit battlements of Carnarvon Castle. "Sir," cried Churchill, passionately, "in this Prince there were discerned qualities of courage, simplicity, of sympathy, and above all of sincerity rare and precious, which might have made his reign glorious in the annals of this ancient monarchy. I should have been ashamed if in my independent and unofficial position I had not cast about for every lawful means to keep him on the throne of his fathers."

At 6.40 p.m. Mr. Baldwin presented the Declaration of Abdication Bill. King Edward was pushed from his place with less fuss than Mr. J. H. Thomas. They gave the Dominions Secretary a *full* inquiry.

Thence until the early hours: Fleet Street sacrificing advertisements wholesale to make room for the climax of the biggest story of the year. . . . King Edward in his country retreat preparing a broadcast farewell as "a private person owning allegiance to the new King" . . . Crowds singing a parody of "John Brown's body" in front of Buckingham Palace. . . . Crowds cheering the new King when he returned from dinner with his brother at Fort Belvedere to his Piccadilly house. . . . *The Times* preparing to disclose to the world that "His Majesty's circle was too largely composed of men and women, some of them of high birth and all of them remote from the 'people,' who cared less for his welfare than for their own amusements. The real clash was between the thoughtlessness of an exotic society and the hard core of a British tradition of conduct which is common to all classes in this country. His decision is a proof of obstinacy rather than strength." Said Oswald Mosley, savagely, who had backed the King with his Fascist "Leader—Hero" slogan: "Baldwin was elected to keep the Emperor of Abyssinia on his throne. In 15 months he has only succeeded in pushing both Haile Selassie and his own King-Emperor from his place."

And so into Friday, December 11, ran the story. At 1.52 the new King began his reign, when the royal assent to abdication was pronounced. His brother, now a private citizen, received Mr. Churchill to luncheon, and gave his old friend and mentor of other days a signed portrait, perhaps the very last signature he

wrote Edward R.I. Churchill's generous heart was filled, and as he said good-bye to the Prince, who looked still so debonair and composed, the veteran minister near to tears, repeated Marvell's tribute to another King who lost his throne :

*" He nothing common did or mean  
Upon that memorable scene."*

Then Churchill stepped into his car and began to drive away. A moment later the Prince was running down the drive calling: " Hi! Winston! You have forgotten something!" It was the portrait.

Edward settled the future of his servants, recommended his valet to his brother, took a last look round the gardens in which he had taken such personal pride, motored to the Royal Lodge, Windsor Great Park, for dinner with his mother, the new King, and other members of the Royal Family.

At ten o'clock, as the world gathered round millions of radio sets, came the voice of Sir John Reith: " This is Windsor Castle—His Royal Highness Prince Edward," and then, after a slight pause, the clear resonant tones of the Prince, who had given up the world's most gorgeous throne for a woman.

" At long last I am able to say a few words of my own. I have never wanted to withhold anything, but until now it has not been constitutionally possible for me to speak. . . .

" I found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility"—the voice dropped one note in its pitch—" without the help and support of the woman I love.

" And I want you to know that the decision I have made has been mine and mine alone. This was a

thing I had to judge entirely for myself. The other person most nearly concerned has tried up to the last to persuade me to take a different course. I have made this, the most serious decision of my life, only upon the single thought of what would in the end be best for all. . . ."

His brother's fine qualities: "And he has one matchless blessing enjoyed by so many of you, and not bestowed on me, a happy home with his wife and children."

A tribute to the consideration with which Mr. Baldwin had treated him, and then, with a snap of decisiveness, "I now quit altogether public affairs and I lay down my burden."

Another pause, and another catch in the voice. "And now we all have a new King. I wish him and you, his people, happiness and prosperity with all my heart. God bless you all."

A second passed, and over the waves of the ether rang the last words that Edward would speak to a whole world: "God save the King!" cried the man who until yesterday was the King.

It was Edward's 77th broadcast. As Prince of Wales he made 75; as King, one. His farewell message lasted exactly seven minutes. Two hundred stations relayed it throughout America. In Spain, even Barcelona and the troubled city of Madrid, stopped a discussion on Soviet child mentality to hear the address given verbatim and in Spanish. Thus "The woman I love" sounded romantically above the roar of guns as "La mujer quien yo amo."

Programmes in West End theatres and cinemas were interrupted for the address. Few people were

in the streets. Not one telephone call was received by the Clissold exchange, one of the largest manual exchanges in London.

In Cannes Mrs. Simpson was overwhelmed, and retired to her room at once.

That night a big saloon car halted in Portsmouth. The driver asked a wayfarer for the route to the dockyard. "Thank you so much," responded a voice from the window.

At 1.45 a.m. a destroyer slid out of the harbour bearing Edward into exile.

CHAPTER XV  
GOD AND MAMMON

ON Sunday, December 13, the Archbishop of Canterbury launched forth by radio. He said :  
" On the 11th day of December 248 years ago, King James II fled from Whitehall. By a strange coincidence, on the 11th day of December last week King Edward VIII, after speaking his last words to his people, left Windsor Castle, the centre of all the splendid traditions of his ancestors, and his throne, and went out an *exile*. In the darkness he left these shores.

" From God he received a high and sacred trust. Yet by his own will he has abdicated—he has surrendered his trust.

" Even more strange it is that he should have sought his happiness in a manner inconsistent with the Christian principles of marriage, and within a social circle whose standards and ways of life are alien to all the best instincts and traditions of his people. Let those who belong to this circle know that to-day they stand rebuked by the judgment of the nation, which had loved King Edward."

On Monday, December 14, *The Times* printed a special page of sermons. Preached the Bishop of Portsmouth :

" Almost universally there is a shudder at the indecency and wild conduct that knew no law, of



which there had been such plain signs. The English people would not stand it. They had a sense of propriety in great places and in great affairs, and would not tolerate headlong slips into the abyss of shamefulness. . . ."

On Tuesday, December 15, the *Morning Post* reported:

"There was a fervent demonstration of loyalty at the Stock Exchange shortly after eleven yesterday morning when three verses of the National Anthem were sung.

"Mr. Alan Kirby conducted from the balcony in the gilt-edged market, and four drummers and some instrumentalists of the Cadet Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, assisted."

#### LAST SHOT

"Best Christmas greetings from an old Minister of the Crown who holds you in as high esteem as ever and regards you with deeper loyal affection, deploras the shabby and stupid treatment accorded to you, resents the mean and ungenerous attacks upon you, and regrets the loss sustained by the British Empire of a monarch who sympathised with the lowliest of his subjects."—DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, in Jamaica, to the Duke of Windsor, Christmas, 1936.

## CHAPTER XVI

### EPILOGUE

**D**O we learn anything from this story? The press wrote, in days following, that it showed the immense inherent strength of the monarchy. Surely it showed the strength only of Britain's ruling oligarchy, and the *weakness* of its instrument of monarchy?

For here was a Prince whose fame and reputation had been built up for 40 years by all the weapons of modern propaganda. In ten days he was destroyed. They simply pulled away the props from under the monarchy—the Tory Party, the Church, and the "heavy" Government press (the rest of the newspapers stood nowhere), and down came the King.

Do not withhold admiration for the way in which the ruling forces of our democracy impose their will. The official Socialist Opposition, of course, played up officiously as befits a "constitutional party."

But isn't it time that we revised our ideas about monarchy? In 25 years this country raised King George to be a semi-god-like being. Greater adulation has not been paid a monarch since the Stuarts sought to set up the divine right of kings. King George V could take it. He was a good, honest man, conforming to accepted standards of morality and conduct.

King Edward VIII did not conform. That was his "crime." If he had fallen in with the mood of those

who govern England perhaps he might have been a Hero-King or benevolent British dictator. He couldn't "take it." They built him too high. As long as he did the right things he was acceptable. When he began to do other things the whispers began, and they grew. In the end they overwhelmed him. The "heavy" press gave a stamp to the attacks upon him when the campaign was launched, and all the bawling of the popular newspapers could not catch up.

Down came King Edward! If you pay respect and regard to the institution of English Kingship, mark and learn something from its latest crisis. Don't pyramid your next Kings the same way. Don't let Fleet Street do it.

If our monarchs are presented as ordinary decent men trying to do a difficult job as well as they can, they may gain the respect and affection and loyalty of their people.

If nobody believes any more in the theory of the Church's anointed, do not blame the atheists or the anarchists. Send the bill for that to the Archbishops.

