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So the People May Know

Dicta Editorial Board

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DICTA

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SO THE PEOPLE MAY KNOW

THIS issue deals a valiant blow to the doctrine of *stare decisis*. It was felt that the old Record had evolved from the modest pamphlet which it was at the beginning of its career into a magazine of substance. It is not only an important instrumentality in developing a feeling of group unity among our membership, and in affording a medium for the record of our activities: it is now the vehicle for the presentation of divergent views concerning the substance of the law.

What steps should be taken to realize an ideal of greater usefulness? One of the first suggestions was to change the type. That employed in the old Record was diminutive and therefore difficult to read. Doubtless the new type will not only add to the ease of reading: by the elimination of the double column page, it will add much to the dignity and attractiveness of the material presented.

Having cast the die as it were, the matter of further changes followed naturally, and the additional physical changes which you now behold, such as the larger size, the different weight and texture of the paper, and the new cover scheme, were adopted with the belief that they will all add to the attractiveness of the magazine.

Not satisfied with this attack on the established order, your relentless President, your talented Executive Committee, and your humble Editorial Board, decided that, even if the best of Boccaccio's stories were contained within, yet as long as the name "The Record" remained, there would be a tone of formality which might discourage the potential reader. In other words, we felt that "The Record" conjured up no very enticing suggestion of readable material. Usually records are pretty dry reading, and we find very few lawyers who peruse them as a form of mental relaxation. And there were also those who felt that as a name, "The Record" was not a gem of originality. It certainly possessed no elusive charm, no

vague and endearing individuality that captivated by its very sound. In brief, "The Record" meant merely a record—and this magazine aspires to be something more.

But it was difficult to find anything more suitable. However, your Editorial Board launched into the unknown sea, and enlisted the co-operation of the members of the association in suggesting names. This co-operation was cheerfully given—too cheerfully in several instances, for your Board was compelled to adopt a stern and repressive attitude. Then the struggle began. Judge Butler refused to deliberate at all until assured that we would not consider "The Vampire", in view of the relationship of our periodical to the late lamented "Jealous Mistress". And Albert Gould, your distinguished secretary, refused to consider any name which he could not pronounce. Another problem was met: each committee member who had suggested a name felt impelled to defend it to the death. After arduous research and debate, there emerged from the list of possible names, battered but victorious, the title which now greets you. Behold: "Dicta"!

For the benefit of those new to our ranks and, therefore, not yet enthroned upon the heights of knowledge whereon we elders sit, and as a further display of our own erudition, your Board takes pleasure in explaining what "Dicta" means.

According to Mr. Bouvier's Law Dictionary, "Dicta" refers to "Opinions expressed by a Court but which, not being necessarily involved in the case, lack the force of an adjudication". Our own impression, gathered from the eloquent statements made by many of our most prominent members in open court, is that "Dicta" refers to the alleged heart and soul of each decision cited by an adversary. On the other hand, many contend that the word implies a device worked out by a learned court, whereby he so obscures his actual decision that it requires a high degree of legal scholarship to ferret it out, and thus prevents the practice of the law from being made so easy that it ceases to be an art.

As will readily be seen, any of these concepts render it an appropriate name for our medium, and it has, in addition, the virtue of originality. In a more serious vein, we wish to say that we have given the matter of these changes, both of size, make-up and name, careful consideration. Your Execu-

tive Committee, your Editorial Board, and especially your President, Mr. Toll, have worked long and earnestly over the matter in a sincere attempt to give to the Association a more effective medium.

In the matter of format, we acknowledge our indebtedness for more than one feature to a noteworthy example of the printer's craft, the Foreign Affairs quarterly.

Your Board realizes that such physical changes, however beneficial, cannot alone achieve the goal of usefulness to which "Dicta" must and does aspire; that the subject matter and the content must also keep step if they are to merit the attention of the members of the Association. It will be the ambition of the Board to make "Dicta" as readable a magazine as possible. No article or thesis, be it ever so worthy or ennobling, can achieve much unless it is read; bearing this in mind, we may occasionally include some matters of lighter tone; nor will "Dicta" disdain battle, blood and sudden death. It will adhere to the ideal of old Voltaire that, although it disagrees with every word presented by a contributor, yet it will defend to the death his right to state his views.

In conclusion, your Board wishes to solicit the aid and co-operation of every member of the Bar in the task of making "Dicta" of the utmost service to the Association and to the profession. By suggestions, by criticisms, by the submission of articles, our members can render great service. "Dicta" is their magazine. They have a right to expect that it will serve their desires; but this can only be done if those desires are made known.