

St. Dunstan's Red and White

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Editorials

MONTE CASSINO

In time of peace men may unknowingly undermine the basis of a civilization; in time of war they may all but destroy the material and visible achievements of that civilization. The latter action, a disaster in the eyes of all lovers of Western culture, is now under way. There have been many instances in past years of the indiscriminate destruction of the sensible monuments to

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Standing: Vince Murnaghan, Walter Murray, Leonard MacDonald, Don MacDonald, Henry O'Shea, Tommy MacLellan, Allan Macdonald.
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European classical thought. But one incident in particular, and of recent occurrence, unique in its own way, stands out in the minds of Christians everywhere, especially in the minds of those who value the contribution that has been made by the Church to our civilization. It has brought sorrow to those who see in the glory of that Church the triumph of good over the powers of evil.

On February 15th the historic Abbey of Monte Cassino, Motherhouse of the Benedictine Order, was blasted by the shells and bombs of the Allied army. We must not assume, however, that our brothers in arms have been the cause of untold grief to the members of that religious order for any other reason than that of military necessity. The Nazi tyrants, seeking to outdo the strategy of the Allied armies, had occupied the sacred and historic edifice and had used it as a vantage point from which to bring disorder and destruction to the allied armies on their march towards Rome. Moreover, by making necessary the step taken by the Allies, the Nazis most probably aimed at fostering prejudice in the mind of the world at large against the Allied commanders in Italy. In either case we may safely place the responsibility for the calamity on the Nazi invaders. We must not fall victim to this form of strategy so common in a war of propaganda and make-believe. The act of the Allies is justifiable when one considers that the lives of men are invaluable in comparison to any material structure, however great.

The Monastery was founded in the year 529 by St. Benedict of Nursia, who, by writing his Rule for communal life, became the patriarch of Western monasticism. He was the founder of an Order whose history is an eventful as that of the Church, the Faith of which it has ever propagated. During the fourteen hundred years of its history the sacred place has been pillaged by Lombards, Saracens, and Germans. In more recent times it has been plundered by the French and Italian governments. Monte Cassino is truly the invulnerable oak, as its emblem symbolizes. It will rise again in greater grandeur.

We can have little realization of Benedictine monasticism as a bulwark to Christianity during the centuries known as the Dark Ages. During these years its work

was identified with the Christianization of Europe and with the foundation of the Ages of the Faith.

Its work for Christianity was at the same time one of culture. A fundamental step in the civilization of the barbaric hordes was taken when, through the influence of the Benedictine vow of stability, they settled down to a life of agriculture. Moreover, monasticism was based upon the vow as the highest of ideals. Mediaeval social solidarity was the result of the application to everyday life of the teachings and practices of Benedictine monasticism.

Our social order, with institutions such as the family, is the child of that same mediaeval culture which in its infancy came under the influence of monastic ideals. Little, then, may we wonder at the alarm at the destruction of Monte Cassino Abbey. For the destruction of a monument means the repudiation of that for which it stands. It is symbolic of the decadence of the invisible, social, and cultural institutions for which we are today fighting desperately.

Our consolation is that out of all this turmoil and destruction will emerge some day a lasting good. In the meantime we go forward, hopeful that the sacrifice of our heritage has not been in vain.

PROVINCIAL ATHLETICS

It is an accepted conclusion that athletics play an essential part in the development of the whole man. The perfect combination is a healthy mind in a robust body, and, indeed, in the opinion of many people a strong body is a prerequisite of a strong mind. This is not some new theory, but was a recognized fact even when the Greeks were masters of the world. To them two things were necessary in the perfect man. He must be a philosopher and a soldier, and in order to fill these positions he had to be a perfect physical type. And so, as the early Greeks stressed athletics as a part of man's education, we, too, can easily see that it is truly considered all-important that the student should be given a balance be-

tween mental and physical exercise. The same is true in the life of any man, but in that of a student it is most essential as a body builder and a means of recreation.

In the armed forces, too, much stress is placed on the need of recreation and athletic competition. All time cannot be devoted to drill. All work and no play would have a deleterious effect on the development of the hard, tough physiques necessary in modern warfare.

During the past few years, and for very good reasons, inter-collegiate competition has been curtailed; it was considered detrimental to the war effort since much time would be wasted in travelling from place to place and unnecessary travel should be stopped to conserve essential space in transportation. The result was that in many places, and especially in our Garden Province, athletics showed a marked tendency to decline and even to disappear. For, as it is quite easy to see, there can be little interest aroused in the strenuous effort of playing games unless there is some definite goal to strive for, some prize or honour at stake. This is where outside competition comes into the picture. College students soon tire of intramural games. There must be something more varied to take up their attention, to arouse their college spirit, and to awaken in them a desire to become athletes of a sort.

The armed forces get plenty of exercise with men of their own unit on the drill square and even in gymnasiums, but they also need pastime outside the barracks. They have a definite need for and a right to relaxation which can be provided by way of competition with outside teams.

And not the least of those who benefit from sport of this kind is the private citizen himself who glories in a chance to get away from the monotonous grind of work, from the continuous task of helping to win the war, so that he may bolster up his morale by watching players compete in clean and healthful games. Athletics can play a very important role in the war effort.

It was owing to a realization of this fact that the government and some private citizens endeavoured to stage a revival in athletics here during the past year.

The armed forces were seeking a means of recreation outside their camps; the colleges had need of some variety to keep the students interested in sport; and the people of the Island, especially the citizens of Charlottetown, were expressing their desires for some sort of diversion for their free time. An outlet for energy was necessary; people must have something to do for recreation, something to discuss besides war if a high morale was to be safeguarded.

During the past scholastic year there has been an evident change in the field of sport in the Island. The year has been most successful as regards both studies and athletics. The two colleges in Charlottetown co-operated with the armed forces to provide games both for their own benefit and for the benefit of the public; and it seems that all have been greatly pleased with the results. Football, hockey, basketball, and track have staged a comeback that reflects credit on those responsible. The City Hockey League was most successful and aroused an interest such as has not been shown in hockey here for several years. It is a fact that much good has been derived by all concerned, and, if conditions remain as they are at present, we should look forward to an even more interesting season in the coming year.

At any rate it is the beginning of a development of sport in this province which, if continued, should play an important part in provincial life. It should certainly help in post-war reconstruction by aiding in the development of the youth of the province and by making life here more attractive for our Island sons as they return from the battle fronts of the world. A movement such as was begun during the past year deserves encouragement and should be given support.

IN PASSING

All good things must come to an end, and, as another class is graduated from St. Dunstan's, so another editor of *Red and White* reluctantly gives up his pleasant task to his successor. Since little can be said in way of farewell that has not already been said by some former editor,

we should like to echo the sentiments of all of these and say that our associations with *Red and White* have been most pleasant and educational. We considered our position one of honour and, however incompetently we have filled our office, we shall look back in future years on this as another happy memory of old St. Dunstan's.

We extend thanks to all those who helped in any way towards the publication of *Red and White*. We thank the contributors, the advertisers, the printers, and above all the *Red and White* staff who cooperated so well in the work which they were asked to do. We solicit for the succeeding editor all the good will, kindness, and assistance that has been so generously given to us during the past year and we wish the very best for *Red and White* in the years to come.—Farewell.

