

### THE CHALLENGE OF THE PAST

This great milestone in the life of our College is an opportune occasion to ponder the significance and honor the memory of the past one hundred years. It is not an elemental past, but one replete with the realities of the highest human qualities and achievements such that anything we might say about them seems almost irreverently unnecessary. St. Dunstan's history speaks for itself and it tells a story of almost legendary proportions to a generation largely unaware of those aspects of dedication and sacrifice which are the stuff of her greatness.

It would be well for us who share in the heritage which is St. Dunstan's to ponder deeply the full significance of that heritage and the motives which determine our sentiments at this time of rejoicing and appraisal of the past. The late G. K. Chesterton said in speaking of modern man, that he retreats from the past because of the "fierce competition of our forefathers", for "there have been so many flaming truths that we cannot hold; so many harsh heroisms that we cannot imitate; so many great efforts at monumental building . . . which seem to us at once sublime and pathetic." In view of this serious indictment against the characteristic cowardice of present-day society, the reason for our apparent contradiction of it should be sought by every son and daughter of St. Dunstan's who rejoices in her glory.

How is it that we can look over the last one hundred years and still retain a jubilant air? Is it because we do not realize the challenge which the past presents, or is it because we feel more at ease in the torch-light of others' achievements, rather than in the mere spark of our own? Or again, is it because they who can look back unfalteringly, do so out of the humble realization that they are doing their best to meet "the fierce competition of our forefathers"? In any case, the first two possibilities should shake us from the realm of naivete and complacency, while the latter should invoke in us the driving force of example and the humility which comes with the recognition of insufficiency.

Are the determination and toil of Bishops MacEachern, MacIntyre and MacDonald the occasion for inspiration or frustration? Similar questions might be asked of the self-



less and often unrecognized labours of the other Chancellors of our College; of our dedicated Rectors and Bursars; of our scores of teachers whose only earthly reward for a life's work was the satisfaction of having done their all for the ideals of our Founders; of the devoted Sisters of St. Martha whose road to sanctity was and still is, unending toil for our comforts; of the great benefactors such as Owen Connolly, Bishop Kelly and the founder-priests of the St. Andrew's Bursar, whose personal denials eased St. Dunstan's through her darkest days; and lastly, of the support of the various parishioners throughout the Diocese, but for whose undying interest St. Dunstan's would have died in infancy.

Certainly for those among us who regard St. Dunstan's with nothing more than mediocre self-interest, the above would be rather strange company. It is we who are turned to stone when the challenge of the past is a Medusa to our complacent self-satisfaction. It is we who bask in the spent energy of others while naively supposing ourselves to be its source.

Fortunately that is but part of the story. Now must we pay tribute to those men and women of St. Dunstan's who still embody the noblest ideals of the past by the perfect manner of living them, whether as an administrator, teacher, benefactor or student. Who is not impressed today by the pioneering zeal of our Faculty as they demonstrate the spirit which has been their fortune to imitate and foster? Indeed, they above all know the true significance of our first hundred years. It is they who are not afraid to gaze upon the glories of their predecessors, for in them they see a challenge which is an ideal, and an inspiration which is ever a motive force.

We might conclude with an examination of ourselves as students. Already we have found ourselves wanting in the attitudes of admiration and gratitude which are our obligations. Further, what of the challenge which follows as a consequence of our knowledge of the past. This is the acid test of College spirit: that those who claim this spirit build from it something even greater than the original. Knowledge of the past always presents a challenge to the possessor of that knowledge, and the greater the past the greater the challenge. Surely this challenge is no mean one, and should we succeed in meeting it, then is it certain that the founders and supporters of St. Dunstan's have indeed "builded better than they knew."

—EDITORIAL.