

# St. Dunstan's Red and White

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## Editorial

### Christmas

Over the snow-clad fields creep the first dawning beams of the Christmas morn. Slowly, yet majestically, the sun rises from beyond the distant horizon, and shines with all its splendour upon the hoar colored church spires which point inspiringly heavenward. Down through the chill morning air, with sweetest harmony on the ear, float the peal of the Christmas bells: "Adeste fideles!" "Christ is born!"

What sweet memories are awakened by the peal of these bells! The religious, on bended knee, remember the first Christmas morn. They recall the sufferings of Mother and Child, and offer in return for God's love a



prayer of thanksgiving. The aged, no longer able to take an active part in the festivities of the day, recall their childhood. Memories of many happy Christmases spent at home with relatives and friends flood their minds. The child, whose sensitive nature is easily stirred, revels in the arrival of the long-awaited day and in the joys that this day brings him.

But for the student Christmas is something different. He has passed the Santa Clause stage and, as yet, has not reached the age of absolute inactivity. He thinks of Christmas as a rest from text books and uninteresting lectures. Moreover, he views it as a time to store up fond memories which he may recall during the dull studies and classes of the coming semester. Yet it means still more. During his absence he has learned the full realization of what home is, and this makes the reunion with his loved ones the more cherished.

But this is more the material side of his thoughts. For him Christmas is not merely a time of selfish enjoyment. His training has taught him the dangers of abuse. Besides, this particular season is one of thanksgiving. It is the anniversary of the birth of Christ, and should be celebrated as such. This thought causes him to marvel at the love of God for mankind and for himself, and to offer up a fervent thanksgiving in return for this love.

Christmas, then, is a season of thanksgiving and joy. It is with this in mind that *Red and White* extends to all its Subscribers, Advertisers, Contributors, and to the Faculty and Students of Saint Dunstan's, sincere wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

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### The Saar Question

It may be said to the credit of the Treaty of Paris that it brought into existence a machinery for the maintenance and the preservation of peace that never existed before. On the other hand, the Versailles Treaty created a number of problems whose perplexity is sufficient to tax the powers of any peace organization. Little did the leading men at Versailles think that, within a period of fifteen years, the abhorrence for war would be forgotten, and that talk of a prospective war would again be rampant; otherwise they would not have left unsettled a question in which the opposing interests of two of the most militaristic nations conflict.



In remuneration for economic losses for which she was responsible in the iron-mining districts of Northern France, Germany was obliged to submit the rich coal-mining territory of the Saar Valley to political control by an international commission, and to the economic exploitation of France. This regime in the conceded territory was to last for a period of fifteen years, at the end of which time Germany was to abide by the decision of a popular plebiscite as to the permanent ownership of the territory. The voting population was to decide whether the Saar territory should remain under the League of Nations, unite with France, or re-unite with Germany.

Until a year ago there was little doubt but that the plebiscite would bring victory to Germany, since the population of the Saar is overwhelmingly German. But since that time new conditions have changed the situation. The Roman Catholics of the territory, who comprise the larger portion of its population, are alarmed at Hitler's suppression of the Roman Catholic Centre Party in Germany; the ever increasing number of Socialists and Communists fear the fate of their fellows in the Reich; and German refugees in the Saar want anything but re-union with Germany.

Realizing the possible danger from these unfavorable groups, Hitler and von Papen suggested that the plebiscite be abandoned, and that peaceful negotiations be made by France and Germany for the return of the Saar to the latter. This offer might have been accepted by France had it been made sooner, but the alienation from Germany of so many Saarlanders is likely the reason for France's refusal to negotiate. As matters stand, there is a possibility of the Saar's retention of League rule, or, failing that, a partition of the territory between France and Germany.

The League, in an effort to avoid friction on the matter, decreed some time ago that the deciding plebiscite be held in January 1935, and both France and Germany have been doing their utmost to improve their position for the decisive day. In fact, the tension became so great at one time that the president of the Governing Commission, Geoffrey G. Knox, sent in an urgent demand to the League to triple the police force. Apparently a large number of Saarlanders were receiving military training in Germany, and the voting population was being intimidated by outside enthusiasts.



Whether or not the January plebiscite will end the *melee*, it is doubtful. If the Reich should win back the territory, Germany must repurchase the mines. A compromise as to the price seems to be out of the question. The French suggest eight billion francs; the Germans, on the other hand, claim that the mines have deteriorated under French control, and that seven hundred million francs will be required to put them in shape again. Germany points to the four hundred million francs profit which the French have derived from the mines and contend that it is enough to pay the cost of war destruction; France points to the improvements in the mines which, they claim, have cost them that amount. Moreover, according to the agreement of Versailles, Germany must pay in gold, and she must pay within a year; but at present Germany has little gold and no equivalent in foreign exchange.

It would seem that the best way to maintain peace between the two countries concerned would be to have the Saar remain under the League of Nations. But this would be at the price of Saar industry. In all likelihood League rule would mean the necessary abandonment of the flourishing coal mines, since the Saarlanders would be deprived of their natural markets in France and Germany, and, owing to their distance from the sea, could not rely exclusively on exportation.

Eight hundred thousand Saarlanders in particular, and the world, in general, anxiously await January 13th, the day which will decide the heritage of the Saar Basin. So many parties are involved, so much depends on the outcome, and so much propaganda is being distributed, that a harmonious and peaceful plebiscite can scarcely be expected. The League of Nations, however, by exercising its authority in a firm and impartial manner can surely help in bringing about a peaceful settlement, thereby retaining the faith of its members and justifying its existence.

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Ed. Note:—As we go to press newspaper dispatches state that an agreement has been reached between France and Germany with regard to the distribution of property and mines in the Saar Valley, if the Saarlanders should decide in favor of coming under Germany's rule. This agreement, brought about chiefly through the instrumentality of the League of Nations, is an important step to-



wards a harmonious settlement of an issue the outcome of which at times threatened to disturb world peace, and it is to be hoped that amicable relations will be maintained among the European Powers.

### Legion of Decency

Some months ago the Catholic Bishops of United States, who for a long time had watched the indecent trend of the cinema with unreserved disapproval, joined hands that something might be done to remove the gross vulgarity which had crept into present day pictures. Accordingly, in the conclave that ensued it was decided to form a society, known as the Legion of Decency, in which the members would pledge themselves to help the society to attain its end by absenting themselves from immoral and questionable movies. The project was a huge success. Millions of Catholics throughout United States and Canada joined, and Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis, together with many of their respective congregations, endorsed the campaign and threatened to shun movies until Hollywood had cleaned house. This was not a campaign for federal censorship, although this is a possible outcome.

Before this, some little had been done in the line of censorship. A Production Code had been formulated, approved, and passed. Wm. H. Hays president of Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., had been appointed and is administrator of the Code. But as yet Mr. Hays has done only a little to make the movie barons obey, and to prevent evasions of the Code. Perhaps Mr. Hays has promised too much. Or, maybe the fact that he is only considered an employee, whose mandates are to be obeyed only when and where they please, answers for the numerous evasions of the Code. Whatever the cause may be, the fact that producers are not living up to their contract is obvious. They promised among many other things: that the technique of murder would not be shown in a manner which inspires imitation; that brutal killings would be barred; that theft, arson, smuggling, and other crimes would not be set forth so as to make imitation possible; that the illegal drug traffic would be barred; that marital infidelity would never be justified or presented attractively; that seduction would never be more than suggested; that complete nudity



would never be permitted; and that undressing scenes would be avoided or used only where they were essential to the plot. In conformity with their promises many producers submitted their scripts to the Hays office. But suggestions for changes were rejected. They permitted the Hays office to see the completed film before it was released; but if cuts were suggested they were never made.

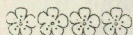
While Hays promised more than he could do, it is possible that he meant well by it. Repeatedly he warned producers that their evasions were serious offences and that, although he was powerless to punish them, a storm was brewing whose fury would lash them until their offences were expiated and their repentance assured. But they refused to believe him. Now many wish they had heeded the handwriting on the wall.

But why this universal uprising of public indignation against the cinema? After all, the screen is one of our popular means of recreation and as such should be left with us. That is true. The Catholic Church, in its drive against indecent films, has no intention of depriving her people of this wonderful recreation. Such a method has never been the policy of the Church. From the earliest times she, in her great wisdom, has known man's need of amusement and has always encouraged him to seek it. But, at the same time, she has endeavoured to exercise a guiding hand in his choice of wholesome amusements. Never has she had a word of censure for wholesome recreation, but on the contrary has been its constant patron and sane protector. On the other hand she advises against and forbids the attendance at amusements that are incompatible with her teachings. Here, and on these grounds alone, does she disapprove of the cinema.

The amazing power which the screen exercises over the audience has been used, in the past three years, to debase rather than to enoble; to undermine the foundations of morality; to teach a heretical philosophy of life; and, in a great measure, to counteract the good influence of the home, the school, and religion. But this is not all the reason for the Church's opposition to the present day movies. For the past few years the barons of moviedom have chosen to portray this degraded world as the world of reality, which it is not. Bad as conditions in this continent are, they are by no means in conformity



with the obscenity, the vulgarity, the blasphemy, and the carnal adventures which are portrayed daily on the screens. The vast majority of the people who inhabit this continent are clean-minded, honest, and normal. They are simple in their ways, and law-abiding in their pleasures. They desire only the modest comforts of life and ask only that their world be depicted as it is, decent and normal. These are the facts that the Catholic Church and the members of the Legion of Decency wish to refresh in the minds of the barons of Hollywood. Until this is done the drive will go on. The first objective, the arousing of the public opinion, has been reached and passed. It now remains for the League to sustain this opinion; and, by following up and consolidating their present gain, convince the movie producers, in no uncertain manner, of the earnestness of their demand for decent and intelligent pictures.



"Love truth, but pardon error."—*Voltaire*.

