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NOTES

INNER TEMPLE OF LONDON PRESENTS RELIC

Dickinson Law School has received a gift from the Masters of the Bench of the Honorable Society of the Inner Temple that will be highly valued by our students and graduates—a stone from the ruins of that Inn which was largely destroyed by the Nazi blitz on London in 1940-41. The relic will be fixed outside of the Dean's office in Trickett Hall as a memento of the common source of the law of the English-speaking world.

The Benchers of this ancient Inn of Court presented the stone to the law school's Corpus Juris Society at the instance of the Master of the Rolls, the Rt. Hon. Lord Greene, P. C., who very kindly offered to assist the Society in securing the relic. Lord Greene has also presented to our library a privately printed, illustrated book by the late Lord Justice MacKinnon, entitled *The Ravages of the War in the Inner Temple*, which describes the lamentable destruction visited upon the historic site.

Of the many eminent legal personages nurtured by the Inner Temple during the eight centuries in which the Inns of Court have been in charge of education for the English Bar, Sir Edward Coke and John Selden may be mentioned as having greatly influenced the course of the law in America and England. Lord Chief Justice Coke, who has been called "the greatest common lawyer of all time", championed the Common Law against the prerogative of King James I., in opposition to Sir Francis Bacon and Lord Chancellor Ellesmere.

Coke's contemporary, Selden, was the most learned man of his day—at his burial, the Master of the Temple remarked, "If learning could have kept a man alive, this our Brother had not died." He engaged his vast knowledge of the law in resistance to the Crown's encroachment on the rights of Parliament, and was twice imprisoned in the Tower because he would not bend to the royal will. This presaged the role American lawyers (many of them educated at the Inns of Court, and all of them students of Coke's *Institutes*) were to play against King James's Hanoverian successor a century after Selden's death.

The spirit that defied tyranny in the 17th and 18th centuries has not been wanting in our generation. Had the British capitulated in 1940 when they stood alone, the Inns of Court might be unscathed today; those who esteem our Common Law will reflect, when they see this fragment, that the rubble of the Inner Temple is a monument more admirable than brick and stone kept intact at the cost of such submission.

T. EDWARD MUNCE, JR.