

Quotations from Editorial comments

expressed by Michel Clare in Sport et Vie, Paris, 1960.

Do not the facts of pending old age and ineluctable death render more pathetic than ever the effort which prompts the athlete to strive for perfection when he is fully aware that his time and span of life are of limited duration? All the exploits achieved in

1960 were seemingly to overcome this twofold fatality. Never before has man reached such superhuman level of performance which were listed as world records. Never before has the athlete shown such feats of endurance and courage. In sportsmen, the fascination

of striving for perfection has always been present as well as the desire inherent to man to attain inaccessible summits combined with putting into practice the famous motto which is the inspiration of the Olympic ideal: CITIUS (faster), ALTIUS (higher), FORTIUS (more courageous), this brought about the unity which marked the Olympics of Rome 1960 as the most unforgettable year in the annals of sport.

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With regard to records, let us refrain from asking this stupid question: When will man stop this craze breaking records? Man will cease striving to surpass himself the day he dies, when life, this greatest gift of all, has left him. Is it not the facts of the stimulation of athletic life and the exhilaration caused by competitive sport which have increased man's vitality? Ever since the beginning of life, the greatest match ever fought by man, under various aspects and surrounded as he is by mysteries, has been his fight against Time: when a book, the creation of a masterpiece, an athletic exploit are the means given to man to go beyond his limitations and to surpass himself. The very setting of these Olympics of Rome, set over ruins buried under centuries of dust, the mutilated faces of statues, vestiges of perishable civilizations, all this taught us all that nothing is static, the essential is always to go ahead and start afresh.

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At a time when our planet finds itself transformed in a gigantic tower of Babel, where spatial distances are abolished, when enormous devices are set to work in order to bring mankind together, one thing strikes us, that, in spite of the fact that men do not speak the same language, sport succeeds in establishing the only universal code when divergences of opinions are settled amiably, when truths are gauged by a standard measure, common to all races and where happiness bears the same features. Do not let us expect too much of sport in other respects, for, in truth, Olympics have never before brought about such harmonious bonds of universal understanding. These feelings were deeply felt by all those who were present in these unforgettable Games which took place in the Italian peninsula basking in the lovely golden glow of late summer in Rome when the champions appeared perfectly poised in their full splendour.

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In spite of outstanding proofs of the glorious achievements attained by sport, there are still people to be found who will ask: 'What is the use of it all?' It is quite obvious that these people will never grasp that sport brought to such a high level will always appear useless according to the often mediocre realistic outlook on every day life felt by some people. Sport seems useless as are all things which tend to ennoble and enrich our lives, such as poetry, arts and games. Sport as an incitement to attain perfection is set on an infinitely higher level.