

THE MARATHON AS THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

In the preliminary programme for the Olympic Games in Munich (published in our *Newsletter* for January, page 46), athletics, as in Rome, appear as the final apotheosis of the XXth Olympiad. The sports writer Stantcho STANTCHEV suggested such a decision in the bulletin of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee. He wrote :

"The most beautiful part of any spectacle is always reserved for the end . . ."

In the same line of thought, Stantcho STANTCHEV makes a suggestion to which he attaches a symbolic value :

"The last event in the programme should be the Marathon of 42,795 km. which would remind us every four years of the anonymous hero who ran the distance from Olympia to Athens to bring news of the victory at Thermopylae and of the peace which was to follow. The Games have been named after the place on this ancient mount, where every four years the Olympic flame is Lighted, to be carried from there to the city where the Olympic flag has been raised. The arrival of the Marathon runners in the Olympic stadium will not only be a symbol but will become a tradition making perfect the closing ceremony - when the flame is extinguished until the next assembly four years later. After all, the fundamental idea of the Olympic Movement is eternal peace on earth which will permit the holding of peaceful reunions between all the sportsmen of the world.

One can imagine how solemn and splendid will be the moment when the Marathon winner enters the stadium, bringing the Games to a natural climax before the closing ceremony."

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