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First Natural Law Institute -- Contributors to the January Issue

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THE FIRST NATURAL LAW INSTITUTE

"In American jurisprudence, natural law is both a foundation and a stumbling block. It is a foundation because it lies at the root of our juristic tradition. It is a stumbling block because it is rejected by the prevailing philosophy." Thus did Mr. Harold R. McKinnon describe the problem discussed by The First Natural Law Institute which convened at the College of Law of the University of Notre Dame on December twelfth and thirteenth. This meeting, which brought to the College of Law many of the nation's leading lawyers, legal philosophers, and scholars, was entitled "first", because it is probable that it is the first gathering in modern times by members of the legal profession for the primary purpose of considering the natural law.

The purpose of the Institute went beyond discussion. Its aim was to proclaim the fresh and vital doctrine of natural law to a profession which is today, in Chesterton's phrase, "full of tangled things, and texts, and aching eyes." To a world endangered by pragmatism, the Institute reaffirmed that view of the law which inhered in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, was the philosophy of the Founding Fathers of the United States, and found concrete expression in the American Constitution.

Participating in the First Natural Law Institute were Clarence Manion, Dean of the College of Law; Rev. William J. Doheny, C.S.C.,