

DALHOUSIE Gazette

AMERICA'S OLDEST COLLEGE NEWSPAPER

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Letters To The Editor

Halifax, Jan. 29.

Editor, Dalhousie Gazette:

Dear Sir,—Considerable criticism has been levelled at you and at The Gazette for the article "The Miracle of Sunova Beach," which appeared in issue No. 23.irate readers have sent everything from pity to condemnation, and your right to print the article has been questioned and doubted. As far as I can see, you had every right of a free press behind you, and your "reasonable discretion" is just as good as anybody else's. If The Gazette were never to publish anything of a controversial nature and were to reject any such material, it would be well on its way to the press censorship that it is its purpose to avoid. The editor of a college paper always uses his reasonable discretion and no censorship is required. This point is proved simply by the publication of the article.

The article was clever and witty and was recognized as such by Protestants and Roman Catholics alike. There is nothing wrong with satire as long as it is not presented in obscene language, and whatever "Sunova Beach" was, it was not obscene. Some students have objected strenuously on the grounds that it ridiculed a part of their faith. But the article was not an attack on anybody's religion. It was simply intended to amuse, and was not written in a derogatory spirit. The parallel so frequently drawn is there only if some one chooses to see it. Several Roman Catholics of my acquaintance did not connect the article with the experience of Fatima; however, it is useless to deny that the article was written with this in mind. But it was intended to be funny, and it was, to most people. Aren't people big enough to laugh at a joke? Indignant writers have flooded the paper with letters which are neither constructive nor sensible; several have been intelligent and decent, but they have been buried in the deluge. No one has offered any tangible or definite reason for not printing the article. Such vague references as "the ideals of Dalhousie" and "the principles of a college paper" made by people who have no or very little idea of what these expressions mean, prove absolutely nothing. Dalhousie is a non-denominational university, and as such offers freedom of thought and expression to anyone, whatever their religious belief. The Dalhousie Gazette prints articles and letters submitted, provided they have some literary merit, and are not obscene, and are not derogatory to the university as a whole. The article was neither contrary to The Gazette, its editor or Dalhousie.

If anyone thinks that the article was not fit for publication he should offer definite reasons, and the fact that one's feelings were hurt is hardly a definite reason. If one's beliefs are so insecure that they can be shaken and harmed by an article in this vein, it is time for that person to examine his beliefs again. If a person really believes in something his belief will not be harmed by satire, or to go further than The Gazette did, by ridicule.

Yours truly,
DAVID PEEL.

The Editor, Dalhousie Gazette.

Dear Sir,—I wish to express my regret at seeing such intolerance of Christian expression and teaching in a recent letter to the editor by O. P.

Christian teachings (of every denomination) have been expressed through the medium of what O. P. might prefer to call "fables". The Bible provides us with innumerable examples.

Were O. P. unable to consider these credible, I am sure he could not deny that a strict universal observance of, and an adherence to, the Christian principles and expressions of these "fables" would undoubtedly lead to the end of national and international strife and anxiety at the very least!

I do not question freedom of expression of the press, yet discretion on the part of O. P. would have averted considerable discomfort of many readers whose particular belief was criticized. Though not in complete accord with their views, I consider the letter an unfair criticism of every Christian denomination.

HAROLD STEVENS.

Editor, Dalhousie Gazette:

Dear Sir,—Re "Sunova Beach" year, SOS has come in for a good deal of criticism, much of it in bad taste and little of it constructive. It would seem SOS should be commended for at least a try at injecting a spark of enthusiasm in "ye olde Gazette", if nothing else.

The world loves excitement, adventure and anything that colors the grey hum-drum existence of everyday life. SOS has written a colorful satire which has received some response from all corners. The calamity of the column, however, is that it was not taken in the light vein in which it was written. It was not bitter or at all acceptable as a realistic occurrence. "Sunova Beach" was not unlike the hit-parade tune "It's In The Book," featuring Gramma's lye soap, except the latter was not taken as a personal insult by all who follow Billy Sunday. It would seem in this area, narrow mindedness is at a maximum and tolerance at a minimum.

After a few years when the hot hostility hanging over the heads of Halifax burns out its "Sunova Beach" substance, Dal students of '53, recalling the events of the dim and misty era of O.V.P. SOS, and "at last reports Acadia was still there" will find one of the most memorable incidents will be the "Miracle of Sunova Beach" and the flood of furious and futile letters to the editor. SOS will go down as the Voltaire of Dalhousie or at worst, the Al Capp or Walt Kelly of '53.

The critics of SOS' M.O.S.B. had better keep pen in hand because this will not be the last article either satirical or serious, appearing in publications, with religion as its theme. From time immemorial original thinkers have utilized controversial subjects, such as religion, as a basis for essays and books which are now listed as the world's best in literature. Their critics, like Don Quixote tilting at imaginary windmills in the form of insults to their personal beliefs, are so long forgotten as to be completely obscure.

That SOS will go down in clas-

sical history as a great writer is doubtful. He has proven, however, and contrary to campus opinion, that The Gazette has a great many readers.

D. NICHOLSON.

5 Murray Place,
Halifax, N. S.
Jan. 28, 1953.

Editor, Dalhousie Gazette:

Sir,—May I express my unbounded admiration to you, Mr. Editor, for according the freedom of the press to the author of the much criticized satire, "The Miracle of Sunova Beach"? Although it may not have met with my approval, yet if freedom means anything at all it must involve freedom to disagree and the right to express an opposite point of view, or in the words of a great fighter for freedom, "I disagree violently with (hate?) what you say, but I will fight to the death for your right to say it". Furthermore, Mr. Editor, I admire you for being consistent to the principle of a free press by according the same freedom to those who took exception to the above-mentioned story. You are to be congratulated, Sir, but judging by the concluding remarks of many of the letters that flooded your column all do not possess the same confidence in your integrity as I do. I find myself wondering whether it was wisdom that so much heat and pressure was applied to such an affair as a literary contribution by one of our students. No doubt, he feels an importance out of all proportion to the true merits of the article because of the widespread publicity given to it; and many have reread and discussed this article, while others who might not have read it have been sent searching through back issues in order to bring themselves up to date on current campus topics, all because of the fuss that has been created. But my Roman Catholic Christian friends were intent on having the blood of "S. O. S.", and yours, too; they wanted to heap on both your heads the contempt that it deserved. Would it have not been much wiser to have ignored the author and his article, and to have given both the contempt of silence? That would have been much more mature than giving in to emotional outbursts, decrying against you, Mr. Editor, or the Dalhousie Gazette, or our University.

F. HOWARD-ROSE, B. A.,
Education,

January 28th, 1953.
Halifax, N. S.

Editor, Dalhousie Gazette,

Dear Sir,—May I be permitted to reply to a recent letter by Mr. David J. Janigan? He begins his letter by saying that he is a Roman Catholic, so perhaps I ought to start off with the statement that I am an English Catholic, i.e., a member of the holy Catholic Church of England in Canada; and may I hastily add that although I am in communion with the See of Canterbury, yet I have the greatest respect for the Holy Catholic Church of Rome.

Mr. Janigan believes that the two authors, "S.O.S." and "O.U.P.", consider that he is "a religious fool" and "... has not attained maturity of mind". He goes on to say that, "This, they apply to all Roman Catholics". They might have meant it for you Mr. Janigan, for perhaps they are your friends and possibly might know you; but I doubt whether their remarks could be intended for all Roman Catholics. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that they consider some Roman Catholics are fools, or more specifically, those who believe the Miracle at Fatima.

Surely, Sir, you are well aware that the story of the Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima is not an article of belief, "de fide", but simply a beautiful and touching account which may be held as a pious opinion. An official pronouncement from the Holy Father may come later; but at present, it is not binding on all or any Roman Catholic to believe it. Therefore, do not be too perturbed about ridicule against this opinion, for it is not possible to insult Truth; if it is true, it will prevail.

There is just one other point in Mr. Janigan's letter to which I must take issue, I quote, "It seems almost paradoxical to me that "O.

NOTICE

The Gazette wishes to announce that it regards the current discussions pertaining to the publication of the Miracle of Sunova Beach as closed insofar as the use of this paper is concerned. No further correspondence on this particular subject will be published at the present time.

—The Editor.

NOTICE

To whom it may concern:

As a result of a request by the Student Council I, the writer of the story "Miracle of Sunova Beach, am complying with the opinion of Council that said story was distasteful to the feelings of a certain religious group.

S.O.S.

well verbally, are neither immature nor did they write in bad taste. It would have been in poor taste in Russia to write as they did, but not here.

My congratulations to SOS, who wrote "Sunova Beach". It appears to have been a thought-provoking article. It could only be the product of a university where thought is not strongly directed along conventional lines.

It hardly seems fair to attack a person because he holds unconventional ideas. Men may attack the idea, but they seldom attack the person violently unless there is enough of truth in the ideas to upset them considerably. Or perhaps the defenders of the church merely felt the church needed defending. It doesn't. It will be here when communism is long dead.

"Sunova Beach" was written as an amusing article, and most of us took it as such. It was better than most material that finds its way into college papers.

God bless SOS and the editors of Dal Gazette.

Yours respectfully,
H. DONALD URQUHART,
1st year Med.

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ECCLESIA ANGLICANA.
Name supplied on request.

Editor, Dalhousie Gazette.

Dear Sir,—Satire is one of the most effective forms of criticism. Surely Arthur Koestler and George Orwell, who attacked Russia so

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