

DALHOUSIE Gazette

AMERICA'S OLDEST COLLEGE PAPER

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Yesterday the Editors of The GAZETTE received a letter from the Executive of the Dalhousie Medical Society. It read as follows:

Open Letter to a Thief

On the afternoon of Monday, November 27, a sum of money was stolen from the Medical Society Book Bureau in the basement of the Medical Library.

The Medical Society Executive is deeply disturbed about this, and would like to say this to the person guilty of this act. If you are a medical student, we are most ashamed of you and will do our utmost to ferret you out, since anyone who would steal money, especially from his colleagues, is hardly a fit candidate for the profession. If you are a student from another faculty, we lament the fact that you are a Dalhousian and hope that your classmates will deal with you when they discover you to be the wretch you are. If you are an employee of this University, we hope your employers will soon realize what a mistake they made in hiring you. If you are a professional or experienced amateur just passing through, may we extend an invitation to return soon, when we are better prepared to receive you. No matter who you are, our contempt for you is boundless, yet we cannot suppress a feeling of pity for your abysmal soul and for your poor, unfortunate family.

All students reading this who share these views, are asked to circulate this issue of The Gazette as widely as possible, so that the person to whom this letter is addressed will be sure to read it.

And anyone who has any clues as to the identity of the guilty person or persons is urged to contact any member of the Dalhousie Medical Society Executive. Your evidence may be just what is needed to bring an end to this epidemic that is plaguing our campus.

SIGNED: The Dalhousie Medical Society Executive.

The most unfortunate fact about the whole matter is that there is a definite probability that the theft was committed by a student.

This is not the first such incident of this kind. In fact it is merely one of a series of "disappearances" of various articles from the campus.

Coats have been disappearing with alarming monotony from the cloak room of the MacDonald Memorial Library, and there have been scattered thefts of clothing from other parts of the campus.

The thefts which have occurred at the Library and at the Forrest Building could have been the work of outsiders, despite the frequency of such occurrences. This theft, however, definitely points to an inside job.

There is a possibility that all the thefts have been carried on by an organized gang of students who incline towards peculiar tastes in extra-curricular activities. It is most unlikely that this is the case, but the possibility cannot be overlooked.

The situation has reached a point at which something has to be done, whether by University, student or civic authorities. This unlawful practice cannot be allowed to continue.

OPERA IN NOVA SCOTIA

Wednesday night, I saw the Nova Scotia Opera Association's presentation of Verdi's opera "La Traviata". The opera, one of the world's favourites, based on Alexander Dumas' famous play "La Dame aux Camelias," was an excellent choice for presentation in an area obviously hungry for good music and good singing. The opera satisfied the former, but left something to be desired as to the latter.

Wagner, in his criticisms, said that a period opera should have four components and equally strong parts, the music, the libretto, the dramatics and the singing, and it is from these four classifications that I would discuss the presentation.

The score is unquestionably one of the best in opera repertoire. From the opening strains of the main overture, modeled on the Wagnerian overtures to the famous Violetta—Georgic Germont scene to the final curtain, the music follows the dramatic angle. The Opera Association orchestra under the capable leadership of Alfred Strombergs did justice to the score. It not only produced the music, but in this writer's opinion, did a more than admirable job in supporting the singers.

The writer did not understand enough of the words to tell if it was good or bad. Several years ago when opera lovers in the U.S. decided to ask the Metropolitan to change their librettos into English, there were two main challenges to the idea; first was the poor translations in existence, second was the fear that directors would not sufficiently demand that the singers learn to pronounce their English properly. The latter challenge was evident Wednesday night. The author realizes that sluffing over one's language today is the accepted practice, but it is to be deplored when this appears in opera. It is hard enough to understand foreign words, practised and memorized by English singers without having to listen to English being slid through.

The dramatics of an opera can be divided into two parts, the staging and the acting. Dealing with the latter, first the writer must admit that sometimes operatic arias or music is such that acting is very difficult. There must, however, be some motion or acting to fill up the gaps between the end of one speech and the opening of the next, between the beginning and

end of a long aria. When you listen to an opera on the radio, you imagine the in between, and it amounts to a catastrophe if when seeing one, the singers fail to act sufficiently. Wednesday night the performers tried hard to keep moving. They succeeded in looking natural most of the time, but there were some very weak points. Violetta swung her fan too much, and Alfredo looked lost, as though wondering whether he should catch her each time she fainted. The weakest acting or directing was in the third act when Violetta went back and forth across the stage with only a few hours to live, unaided. The doctor failed to convince the writer. The doctor should have at least had a black bag, and medicine or a note book to keep him busy.

The scenery was very good. The scenery in the opening act was enough to inspire the apparent gaiety, and brought gasps from the audience. The scenery was equally good in the other acts and simple as it should have been in the last act, but the lighting was very bad. The lighting used in the first act commanded appreciation, but in the third act it was grim. The third act opened badly in this writer's opinion when those in charge failed to open the curtains in unison with the opening strains of the orchestral prelude. The overture and the scenery together should have put the audience in proper temper, but instead, the

overture alone, and the succeeding blue room failed to make the necessary effect. The brilliant lighting of the first act failed to give effect to the pathos.

If the singers were at all short in their presentation, the writer believes that more is to be accredited to lack of microphones than anything else. The heroine, Violetta, was sung by Eleanor Davis who sang well, but not loud enough. Two suspended microphones would have solved the problem. The same can be said for all the other parts except perhaps Theodore Britts and Diane Parker. The singers did a fine job under the circumstances.

Though the writer may have conveyed a harsh treatment at times in his criticism, he does not imply, or mean to imply.

The presentation left something to be desired, but it was a good attempt at a very difficult opera. It takes a particular type of person for nearly all the parts in "La Traviata" and anyone not exact for a role is placed in a difficult position. This opera, the third attempt by the Nova Scotia Opera Association, fell short of the previous two operas, but still gave Nova Scotia a good working platform for further attempts. The Association may rest assured that the audience were satisfied with their pioneering and will attend diligently future presentations.

Harbour Fog

A grey sea-mist on the harbour
 Grey clouds in a sunless sky,
 Fog-horns muted by stillness,
 No sea-gulls winging by.

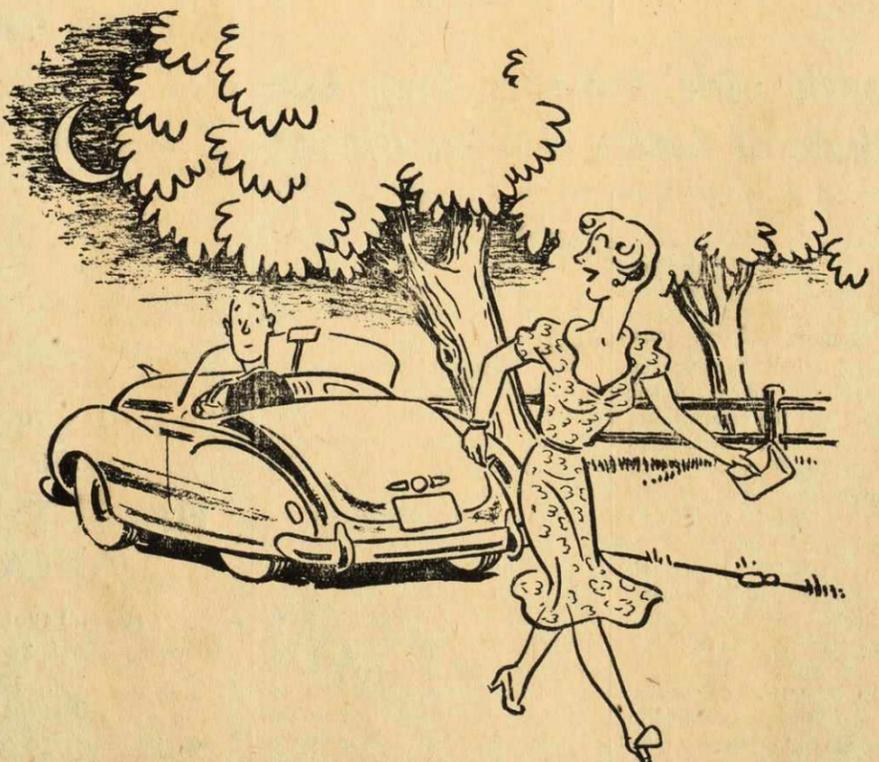
And the heart of the mighty ocean
 In all its glory and pain
 Has crept o'er the silent harbour
 And all is stillness again.

Grey shrouds all, and the sadness
 Is on my heart once more,
 As the wifts and wafts of mem'ries
 Drift, as the fog, to the shore.

And over all is the feeling
 Of dreams and long ago,
 In memory is all silence
 As the wind whispers to and fro.

Once more the world is waiting,
 Once more Time seems to cease,
 And over the earth is stealing,
 Sad, melancholy, Peace.

Moyra Seegar.



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