

Bohemian Summer: Rome to California

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the village

Voice

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The Night People

by JEAN SHEPHERD

Quo Vadis?

A FRIEND of mine made a few remarks the other day to the effect that the whole damn thing has had either a Wagnerian flavor or a Laurel-and-Hardy quality, and he couldn't make up his mind which was the most valid. I kind of like the Laurel-and-Hardy thing myself, although there are certain essential differences unfortunately. For one thing, it isn't easy to tell who is playing what role. You never had that trouble with the original Laurel-and-Hardy cast. Laurel was always consistent, to say the least, and Hardy was as one carved from the stuff of Gibraltar. A pair of buffoons (a wonderful word), but loveable and completely recognizable.

True, our cast is shot through with its share of buffoons and poltroons (another great word: I was reminded of it while watching a couple of recent Convention sessions), but they aren't always loveable nor are they even recognizable. But I still enjoy mightily the L-&H idea. What a great thought! There was old Stanley constantly pursued by the Fates, who fought a war of attrition against him, wearing and running him down until his sense of defeat was a beautiful thing to behold. His only answer to a particularly stunning psychic blow was to straighten his derby and break into tears. Poor Nothing. One with most of us. Hardy constantly tasted defeat but never knew it. He bumbled. He blustered. He bragged. He was a Positive Thinker, but when the world crashed around him he blamed Stanley, mopped his brow, and bravely fumbled onward into the unknown, exuding a ridiculous brand of dignity. Poor Nothing. He too was one of us. They lived in a surrealistic world where scientists changed people into catfish, but one where at the same time people joined the Foreign Legion for Adventure and wound up instead in a GI laundry, tidying up after a succession of Victor McLaglen types. This is the way the world really is, you know.

In Search of B-uty

Another thing is that both Stan and Oliver were fairly inarticulate about what was happening to them. Oliver made a fine racket, but it was mostly aimed at Stan.

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New Police Captain

Fenton R. Fergus of Greenwich Village's 6th Police Precinct was promoted from lieutenant to captain, the Police Department announced this month.

Captain Fergus, now 46, rose steadily through the ranks during his 19 years on the force. He is married and a resident of Queens.



TWO APPROACHES TO A PROBLEM. THE PROBLEM (above) at the moment is the streets of the Lower East Side, where violence broke out this month among teen-age gangs. Some of the city's oldest slums, a changing population that has not yet taken root, and poverty in general—all provide a fuse ready to be lit. **ONE APPROACH** is that of the Lower Eastside Neighborhoods Association (LENA), which has been organizing the human resources of the community for the past two years. When violence broke out, LENA brought the warring gangs together and negotiated a truce. Four of LENA's leaders gather (top) to discuss future moves: Rabbi Seymour Nulman, Helen Hall, Reverend C. Kilmer Myers, and John Lassoe, Jr. **ANOTHER APPROACH** is the Police Department's. Commissioner Kennedy deplores "appeasement or agreements," which he feels will bolster gangs ego and give them prestige.

More Lights For Village To Combat Crime

Greenwich Village will be better lit as a result of the joining of street lighting to the fight on crime. Acting on Police Department information, the city is planning its program of new street illumination to include sections that have a high incidence of crime.

The Village was disclosed as one of the sore spots in a report made before the City Planning Commission last Friday by Arthur C. Ford, Commissioner of Water Supply, Gas, and Electricity.

The parts of the Village that will benefit from new street lighting include the area bounded by Fifth and Sixth Avenues and 8th and 12th Streets, as well as Bleecker, Bedford, and West 10th Streets.

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VOICE SURVEY:

Who in November-Ike? Adlai?

The Voice put two questions this week to some 60 local people: Do you think Eisenhower or Stevenson will win in November? Which do you favor personally?

This was no poll. It was merely an attempt to find out something about the trend of thinking in the Village at the outset of the campaign.

These are the results:

- 64 per cent thought Eisenhower would win; 24 per cent saw Adlai the winner; 12 per cent refused to predict.
- 51 per cent said they were going to vote for Stevenson; 42 per cent for Eisenhower; 7 per cent had not decided.

Eisenhower voters were sure they had a winner, but Adlai voters tended to be pessimistic, though they were in the majority. Typical was Mrs. Oscar Berg, of Lower Fifth Avenue, who said: "I'm afraid Eisenhower will win, but I'm for Stevenson."

The most interesting part of the survey was not the numerical results, but that practically everyone had an opinion and gave it without hesitation. Also the fact that most people seem to have made up their minds already. There was, however, one very firm exception. A lady with an indisputably Near Eastern name and a charming accent said: "Please call back tonight. I will ask my husband, of course."

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The Night People

Continued from page 1

who appeared to be his only friend. Stan was a born Night Person. Vaguely aware of imminent disaster, unorganized, hopeful, and about as ineffectual as a guppy in a tank of barracuda. A shy biter. There was also a barely defined streak of the intellectual in search of Beauty that was somehow felt in this fumbling Stanley. Even his name was wonderful. STANLEY. This is almost as good as Clarence. A parakeet with shadowy dreams of eaglehood. His tears were real. Oliver,

a Day Person, always coddled Stan as one does a fuzzy-minded meatball, but at the same time he kept him at heel for his own good.

But the thing that counted most was that neither of them really knew where the handles were tacked on or if there were any handles at all. Stan was afraid there weren't, while Oliver knew there was, and he knew where they were—but one conspiracy after another, with Stan as a witless dupe, prevented him from grabbing the handles for the both of them. He too is part of our nature. Good old Oliver. Good old Charlie Chrysler. I can almost hear and see him delivering a campaign speech from the Convention floor, just before Irving Berlin and the Ladies-Citizens' Drill Team performed for the benefit of the poor fuzzy Stanleys in the Other Party, calling upon them to repent their witlessness and to join in the Crusade. Yet oddly enough, one could not exist without the other, and both together make up all of us. I've sometimes thought that the world of Oliver and Stan was a much more valid one than that of Tennessee Williams and a far more truthful one than that of W. C. Fields (be this heres; . . .).



Yeah, I can see that there is a lot in this equation between Laurel and Hardy and the wild events of the past two or three weeks, including "I, Libertine" and Sweetheart Soap and the wrath of the Gods. Like I said, I isn't easy to spot who is playing what and if there are any handles or not, but then there never are any pat answers to much of anything. Oliver never found them, although he thought he could have in the next reel. If there had been another reel. Stanley just sort of went along for the ride and was given to his occasional crying fits when things got out of hand, but he obviously had the dream. Just so with most of us.

THERE was a kind of Stan Laurel sort of kid in high school with me several epochs ago. He played trombone in the marching band, which is about as close to an athletic field as he ever got. He wore those miserable gold-rimmed glasses that made the sides of his nose red during hot weather. He didn't exactly weep when things got rocky for him, but he would giggle, which is even worse. I don't think he ever had a real date during his entire high-school career. The war came and he got drafted. He spent three years as a mail clerk in Greenland, after which he got on a boat and came home. Not a scratch on him either. He was the type the movies would have killed in a war movie, but who never did get killed in the actual war. He still giggles, and, believe it or not, still has the dream. Poor witless Stanley.

YEAH, I can see how all of this is kind of like Laurel (the skinny one) and Hardy (the fat one). Come on down to the showroom. You'll be glad you did. Thanks a lot.



—Edith Worth

THIS YOUNG LADY and many others like her will be part of an exhibit of some 80 photographs by Edith Worth that opens next Thursday, a week from tomorrow, at the Hudson Park Branch of the New York Public Library, 10 Seventh Avenue South. Entitled "Prelude to a Ballerina," the exhibit consists of studies of "young aspirants to the world of the dance at work to achieve their ambitions." Mrs. Worth, a photographer who also describes herself as "a balletomane of long standing," lives in Nutley, New Jersey. The pictures were taken at the American Ballet Academy, in Newark. Visiting hours at the Hudson Park gallery are 12 to 9 p. m. on Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 to 6 p. m. on Fridays. The exhibit will extend through September 28. There will be a preview next Wednesday, September 5, at 8 p. m., to which all "friends of the branch" are cordially invited.

RESTAURANTS REOPEN

The Potpourri Restaurant, Washington Place, reopens for the fall on September 7, a week from Friday. El Charro, Charles Street, reopened Monday.

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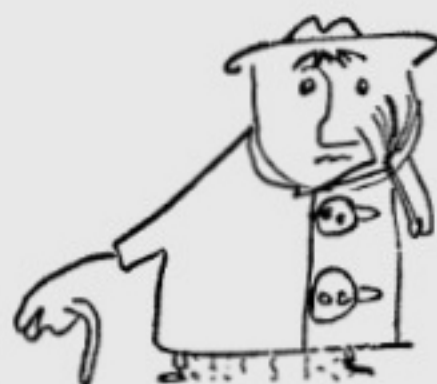
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