

TRADE Winds

IN THE CANTON branch of Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library, there toils a popular and highly efficient young lady named Elizabeth Hart. Her knowledge of juvenile literature is encyclopedic, but she knows little and cares less about the weird sounds that pass for music among the bobby-soxers of the day. To Miss Hart rock 'n' roll is something you buy in a bakery, and she couldn't name two reigning TV bopsters and caterwaulnuts if her life depended upon it.

Into her domain recently there strode a small boy wearing a plastic hat of a brilliant orange hue. Across the crown, in shiny black letters, was emblazoned the name, "ELVIS PRESLEY." So absorbed did the small boy become in a book (for the record, it was Dr. Seuss's "If I Ran the Circus") that he left his hat behind when he departed. Miss Hart put it on the shelf behind the charging desk, hoping that its owner would be back soon to reclaim it.

Some minutes later another little boy inquired, "Is that really Elvis



Presley's hat?" "Yes," answered Miss Hart casually. "He was here a while ago and left it. I imagine he'll be back any moment to get it."

What happened next is still a bit hazy in Miss Hart's mind. In no time flat her department was overrun by virtually every kid in the neighborhood, all equally intent upon getting a close-up of the immortal Elvis. A possible riot was averted only by the sudden reappearance of the genuine owner of the hat, who was propelled through the crowd by an angry mother. She jammed the hat over her son's ears and announced, "He'd leave his head behind too if it wasn't screwed on."

The crowd reluctantly dispersed. Miss Hart, aware by this time that Mr. Presley is a very famous man, hurried to a nearby music shop to hear one of his records. She is now more mystified than ever.

THE AFOREMENTIONED Dr. Seuss (whose real name, I'm sure you know, is Ted

Geisel), has joined his neighbors in La Jolla, California, in a campaign to rid this beautiful seaside town of a growing rash of unsightly commercial billboards. The Doctor's contribution was a characteristic poem, now being distributed by civic organizations of other sign-smeared California cities, and reprinted here by permission:

Signs of Civilization

There once was a guy
And his name was Guss
Who invented a product
Called Guss-ma-Tuss.
(I forget what it did,
But the product was good.)
So he whapped out a sign
As he darned well should.

Then along came a guy, and his name
was Zaxx
Who invented a product called Zaxx-
ma-Taxx.

And he said:
"I shall show this bush-leaguer Guss
"I can double out-sell his Guss-ma-
Tuss!"

And, so, Board Chairman Zaxx of
Zaxx-ma-Taxx
Whapped out a much bigger sign with
his axe.

That's how it all started.
THEN good old Guss
Put a bigger pitch in
For Guss-ma-Tuss!
Of course, you know how Zaxx re-
acted.
(Just about like you expected.)
Ten-ton signs around his door!
THEN Guss . . .
HE re-acted more!



Gisele MacKenzie—"stardom seems certain."

And, thus between them, with impunity
They loused up the entire community.

Sign after sign, after sign, until
Their property values slumped to nil.
And even the dinosaurs moved away
From that messed-up spot in the
U.S.A.

MOST TV CRITICS opine that the Elvis Presley vogue will be a temporary one, but there's a girl brightening up another weekly TV fixture—"The Hit Parade"—who is a very different kettle of dish. Stardom on Broadway seems certain for her—and in the near future, too. Her name is Gisele La



Fleche, but years ago she decided that was rather flashy for theatrical purposes. She changed it to Gisele MacKenzie.

The restaurant corner in which I interviewed Miss MacKenzie was, by chance, the very one where Maurice Dolbier of the *Herald-Tribune* had questioned me the day previous, a story in his column. Now, literally, the table was turned! We attracted some attention. "What are you and Miss MacKenzie plotting?" one lady paused to demand. "It's a merger," I told her. "We're combining 'The Hit Parade' and 'What's My Line.' Don't tell a soul." "I won't," she promised, "but it's the worst idea I ever heard!"

You know Gisele MacKenzie today as a singer and a comedienne, with what an NBC executive described as "an irresistible girl-next-door quality." She began her professional career, however, as a concert violinist—a darn good one, too. Her father, a doctor in her native Winnipeg, invested \$3,000—and how he had striven to save that much!—in a violin which she played at her debut in Toronto in 1941.

Gisele was fourteen at the time, but already so attractive and accomplished that when war broke out she was asked to help entertain the enlisted men in various Canadian training camps, doubling as a violinist and a singer. "I preferred the singing," she recalls, "to fiddling around."

One man who appreciated her heartily in both capacities was Navy Lieutenant Bob Shuttleworth, and fortunately for her he was the band leader at a big summer resort six years later when she applied for a job there. He hired her without an audition, and when he discovered that she had added piano playing and

dancing to her other accomplishments, doubled her salary forthwith. He's her personal manager today.

Gisele still was weighing the comparative advantages of a career as a serious violinist with that of a "chan-tootsie" when fate stepped in one summer day in Toronto in 1947. Some rascal, never apprehended, broke into her locked automobile, and pilfered her precious \$3,000 violin—not to mention bags containing all of her evening clothes. "Somebody up there doesn't like my violin playing," concluded Gisele. She began singing on radio shows with Mario Lanza, Bob Crosby, and a slick troupe of harmonizers called the Modernaires.

It was a lucky day for her adopted Clan MacKenzie when Bob Crosby bundled up Gisele and the Modernaires for a star-spangled engagement at Las Vegas's Sahara Club. Among the reckless spenders applauding at a ringside table was Jack Benny, who always knows a good thing when he sees it. Jack persuaded her to join him for an in-person production in San Francisco—as a singer exclusively.

Benny found out by accident that Gisele could play a mean violin the day the show opened, rushed out and bought her a fiddle with his own money. That night they rendered "Getting to Know You" as a duet and brought down the house. "That girl," said Benny appreciatively, "can do everything." This was before she had cooked him a full, eight-course dinner, too!

A Lucky Strike scout saw Gisele clowning with Benny in San Francisco and signed her without further ado. She's appearing on "The Hit Parade" now for her fourth successive season, and with Dorothy Collins as a team-mate provides a one-two punch that has pulverized the opposition.

What next for Gisele MacKenzie? Grand Opera? Musical comedy? Even the Met's Rudolf Bing, I am told, is enthusiastic about her potentialities. And when Bing comes, can Rodgers and Hammerstein be far behind?

—BENNETT CERF.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
KINGSLEY DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 1191)

R(EBECA) BEARD:

EVERYMAN'S ADVENTURE

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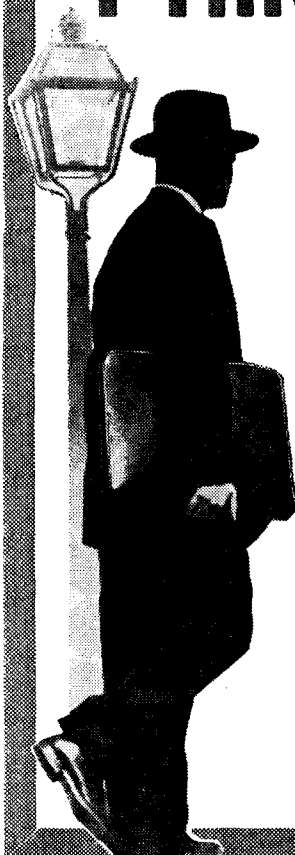
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Saturday Review Syndicate

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A REPUBLIC AND ITS NATURAL DISEASES

*Who (or What)
Killed Roman Freedom?*



—Bettmann.

We are all more-or-less agreed that shadowy psychological forces—rather than a neat gearworks—are the secret masters of history. It seems to be more accurate to regard fears, lusts, sudden anxieties that sweep across whole populations like the flu as responsible for social disasters like depressions, wars, and tyrannies rather than—as the Victorians thought—the vagaries of a quasi-mechanical system. If we are right, then the sound emotional health of a society is indispensable to its enlightened government. It is just the sicknesses of spirit which eroded away the Roman Republic, and which might attack any republican form of government under pressure, that are analyzed here by F. R. Cowell, well-known British classicist and Foreign Office official.

By F. R. COWELL

THE Republic is merely a sham." Julius Caesar, whose assassination 2,000 years ago was commemorated last year, is supposed to have made this statement the explanation of his ruthless liquidation of the ancient and honored Roman Republic which had given him birth and success. Caesar was not unique among Roman public men. Cicero, the staunchest defender of the Republic in its last days, said himself. "We have preserved the word Republic but there is no doubt that we have long since lost the thing itself." They were right. There had been no plague or

pestilence, no military defeat; Rome's imperial eminence was more spectacular than ever. But the Republic had died.

How had this come about? The Roman Republic originally came into being about 500 B.C. after the expulsion of a despised foreign dynasty. Over the centuries the Republic had waged many victorious wars and had constructed an empire out of the whole Mediterranean world. By Caesar's day, though there was of course very considerable economic inequality, the political balance between poor and rich was comparable to that of eighteenth-century England. Lastly, there existed no alternate ideology

for intellectuals and malcontents, such as Communism provides today. The Roman people knew and desired only republicanism. To the day of the East Roman Empire's demise 1,500 years later the emperors were forced by sentiment to retain at least some of the trappings of the old Republic. How then had this tough institution, with triumphs in the Punic, Macedonian, and innumerable other wars to its credit, having overcome the Sullan and Gracchan and innumerable other internal crises, come to mean so little to its own people that they permitted adventurers to carve it up like a roast?

FAITH AND POLITICS

The most important resource of any government is the faith of the people. Once the people are thoroughly disillusioned, once they have permanently identified "officeholders" and "politicians" with graft and corruption, there is no use in patching up forms. Louis XVI was the best-hearted Bourbon of them all; near the start of his reign he agreed to the most far-reaching constitutional reforms. Yet the injuries his two predecessors