

LEND AN EAR

By MADELEINE HARRIS
Special Writer for The Eccentric

A Night at the Opera

We have grand opera with us only a very short time each year—one week to be exact! And a taste for opera, as a taste for olives, may require many samplings before a real liking for either permanently develops.

This places a heavy responsibility upon our visiting opera companies—a single operatic experience for many must be enough per year to sustain one's active interest until next time—twelve months later. This is a very unhealthy state of things for the opera public and for music as a whole.

There may come a day when we as a public will demand more of this wonderfully expressive art; but certainly we shall have to be exposed to it for longer periods and more frequently to be able to enjoy it on its own terms. Opera actually is a combination of drama and music.

AND THOUGH some more recent attempts have been made at writing a modern opera, complete with what we like to feel are improved dramatic techniques (and, I'm afraid, with much dissonance cacaphony) it is chiefly a child of the romantic period of the late eighteenth and all pervading nineteenth century romanticism.

Its plots have been called corny. Indeed, many are farfetched and improbable in terms of modern dramatic standards. Characters in opera are "types." There are the "Good Guys" and the "Bad Guys" and never the "rain fall" meet. Opera really is allegory plus music. Its plots may not always stand up to contemporary psychological analysis, but they are not supposed to.

THEY ARE the framework upon which the musical fabric is hung. The stories of opera are expressed through the music and without this oftentimes glorious help-mate, they might be considered inane and ineffectual.

Yet hand in hand, together, they express deep human emotion as old as the human race.

It is interesting to note that

WHY?



Do We Have Coming Out Parties?

Because of taboos, their barter value when brides and to protect them from marauders, girls from puberty to marriageable age in savage society lived segregated lives.

Confined to huts, often for years, they had no contact with the outside world except through crones who guarded and fed them. When mature, however, their "coming out" of the hut was celebrated by days of feasting and dancing.

Though we have not guarded them closely since Victorian times, we too have coming out parties and debutante dances for our marriageable daughters.

Who'll Volunteer?

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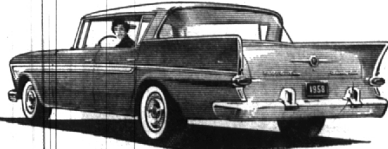
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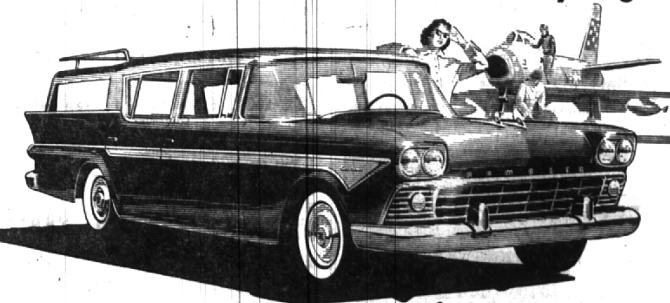
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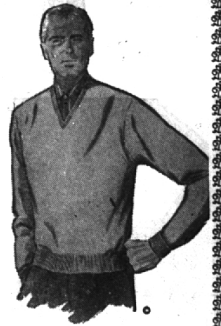
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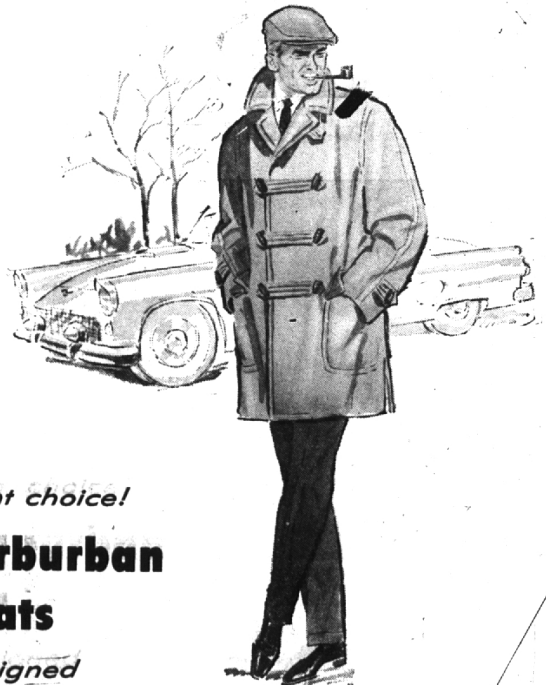
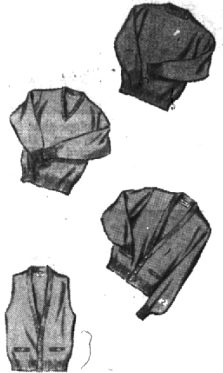
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