

**EXPERIENCED BOOKSELLERS KNEW** that one new surefire bestseller would mark the official end of the most severe late spring sales slump in years. Whittaker Chambers's "Witness" proved the answer to their prayers. Tom Costain's forthcoming novel, "The Silver Chalice," due in late July, will be their next bonanza. Doubleday expects a sale comparable to those on "The Robe" and "The Cardinal."

The fall has any number of further plums in store. First and foremost is a new Ernest Hemingway novel, "The Old Man and the Sea," already snapped up by the Book-of-the-Month Club and heralded by its publisher (Scribner) as "a new classic; a great book like no other." (Princeton University Press has managed to include consideration of "The Old Man and the Sea" in its forthcoming critical study, "Hemingway: The Writer as Artist," by Carlos Baker.) John Steinbeck's "East of Eden," the longest book he has written, is another sure winner. Much of its story takes place



in his native Salinas Valley in California, and traces the fortunes of one family from the Civil War to 1918.

Edna Ferber's "Giant" is a story about Texas, and partly because many readers will think they can identify leading characters and background will cause a great commotion when it is published. This is Miss Ferber's most important book since "A Peculiar Treasure." Also due: "A Cry of Children," by John Horne Burns; "The Awakening East," by Eleanor Roosevelt; "The Folks at Home," by Margaret Halsey; "A Moon for the Misbegotten," by Eugene O'Neill; "Mid-century Journey," by William Shirer; "The Devils of Loudun," by Aldous Huxley; "Confessors of the Name," by Gladys Schmitt; "Life of Wendell Willkie," by Joseph Barnes; and "Time's Corner," by Nancy Wilson Ross. And Houghton Mifflin are already beating the drum for Madison Cooper's 840,000 word novel (wow!) due for unveiling on October 22. Books like these will still much of the nonsense being bruited about currently

to the effect that paper-bound thirty-five-cent originals are going to ruin the existing publishing industry. It isn't really good books that are overpriced; it's trash. Get the junk off publishers' lists and out of the legitimate bookstores and this will be a healthier and more prosperous business all around!

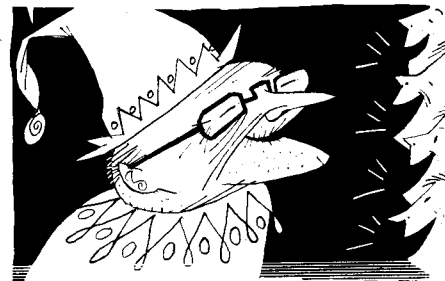
**PEOPLE . . .** Charles Scribner, Jr., is the fourth of that name to be elected president of his firm. . . . Frank Taylor is the new editor of Dell Publications. . . . Feike Feikema has changed his name to Frederick Manfred. . . . The tragic suicide of Herschel Brickell (a result of persistent ill health) removed from the scene an eminent critic and a thoroughgoing gentleman. . . . Lon Tinkle, of the *Dallas News*, has moved self and family into a new, modernistic villa, built literally over a picturesque lake, that is the talk of the community. . . . Jean Ennis is the new publicity director of Random House. . . . Edna Woolman Chase, long-time editor of *Vogue*, is writing her memoirs for Doubleday, assisted by her famous daughter, Ilka Chase. . . . Bertram Wolff, the Beau Brummel of bookbinders, has charmed Edith Dieu into matrimony. . . . Professor Irwin Edman is summering in Aix-les-Bains. ("Ah," commented an admiring student, "Ham in Aix!"). . . . The *Portland [Oregon] Journal* has unmasked the mysterious "Mister Otis" whose paintings and murals have been dazzling art lovers throughout the Northwest. "Mister Otis" is none other than Stewart H. Holbrook. . . . The advertising manager of a certain publishing house assured me that a campaign he was planning was not only "generous, strong, solid, full-scale, and aggressive," but also "major" and "nation-wide." Translated into hard cash, this all meant five hundred dollars.

**THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW**, pioneer newspaper of Spokane, is the subject of Ralph Dyar's informative and colorful "News for an Empire," published by Caxton. Dyar devotes an entire chapter to Stoddard King, whose column was widely read in the Northwest, and whose lyrics for the hit song "There's a Long, Long Trail A-Winding" earned him more than all his other poems put together. When ex-President Herbert Hoover remarked, "A resoundingly good new joke would be highly beneficial to the whole country," Stoddard King questioned the word "new."

"What's wrong with a resoundingly good old joke?" he demanded in a burst of indignation applauded vehemently by every columnist and radio comic in America, and then dashed off the following poem:

#### AN ANTIQUARIAN DISSENTS

The good, new jokes come bravely out  
To face a bitter age;  
They wander timidly about  
And go upon the stage.  
But even though we hear them sprung  
By experts and with zest,  
We do not like our jokes too young—  
The bad old jokes are best.



No tombstone-graven epitaph  
Records the jokes of yore;  
We love most heartily to laugh  
At gags we've heard before.  
They rouse us to a merry bray  
As they go tottering by—  
Though new jokes greet us every day,  
The old ones never die.

Shoot if you must this old gray head,  
But spare Joe Miller, please;  
And do not offer me instead  
A fresh, unripened weeze.  
Devote such time as you can spare  
To new-coined humor's quest,  
But I shall still depose and swear  
The bad old jokes are best.

**OTHER BOOKS ON MY DESK . . .** From Century House, in Watkins Glen, New York, come three wonderful, nostalgic volumes for people who love to sing old popular songs: Jack Burton's "Blue Book of Tin Pan 'Alley" and "Blue Book of Broadway Music," and Larry Freeman's "The Melodies Linger On." Freeman's book in particular, with cover reproductions of songs that used to grace our battered fraternity-house piano in my undergraduate days, sent me back to humming old gems like "Hindustan," "Till the Sands of the Desert Grow Cold," and "He'd Have to Get Under." Century House is making a valuable contribution to Americana. A note to the editor in Watkins Glen will bring you full particulars. . . . Franklin P. Adams, about to resume operations on the air in a televised version of "Information Please," has edited a valuable new 900-page "Book of Quotations" for Funk and

Wagnalls. . . . Freddie Pearson and Robert Taylor have applied their "Fractured French" technique to the national pastime in "Butchered Baseball" (Barnes). You'll like particularly their conceptions of an "intentional pass" and "no runs, no hits, no errors." Mr. Pearson avers that his wide experience as a diamond great was gained when he went in at right field one afternoon for the sixth-grade team at Miss Overton's school for girls. He got caught in a squeeze play and was sent back to the bushes in a plain manila envelope. . . . Louise Seymour



Jones's "The Human Side of Bookplates," a beautifully produced volume from the Ward Ritchie Press, contains some amusing addenda to the Chris Morley legend. . . . Some of the year's most interesting books are sometimes overlooked entirely by overburdened reviewers—not to mention the compilers of best-seller lists!

**OCCASIONALLY A WRITER** comes along who can sit down at a typewriter and bang out a column or story at will. Most writers, however, can think of more ways to delay getting down to their work than even a temporary kitchen maid. Lee Rogow cites the case of one Hollywood scenario scripter who simply had to have a job completed by the following morning. His understanding wife disconnected the phone, inserted a fresh page in his typewriter, grabbed both kids by the hand, and left him in sole possession of the premises. They rode to the end of the bus line and back, saw a double feature at the neighborhood movie, and came home at the tag end of the day to see how far daddy had gotten. He hadn't done too badly. As they walked through the door, he was just polishing the last piece of their eighty-piece sterling-silver dinner set.

—BENNETT CERF.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S  
DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 952)

JOHN DOS PASSOS:  
CHOSEN COUNTRY

Lulie was on the back porch hulling strawberries. The whole berries she dropped into a bowl for shortcake. There was berry juice on her cheek. . . . Her sharp pink fingers moved faster and faster. . . . Everything smelt of strawberries.

*Share the dangers and excitement of a sea chase  
for the mightiest monster of the northern waters!*



Gavin Maxwell hunted the basking shark, the second largest fish existing, risking his neck and his capital to turn a fisherman's luck into a business. His is a rare—and beautifully told—story of true maritime adventure, packed with spine-tingling hunts and hazards among the spectacular Hebrides islands. An appendix gives scientific data about this little-known fish. Illustrated with 82 photographs and endpaper map. \$4.75

# Harpoon Venture

by Gavin Maxwell

*The Viking Press*

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JUNE 28, 1952

## History in Doublethink

ELMER DAVIS



Elmer Davis

HOW long will these ex-Communists and ex-sympathizers abuse the patience of the vast majority which had sense enough never to be Communists or sympathizers at all? They have a constitutional right, of course, to tell us what we must do to be saved; as they have always done. Twenty years ago they were telling us the direct opposite of what they tell us now; but they were just as sure then as now that they had the sole and sufficient key to salvation, and that those who did not accept it were forever damned. One becomes bored.

The arrogance of the ex-Communists is the most irritating thing about them, but not the most dangerous; and for that arrogance they have, in this country, official countenance. Congressional committees always seem willing to take the word of an ex-Communist against that of a man who never was a Communist. This preference may seem in contradiction to the stringent provisions of the McCarran Internal Security Act against the admission into this country of ex-Communists from abroad; but those provisions are only a phase of the protective tariff. The lucrative home

market for exposures and revelations must be protected for domestic industry against the pauper labor of Europe. With this Congressional benediction there is some excuse for the ex-Communists to think they are a superior species.

But they thought that when they were Communists too; through a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn in their opinions they have clung to this certainty of their superiority to the unsaved—and to the concomitant certainty that their dogmas, whatever they may be, are complete, perfect, and infallible. This is the mark of the *anima naturaliter totalitaria*; for I suspect it is not so much that Communism is an ineradicable taint, its after-effects lingering in the system after the patient appears to be completely cured, as that it is people of this habit of mind who are most likely to become Communists. It is no accident that so many ex-Communists have become extreme reactionaries; it is remarkable only that some few of them have escaped into sanity. Aside from these saving few, Communist and ex-Communist are only species of the same genus; and I do not see why we should pay any more attention to them now than we did then.

For it is worth remembering, and worth reminding the young—before the ex-Communists pervert history any further—that not very many people did pay attention to them, even twenty years ago when what was then the American way of life (many people thought it was the only way) had come pretty close to breakdown. Some few thought they had found the answer in Technocracy, a somewhat more numerous few in Communism; but most people preferred to try another of the American ways of life;

in the Presidential election of 1932, the Communists got a hundred thousand votes out of forty million. In the “intellectual” world the infection was stronger than elsewhere, yet even this turned out to be no more than a temporary nuisance. It spoiled some potentially good writers, it made considerable noise for a while; but it passed like any other fad, leaving as perhaps its principal legacy the angry writings of ex-Communists turned reactionary, who are still telling us what we must do to be saved. Where is their claim to authority? Not in their record.

BUT they seem able to persuade some people who were not there that their aberration was an all but universal aberration. Whittaker Chambers tells us that “from 1930 on a small intellectual army passed over to the Communist party.” So it did, and a small army can look like a large army to a man who is in the midst of it; marching in step with his comrades, he might never notice the far larger army on the next road that is headed in the other direction. Alistair Cooke, who was not among us in those days, thought that in Alger Hiss a generation was on trial. That was not true even of his generation of “intellectuals”—not even of young intellectuals who graduated from college, looked around them, and could see no jobs. Some of them fell for Communism; most did not. I suspect that Cooke’s friends include some ex-Communists who cannot bring themselves to admit that their error was at all unusual; who must persuade others, as they have already persuaded themselves, that if minds of their quality were deluded, all other minds must have been deluded too.

Elmer Davis, classicist, novelist, essayist, political analyst, and commentator, is a charter contributor to SR. His radio news summaries early in World War II won him the job of director of the Office of War Information.