

which, it turns out, he needs before he has got very far into his adventures in the middle of the 1800s.

And perfectly good adventures they are. In the first chapter Timothy, having just stepped off the boat in New York, turns up hungry on lower Broadway, blacks out and is picked up by none other than Jeremiah Temple—of the banking Temples, of course. Then Timothy's eyes and chin really stand him in good stead: for what should Jeremiah do but set him up in the newspaper business, which, it so happens, is exactly what Timothy has always wanted to do? Honest Tim proceeds to outsmart those nasty Whigs, decides in all honesty between the banker's daughter and the poor but honest girl, and also understands with almost unsurpassed honesty the forces which prompt the banker's wife, now his mother-in-law, to walk right out on her husband and turn up later as the madam of a very high-priced house of prostitution in Paris (which Timothy himself can now afford).

Along with all these adventures, Timothy lets his readers, as well as himself, witness a rather spectacular chain of historical New York events and even such distant noteworthy happenings as Queen Victoria's coronation, for which, of course, he has seats in the Abbey. All of which helps make the book exactly what it sets out to be—a perfectly adequate and adventurous historical romance with which only a boulder would take the trouble to find flaws.

—JOHN HAVERSTICK.

**THE LITERARY LIFE:** "Anything that pretends to debunk a profession sells," says Andrew Cartwright, the worldly-wise publisher in "Fann Marlow" (Dutton, \$3). If suave, canny, lissome Andrew is right "Fann Marlow" should fall into the eager hands of a myriad of readers thirsting for the lowdown on the literary marketplace. What they will find, in Jane Hardy's purported expose, will be a fustian love story of a dashing publisher and a lively literary agent, who has a kennel of eccentric clients.

Andrew and Fann Marlow, the agent, try to carry on their affair without paying too much mind to Andrew's wife. But she lurks annoyingly in the background, broad-shouldered, sensual, and filthy-rich. More annoying than Andrew's lingering spouse are Fann's odd customers, who punctuate her romance with their peculiar comings and goings. Nobody even approaching the normal ever enters Fann Marlow's busy domain.

Miss Hardy, a onetime authors' agent, seems familiar with some of the lesser gaucheries of the publishing trade. "I'm going to write true to life!"



Jane Hardy—"captures city's mood."

screams one novelist as publisher Cartwright puts him to the rack. But the frail author recants—and so does Miss Hardy, putting in all the sleazy nonsense that Fann Marlow rails against. On the credit side, Miss Hardy captures the mood of the city, an older New York than the one she supposedly writes about. But beyond that—not much.

—M. L.

**MAN ON THE LAM:** There's certainly nothing heroic about Charlie Bell, the middleaged, slow-witted, forlorn hero of "The Man in the Middle," (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.50), a first novel by David Wagoner. Charlie was injured to a luckless life, but beginning with the time he gets involved with a newspaperwoman who's been thrown off a train, and himself becomes the unwilling possessor of the political blackmail evidence for which she has been murdered, his bleak lucklessness turns into a positive, hounding evil. Not knowing what to do with the evidence (or even what it signifies), he decides to flee, thus beginning one of the most wearying runs in recent literature.

In the course of his panicky flight through the nooks and crannies of Chicago and environs Charlie runs into a number of citizens who help or hinder him in one way or another, including a crazy woman laboring under the delusion that he is a soldier who wants to elope with her, and with whom he has some moments which are, perhaps unintentionally, very funny to read about. In fact, the author frequently displays an ambivalent attitude toward his material which gives his story a rather disconcerting unevenness. But when he is describing Charlie on the lam he delineates the feelings, emotional and physical, of a hunted human animal with a sweat-drenched, observant realism which leaves the reader panting with an exhaustion that hardly seems vicarious.

—J. S.

## Innovators

(Continued from page 8)

were also fewer themes to write, less homework, less study of foreign languages, and a less thorough grounding in English. They were being prepared to get along with people rather than to manipulate words or ideas.

Writers born in the 1920s were children during the Depression, which most of them seem to have forgotten, although there are signs that the fear of poverty is still embedded in their minds. They served in the Second World War if they were old enough; many of them spent five or six years in uniform. They learned much about warfare, somewhat less about foreign countries, and more about Americans of all types, while they also acquired the habit of looking to the Government for food, clothing, and answers to the question, "What shall I do next?"

The habit continued for many after their discharge from the armed forces, since the Government sent them checks to pay for their education, with a few dollars extra for wives and children; most of them had married young. Meanwhile still younger writers were also having their share of military life—some with assignments in Korea—and were being taught to hold a similar attitude toward an impersonal, all-powerful, and all-nourishing state. In civilian life both groups would benefit from the longest period of prosperity this country has known—the state was also responsible for that, through its military spending—and both would learn to fear a sudden disaster in which their world might go down to ruin.

The younger group is sometimes called "the silent generation," though I don't know why—unless it is because they have published somewhat fewer books and magazine articles about themselves than their predecessors had published at the same ages. That comparative silence is largely the fault of publishers and editors, or rather of the public they serve, which seems to be less interested in hearing new voices than the public of the 1920s, with the result that more first novels than ever before have remained in manuscript. But the word "silent" may also refer to the fact that young writers have been expressing very few political opinions.

Once I thought that the failure to express opinions was due to caution, but later I found a second explanation. It is true that they aren't sticking their necks out, as they sometimes say of themselves, but neither do they

want to be dogmatic about questions they aren't qualified to answer; they don't like people who "sound off." The young writers and their friends aren't at all silent in sympathetic company; in fact they are fond of explaining themselves, simply and with candor. Some of them say—I have heard the phrase several times—that they feel as if they were standing at the edge of a cliff; soon they might be pushed off, or the cliff might crumble.

Not many of them—or only one group—have displayed the personal recklessness of their predecessors, who believed that the ground was stable underfoot and that they could, if they so desired, assume wild postures without losing their balance. In these later days, when society itself is endangered, many young people have begun to appreciate the solid satisfactions it offers, including love, marriage, and children. They want to fall in love, get married, and have children while there is still time. If they are apprentice writers most of them want to study the technique of literature, defend its traditions, and learn to enjoy its pleasures; they aren't quite so eager to rush into print.

The generation as a whole seems to have no such hunger for social distinction as was felt by young men in the 1920s—by Scott Fitzgerald, for example, who wanted to make the best eating club at Princeton and marry "the most beautiful girl in Alabama and Georgia," as he boasted that he was doing. At Princeton forty years later every junior was elected to an eating club; the student body had decided that no one should be left out. At Yale the *Record* stopped printing the names of men pledged to the senior societies on Tap Day, so as not to discriminate against those who had been overlooked. Today young men don't try so hard to get their names in the papers or even to rise in the business world. "Why kill yourself earning a big income," they ask, "when the Government takes most of it in taxes?" They say, making fun of their modest ambitions, "A steady job, a little house near the golf links, and a big family." Again they say, "We want to be unmolested," and most of them conform to social rules in order to be molested as little as possible.

There is one fairly large group that refuses to conform and has waged a dogged sort of rebellion—against what it is hard to say, because the group has no program, but possibly against the whole body of laws, customs, fears, habits of thought, and literary standards that has been accepted by other members of the generation. The

rebellion is individual and nihilistic; each of the rebels simply refuses to accept any model, in literature or life, that older people ask him to emulate. Some have made a cult out of heavy drinking, promiscuity, smoking marijuana, or almost any other forbidden pleasure, but their real delights are driving fast and well—if they can get hold of automobiles—and listening to cool jazz. They like to be "cool," that is, withdrawn. Last year they talked about being "underground" and called themselves "the beat generation"; it was John Kerouac who invented the phrase, and his unpublished long narrative "On the Road" is the best record of their lives. In two respects they are like the more conventional majority of young people: they take no interest in politics, even as a spectator sport, and they are looking for something to believe, an essentially religious faith that will permit them to live at peace with their world.

Whatever course of action the new writers have followed—whether they are conformists or think of themselves as a rebellious underground—they seem to be a new race of Americans, with a new relation to the state, a new picture of the world overseas, a new attitude toward love and the family, and generally with new values—although they bewail the lack of them. They have a new consciousness and a new subconscious too, one that leads to dreams of quiet self-esteem and violent nightmares of destruction. When among themselves they seem to be speaking a new language. Their realism about the world they live in and their level-eyed candor both hold a promise for the future. Even the nihilists among them, by rejecting everything old, seem to be clearing the ground for new structures.

I like and respect the new writers as a group. My one complaint against them would be that they aren't yet producing new works of literature. They aren't expressing their new sense of life. They aren't coming forward with myths and heroes—that is, with archetypal stories and characters—for the new age in which they live.

**W**HAT I am recommending to the younger writers isn't merely that their work should deal with new subject matter based on the private and public lives of Americans today. That would be a simple course of action, but they could follow it without producing a literature of their own. The fact is that new subject matter has appeared in some recent fiction. It can be found even—or perhaps one should say especially—in



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