

isolated and, to a great degree, self-sufficient agrarian areas. Thus Orin G. Libby and Beard are, in this study, shown to be closer to the truth about the overthrow of the Articles than such revisionists as Robert Brown and Forrest McDonald.

This is certain to be an explosive book, not only for its substantial agreement with the Beardian diagnosis, but also because the author believes Progressive historians to have been right in regarding class conflict as an essential feature of the history of the period. It becomes increasingly apparent that consensus, if it is ever to be found, will rest largely upon some more satisfactory definition of "class" than the economic orientation gives us. May the insights of social history such as those used by Livermore not be of use in this arena also?

That Professor Main is correct in maintaining that the Anti-federalists were far more friendly to popular checks upon government than the Federalists and that more poor men belonged on the losers' side than on the winners' side may be granted without conceding that the contending forces were classes in any sense acceptable to contemporary thought. Whether Main's socio-geographic alignments will be accepted by experts in what is now an historical problem of labyrinthic complexity remains to be seen. To this reviewer they are convincingly constructed in this substantial, carefully documented, but highly controversial work.

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*Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character.*

By William R. Taylor. (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1961. Pp. 384. Notes, index. \$6.00.)

By the time of the Civil War, says Professor Taylor, Americans had come to look upon themselves as constituting two distinct civilizations with different historical and racial origins. The author's purpose is to discover "what social problems produced the need for this kind of historical rationalization, . . . what kind of men and women contributed to its growth and dissemination—what sort of mentality, in other words, created this legendary past and this fictional sociology, and what sort of needs it satisfied" (p. 16). Taylor undertook this study because of his conviction that the belief in separate cultures was an important cause of the Civil War.

The author points out that Americans of the ante bellum period were intensely introspective, obsessed with identifying and examining their national character. As this character—or rather, characters—emerged, it proved to have disturbing flaws. The North did not like the image it projected: the Yankee sharper, the product of a "grasping, soulless world of business." So the North turned to the southern planter in an effort to find those desirable qualities that the Yankee lacked. It also created a "Transcendent Yankee," who, while superficially conforming to the unpleasant stereotype, turned out to be a noble, selfless, nonmaterialistic being.

There were many other tensions that elicited literary solutions. For example, both northerners and southerners were concerned about

the danger to the family posed by the feminist movement and by the extreme social mobility of the times. A major problem in the older southern states was economic decline caused by soil exhaustion and competition from rich new lands to the west. The plantation legend was used in an effort to resolve both problems. Woman, enthroned as mistress of the plantation, became chief guardian of familial integrity. She was given extensive authority and put on a pedestal by her worshiping Cavalier husband—substitutes for the blandishments of feminism. At the same time the planter and his run-down plantation were given a function that transcended mere economic success.

These examples show how, in Taylor's view, ante bellum novelists tried to examine, resolve, or sublimate the problems besetting American society. He draws his material from the lives and works of William Wirt, James Fenimore Cooper, James K. Paulding, Sarah Hale, Beverly Tucker, William Gilmore Simms, John Pendleton Kennedy, and others.

The danger in attempting a difficult study of this kind is diffuseness, and this book is diffuse. Each of the individual sketches is interesting and valuable. But taken all together they are too long and contain far too many irrelevancies. Taylor's thesis is hard to follow, and so the total effect of the book is weaker than it might have been. The summary "Epilogue" is helpful, but cannot entirely repair the damage.

Another defect of the book springs from Taylor's handling of the historical reality out of which this fictional sociology grew. He sometimes makes disturbing assertions about ante bellum America, especially about the South. For instance: "Those novels which give expression to the racial theories of the Old South, the reiterated appeals to an English ancestry (even by those without one) and the Cavalier ethos of war and honor best embody the aspirations and the sense of destiny of Southern society as a whole" (p. 203). Here Taylor himself seems to have fallen under the spell of the legend-makers. Such ideas more likely embodied the aspirations of only a small segment of southern society, mainly the upper middle class, and only a part of that. Most southern whites were small farmers who owned no slaves: tough, hard-bitten countrymen with the earthy mores and ambitions of a section that was largely semifrontier. These men, the majority, had no such inflated aspirations; they would have found the idea supremely funny.

Other assumptions can be questioned. Was the South really the most expansionist part of the country? Were the nonslaveholding whites, along with women and slaves, really in a subordinate position in the South? And is it true that the division between North and South was psychological, not geographical? Finally, to say that the Confederate government "was not essentially different, even in its constitutional details, from the federal republic from which it had just seceded" (p. 336) is to miss the point of forty years of controversy about the meaning of the Constitution. In short, the persuasiveness of the connection Taylor tries to establish between ante bellum fiction and ante bellum society is diminished because of the unsoundness of his assumptions about the latter.

*Cavalier and Yankee* is thoughtful, interesting, and valuable for the historian as well as the student of American literature. The author's insight into the minds of his subjects is often very impressive. The main defects are the book's lack of focus, dubious interpretations of ante bellum history, and an attempt to prove too much too precisely.

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*Under the Flag of the Nation: Diaries and Letters of a Yankee Volunteer in the Civil War.* Edited by Otto F. Bond. *Publications of the Ohio Civil War Centennial Commission*, Number 1. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, for the Ohio Historical Society, 1961. Pp. xi, 308. Illustrations, appendices. \$5.00.)

*Father Abraham's Children: Michigan Episodes in the Civil War.* By Frank B. Woodford. (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1961. Pp. xiv, 305. Illustrations, appendix. \$6.50.)

It is certainly true that diaries form some of our most colorful if not always our most accurate sources of history. Given an intelligent, observant, and active participator in a certain period, and his diary will be extremely useful to the historian. Add to these qualities the feelings, recorded with utmost candor, of a mid-nineteenth-century country boy thrown into strange, often terrifying circumstances, coupled with sometimes lighthearted sometimes grave jottings on love, nature, pranks, and politics, and the general reader has an excellent account of a young Ohio soldier in the western campaign of the Civil War.

In the fall of 1861, Owen J. Hopkins enlisted as a private in an Ohio infantry regiment at the age of seventeen. During the next three and a half years he matured rapidly, traveled with his regiment to Louisiana and back to Tennessee, and rose to the grade of lieutenant. Thus he saw much of the Vicksburg campaign, a period of both intense action and "killing inactivity," guard duty in a "rebel" state, and administrative work in a regimental office. These experiences are all related in a clear, vigorous manner which reflects admirably the spirit of the moment: disgust with mud or red tape, helplessness at hunger or unforeseen trouble, hilarity at a victory in his own or another sector of the war. Of all the various moods captured in the diary, however, two stand paramount. The first, the strong feeling for his beloved Julia back in Ohio, no doubt greatly influenced the second—his constant, serious patriotism despite ribbings and hardship.

Mr. Bond must have felt a thrill when he first discovered that in early attempts at sophistication the diarist, his wife's father, acquired some mastery of French, for the editor is a long-time professor of French at the University of Chicago. His full Introduction, well-placed commentary, and numerous and useful footnotes show the care and research which have gone into his task. This volume is no doubt a labor of love. Unlike so many other books of this type, however, it is both a valuable and interesting contribution to the literature of Yankee army life.

Frank Woodford's *Father Abraham's Children*, on the other hand, is of an entirely different sort from *Under the Flag of the Nation*.