

Dr. Taylor believes that these Alpines represents the highest type that the human race has yet attained. They have relatives in Central Asia in the Mongols, and wherever they have gone, whether in Europe, in Africa, in Southern Asia and Oceania or in the two Americas, they have driven their predecessors out of the best lands and forced them to take refuge along bleak coasts and in high mountains. Men carrying the blood of these predecessors are plentiful along the edges of the European peninsula. Fleure, a Franco-English anthropologist, has found Neanderthal men in impressive numbers in Wales, and Crô-Magnon men are not infrequently encountered in the remoter parts of Southern France. The Nordics, as everyone knows, survive along the shores of the Baltic and the North Sea, and the Mediterraneans still people Southern Italy, Western Spain, most of Greece, and nearly all the islands of the Mediterranean.

Such were the main migrations into Europe, but there were also many minor ones, some of them of great importance. As a result the population of that continent is very confusingly mixed. Many ostensible Italians are almost pure Nordics, and many Danes and even Swedes are largely Mediterranean in blood. There is a great deal of Alpine blood in England, and more in Germany and France. Thus the pressure of the Alpines upon their predecessors is slackened by mixing. But in Asia and Africa, where the same waves rolled over the land, the conflict is still plainly visible. The long-headed races tend to be pushed out of the most desirable land by the broad-heads. They collect in mountain valleys and in swamps along the coast. They take to the sea and so find and people remote islands. The ethnological history of the Pacific is a history of their successive flights. Even among American Indians the process is visible. There are Indians, in Dr. Taylor's judgment, especially in South America, who represent very early races of men, and there are Indians (or, at all events, Eskimos) who

belong to that same Mongolian immigration which flooded Central Europe with Alpines.

I commend this book to those persons who have been misled by the ethnological blather that has been loosed upon the world of late by sentimentalists and worse. Its speculations are not set forth as proved facts; they are submitted to a candid world as speculations only. But behind them lies an immense reservoir of knowledge. Dr. Taylor has made human geography his life-long study, and his contributions to it, especially in the Australasian field, are of the first importance. At the end of his book he ventures upon some prophecies regarding the probable future movements of population among the white races. His conclusion is that Europe has almost as many people today as it will ever manage to support, and that Australia is destined to be largely uninhabited forever, but that in the United States there is still room for many millions. In the end, he believes, Chicago will probably be the capital of the whole white race.

The Desert Epic

DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP, by Willa Cather. \$2.50. 7½ x 5; 303 pp. New York: *Alfred A. Knopf*.

WOLF SONG, by Harvey Fergusson. \$2.50. 7½ x 5; 206 pp. New York: *Alfred A. Knopf*.

THERE is a curious likeness between these two stories, though they are separated by some sharp contrasts. Both have to do with the taming of the Old Southwest, and both are character sketches rather than tales. The scene of each is the north central desert region of New Mexico, lying about Santa Fé and Taos, and each deals with the conflict between the old barbaric Mexican civilization and the new order. In "Wolf Song" the time is a century ago, and the old civilization, meeting the hard rush of a wild man from Yankeeedom, floors and tames him. In "Death Comes For the Archbishop," which begins on an Autumn afternoon in 1851, the fortunes of war go the other way. Here

the antagonist, true enough, is not a Yankee mountain man; he is, indeed, not a Yankee at all, but a French priest. But it is the vast momentum of the new Republic that lies behind him when he flings himself upon what remains of the ancient Spanish *raj*, and it is a tight and well-ordered Yankee archdiocese that he leaves to his successors, and another that his chief of staff carves out of the mountain wilds to the northward.

I part from the Cather story with a certain regret that the author did not make this chief of staff the hero of it, instead of the gentler Monsignor Jean Marie Latour. Latour is a charming fellow, but only too often he stiffens into the austere and somewhat fatiguing attitudes of a plaster saint. Not once does he show any heat of honest archiepiscopal passion. There is pertinacity in him, and patience and understanding, and a steady if mild glow of zeal for the True Faith, but no steel. When rough work is to be done he turns naturally to Father Joseph Vaillant, indomitable vicar, gifted cook, hearty drinker, untiring traveler, and heavy weight champion of the Lord. Father Joseph should have been the apostolic delegate to those wilds, and Father Jean Marie a village *curé* back in Auvergne, tending his placid garden and reading and rereading his dusty books. But the desires of God, published through a committee of three Cardinals, all of them somewhat hazy about New Spain, run otherwise, and so it is not until late in life that Father Joseph puts on a mitre of his own. What a gaudy glimpse we have of him in Colorado, policing the miners! What a story gone to waste!

But of the story that is told there is little complaint to be made. At times, it seems to me, Miss Cather takes the somewhat naïve view of a bishop's business that belongs properly, not to a novelist, but to a highly devoted member of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, and so her narrative drops to the level of a pious tale. But that is not often. If there is a devotee hidden in her, there is also an im-

mensely skillful story-teller. What could be more dramatic, more waggish, more thoroughly amusing than the episode of Fray Baltazar and his tragic end on lonely Ácoma? Here, indeed, is a tale informed with all the high humor and washed with all the brilliant color of "The Three-Cornered Hat." The writing throughout is in Miss Cather's best manner. In her English there is no ornateness, but it is surely not monotonous. She has a fine feeling for the beauty of simple words. Her style flows in a quiet, unrestrained, melodious, almost Mozartian manner. She has done stories far richer in content, but she has never exceeded "Death Comes For the Archbishop" as a piece of writing.

"Wolf Song" is far different in manner. There are places where the fashioning of phrases seems to enchant the author, and even to make him drunk. He runs to elisions, inversions, and other rhetorical devices, sometimes to the good of the narrative but sometimes to its damage. That narrative, however, can stand the burden. It is a veritable riot of blazing color. The Old Southwest is made to palpitate with such light and heat that they are felt almost physically, and the people that gallop across the scene are full of the juices of life. No more real mountain man than Sam Lash has ever got upon paper. In him one senses the brobdingnagian harshness and lustiness of the whole species: he is half civilized man and half painted savage. The tale finds him roaring down upon sun-drenched Taos like some high wind from his own wilds—a hero meteoric, and almost meteorological. The dark-eyed Lola Salazar succumbs at once, and presently she is off for his mountains with him, her family in frantic pursuit. Sam is not afraid of Mexican knives, nor even of artillery. He is a hero of the cut of Jim Bridger or Paul Bunyan. When he wants a girl he takes her.

But there is something in Lola that is more than girl. She is the decorum of the city; she is the ancient assurance that is Spain. Lash, disdaining the hazards that

he knows by old experience, trembles before the new hazards that she presents. Once a married man, he is only two-thirds a man. His wife presently in flight, he is less than half a man. The tale deals with his gradual surrender. He comes home from hair-raising adventures among the Indians to sneak into Taos by the back way, and soon he is wholly lost in Lola's soft arms, and one gets a momentary, dreadful glimpse of a future Sam, docilely riding the Salazar ranges. It is an ironical tale, and full of acidulous humors. As a work of art, it is far beyond anything that Mr. Fergusson has done in the past. In it the high promise of "The Blood of the Conquerors," "Capitol Hill" and "Hot Saturday" comes to fulfilment. It is an extraordinarily brilliant and charming story.

A Comedy of Fig-Leaves

SOMETHING ABOUT EVE, by James Branch Cabell. \$2.50. 7½ x 5½; 364 pp. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company.

"EVERY marriage," says Gerald Musgrave, "gets at least one man into trouble—and it is not always the bridegroom." The text may serve as good as another for "Something About Eve." Gerald, like all of the Cabell heroes, goes on a quest, and again like all of them, he returns from it sadly at fifty-eight, his neck scarred indelibly by the marks of that sinister rope which disguises itself as the naked female arm, and his shoulders burned and cicatrized by female tears. *So geht's in die Welt!* The story comes down to us from time immemorial, and in the form of a thousand tragedies, but Cabell prefers to view it (with sound sense) as comedy, and in the present version of it he adorns it with all the blooms of his singularly lively and corrosive wit. Who can match him at his diabolical best? If you have a candidate, then bring him on to equal the treatise on the articles of war for married ladies and their lovers, in the fourth chapter of "Something About Eve."

As year chases year the position of Cabell gradually solidifies, and it becomes manifest that his place among the American writers of his time, seen in retrospect, will be at the first table. It used to be the fashion to speak of him as an imitator of Anatole France, but that folly seems to be passing out. There are, in fact, few signs in his books that France has influenced him, save perhaps in non-essentials. His point of view is the result, not of viewing the world from Paris, but of viewing it from Virginia. No more thorough American lives and has his being among us. It was the grotesque quasi-civilization in which, coming to manhood, he found himself that sent him flying to Poictesme, and it is that civilization which he depicts from his exile there. The articles of war that I have mentioned would be unintelligible to a Frenchman, and I fancy that they would also puzzle an Englishman, whose traditional answer to adultery on his premises is a suit in equity. But they must ring true to every American, and especially to every American who has lived in the charming wilderness below Wilmington, Del. The observation in them is of the first degree of accuracy, and they are set forth with all the lovely enchantment of a Vienna waltz.

The Cabellian style shows no sign of playing out. It is still caressingly dulcet, but it is by no means sing-songy. There is steel in it as well as attar of roses. It is capable of a phrase that stings as well as of a phrase that lulls. Cabell clings to certain mannerisms that, I confess, greatly irritate me—for example, his curious avoidance of pronouns, his piling up of proper names—, but that clinging is less amorous and irritating than it used to be—or maybe I have got used to it. In "Something About Eve" the narrative flows in beautiful cadences. There is no harsh improvising in it; it is all thought out to the last place of decimals. Cabell has done better books: I nominated "The High Place" at once. But few of his books are better done.