

were brigaded with English and French divisions, than if a separate American Army was to be formed.

The blunt truth was that in Pershing's view the building up of an American Army took precedence of the utilization of these men to beat off the German offensive, while for us the defeat of the offensive and the consequent shortening of this destructive war was all important.

In view of the critical position in which the Allies believed themselves to be in March and April, 1918, Lloyd George was probably right. In justification of General Pershing, however, it should be noted, as Lloyd George explains in detail, that General Pershing did gradually, if grudgingly, make a whole series of concessions to the Allied wishes. In the course of this controversy Lloyd George came to have a high opinion of Secretary Baker, "able, broad-minded, and understanding," and of General Bliss. The American soldiers were also "superb," but "the organization at home and behind the lines was not worthy of the reputation which American business men have deservedly won for smartness, promptitude, and efficiency."

Sidney B. Fay is the author of *Origins of the World War*.

Hell's Kitchen

WHEN NIGHT DESCENDS. By Edgar Calmer. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1936. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE DISCOVERERS" of Farrar & Rinehart have made a genuine discovery in this quick-paced story of a West Side New York family on Relief. The mother is a helpless invalid, the father a drunkard, the children just about as appealing youngsters as one could run across. All the action takes place on one particular night, and the narrative literally bristles with snapshots of moments in other lives surrounding those of the main characters: in the tenement, in the park, in the hotel, in the streets. An excellent impression is conveyed of the swarming, multifarious life lived in New York City.

Mr. Calmer is a close observer and a realist but he understands also both the romanticism of a young girl and the revolt and idealism of a sordidly frustrated boy. He is adroit with his vignettes. He can take as commonplace an incident as a sick woman listening in poverty to a small radio-set and make it almost unbearably poignant. If he shows the sentimentalism in his characters it is merely as it actually exists in downtrodden human beings—just as the real love and the bravery and the weakness and the lust are there.

Those who know their New York by night otherwise than through night-clubs will appreciate this story of brave struggling people. Mr. Calmer writes vividly and with concision. He is worth watching.

Pictures for Thoreau

MEN OF CONCORD. By Henry D. Thoreau. Edited by Francis H. Allen, with Illustrations by N. C. Wyeth. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1936. \$4.50.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

IT would be easy to dispose of this really beautiful book by saying that it is an ideal Christmas present for anyone who likes either Thoreau or wild nature, or character studies of the kind of American who was made by and in turn made New England. It deserves, however, a more serious review than this, for although there is nothing new in it but the pictures, it is in two respects a definite contribution to the growing library of books by and about Thoreau.

"Men of Concord" is the product of a careful and successful selection from the fourteen volumes of the Journals of Thoreau, the purpose being to bring "together most of the passages . . . that deal with the men and women he saw and talked with as he went in and out among them in the practice of his two professions of surveyor and saunterer." Here is Uncle Charles juggling with his hat in bar-rooms, Aunt Mary Emerson who could entertain a large thought with hospitality, Melvin and Goodwin, those hunters that God loved better than Unitarian preachers. Here is old George Minott who could hear a wild goose miles away and thought cats loved life as well as we did, Brooks Clark in his bare feet with apples and a dead robin in his shoes, and the reformer who licked Thoreau with his benignity as a cow licks her calf. Here are Emerson with too much manners and Channing with too few. Here are dozens of good anecdotes and some of the most penetrating character studies to be found in the literature of the century.

Much of this is familiar, but not the grouping and selecting nor the illustration, which is the first I have seen that seems adequate to Concord. Mr. Wyeth is one of the ablest representatives of the school of Howard Pyle. He has embellished this book with a series of small wood cuts which vary in merit; but his chief contributions are the pictures excellently reproduced in color of Concord people and the Concord scene. Of these it may be said that the landscapes—and especially the end paper of a fox on a snowy hillside, and the pictures of the pickerel fishers on the ice and of Cyrus Hubbard driving his ox sledge above the deep-snowed valley lit by a low sun—are all admirable. They are not only extremely beautiful; they have the very contour and color of the Concord fields, woods, and waters, which, as Thoreau rightly felt, were as rich in quality as the Apennines or Devon. Wyeth's people are not quite so successful, being in a familiar illustrator's tradition, yet as story pictures



ILLUSTRATION BY N. C. WYETH
From "Men of Concord."

they add life to the text. He has made Thoreau too handsome—a pardonable error; his three reformers are not slimy enough; and though no mason, I feel sure that Brooks Clark's stone wall, built apparently without foundations, will not last through two winters. Yet I would not be captious. These seem to me to be the first interesting illustrations of Thoreau. Photographs, no matter how beautiful, do not catch the poetry inherent in his text.

One service more this book renders. Thoreau had three styles: the transcendental, when he was in high spiritual mood—this is inclined toward rhetoric and often magnificently eloquent; the ecstatic, when with rapid pen he set his sensations in quick and nervous order; and the humorously reflective, which was his mood of contact with the farmers and fishermen he describes so often in this book. Readers of Thoreau have usually been readers of "Walden" where his transcendental style is at its best, or of extracts from his Journals which include all three styles. Mr. Allen, by drawing forth from the Journals the Thoreau who was a hunter and fisher of homely men, may do much to destroy the legend that this great eccentric was a somewhat inhuman seer and prophet, inclined to moral oratory and never coming to earth except in the seclusion of his woods. "Men of Concord" gives us the humorous Thoreau, the Yankee Thoreau, the kindly, perceptive Thoreau, the friend of Irish boys, and old farmers, and muskrat hunters. Not the Thoreau who doubted whether the human race was wiser than the woodchuck; but the Thoreau who said, "It is a great encouragement that an honest man makes this world his abode."

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

An Interview

THE moods of the trip (remarked the old Mandarin) ranged the whole gamut, from Talleyrand to Sally Rand.

Let's be more specific, the reporter suggested, but he smiled gently (there were wrinkles of fatigue under his obsidian Oriental eyes) and settled into his chair.

In the handsome new T. & P. depot at Fort Worth, he mused, a frightened canary (somehow strayed from his home cage) was perched high on a girder over the main concourse. A stalwart porter was pitching a tightly-rolled ball of paper up at him; with the kindest purpose, no doubt; to scare him loose so he could be chased, identified, or captured. But the bird was too scared to fly: even his yellow feathers looked pale. Though the missile grazed him, he only trembled and clung tight.

The Katy for Waco came in just then, he added, so I did not learn the result. Perhaps it was an illusion, a sort of fable?

I have interviewed the old Mongol often enough to understand his tricks. I saw what he meant: just so I have seen him cling tenaciously to his secret certitudes when suddenly assailed by reporters who requisition a hasty opinion. They get it, and run for their "deadline."—What is it that perishes at the deadline? he asked when they had gone.—The Closing Prices, I said, or the Sports Extra.—No, he murmured, something even more mortal than that.

Funny things happen, he said. Now the reporters have left with their misleading facts may we soliloquize a few accurate fancies? For instance the smell of open fires in Texas. The perfume is quite different. I don't know what kind of timber they burn, and no one would tell me, but the smoke is pungently sweet, a rare spicy sniff somehow suggesting eucalyptus. Could it be cottonwood?

Or that gang Billy Rose had down there for the Lone Star centennial, I ventured; but he waved away my flippancy.

Another novelty, he said, jam made of youngberries, a fruit I'd never heard of. A sort of miscegenation of the blackberry and the logan, with an undertaste of cherry. Delicious!

Towns with slogans, he said. Why did we never think of that in China? It's an inheritance from medieval heraldry, when every municipal escutcheon had its appropriate motto. You remember the punning epigraph of Morlaix in Britanny, *S'ils te mordent, mords les*; or Paris's justified boast, *Fluctuat nec*

mergitur; or the ironical greeting over the fortified portcullis of Semur—*The people of Semur have much pleasure in making the acquaintance of Strangers*. The modern slogan is more pacific, but the idea is the same. *Where the West Begins*, says Fort Worth. And Waco: *A City With a Soul*.

Wasn't that where Brann the Iconoclast, I began, but he gestured me to silence. I saw he was brooding at large. He had been through 15 States in 15 days, and it was understandable if he was still a bit loco.

Not Brann but Browning, he said. Baylor University, a place of enormous kindness, has one of the most remarkable Browning collections anywhere. Don't you think this was a pleasant coincidence: as I reached the station in Waco another train pulled in, the Texas Special, with a Pullman car called *Waring*. Could that have been the Waring of Browning's poem, the one who "gave us all the slip"?

More likely to be George Waring, the great sanitation engineer who cleaned up Memphis and New Orleans, I thought, but let him ramble.

I like the emphatic note in Texas courtesy, he was meditating. They don't say *Thank you*, but *I sure do thank you*.—Although they take them for granted, and are astonished if you admire, the big grain elevators are often more beautiful than their most deliberately contrived buildings. From the window of my hotel I could distantly see the big Kimbell and Lone Star elevators and shocked my friends by thinking them a modernistic cathedral. Superb simplicities of concrete: great square towers and sides rippled in wide cylinder curves.

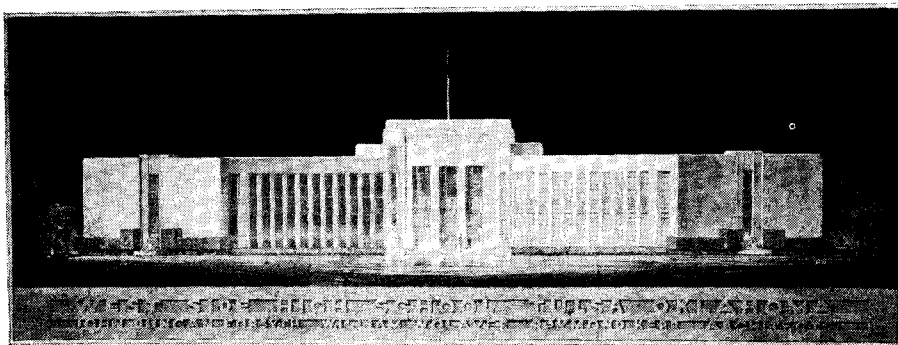
Now I'm on *The Ranger* of the Santa Fe, he continued, and all excited about crossing the Red River into Oklahoma. I'm a bit weary, and I fall asleep, but wake up eagerly as we arrive at the town of ARDMORE. A name of affection to me: I once lived alongside Ardmore in Pennsylvania. We roll on and again I fall into

a drowse. Complete nescience, I know not how long: perhaps ten minutes, perhaps forty. I wake again, look out, and am riven with astonishment. A town called WYNNEWOOD. Have I slept all the way back to Philadelphia's Main Line? Because the two adjoining stations on the P.R.R. are also Ardmore and Wynne-wood. To no one else in the world but me would that have happened; and that's the kind of happening I relish.—I inquired about it afterward, and they told me that line of railroad was laid out by engineers—homesick, perhaps—from Philadelphia.

(The Old Mandarin has developed to a high degree his capacity for being a foreigner. He would now be a foreigner even in China; and by being everywhere alien he retains some of his naïveté of impression. Passionate student of America, his ambition would be to be flown round the country blindfolded and put down at random. Would he then be able to tell, by soil and smell and vegetation, by air and landscape, what State he was in?)

As a matter of fact, he was mumbling (lying back on his chaise longue with a tall elixir to stimulate recollection) Mr. Ekins's flight around the world must have been simple by comparison. He sat in airplanes and made scheduled connections. But your aged Mongolian had often to depend on the kindness of generous samaritans of gasoline who would pick him up and convey him, half stupefied, across great gaps of territory. From one friendly group of children, curious for samples of Chinese script, he escaped reluctantly by a postern door and caught the massy Greyhound which groans through midnight at the apex of a long fan of light. I saw the sunrise on the oilwells of Oklahoma; I saw it again over the water-levels of Lake Michigan. How many a perennial lunch-counter was bemused to receive an obese Oriental, in

(Continued on page 28)



NEW HIGH SCHOOL FOR TULSA, OKLAHOMA
(Kindness of John Duncan Forsythe)

Miller Studio, Tulsa