



—From "Art in Federal Buildings."

Detail of Frieze in Cincinnati, O., Post Office.

The Father of New France

CHAMPLAIN: THE LIFE OF FORTITUDE. By Morris Bishop. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1948. 364 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THE sea and the wilderness are great teachers of fortitude, and Samuel de Champlain was tutored by both throughout his life of incessant adventure and hardship. His career exemplifies so many traits besides fortitude, however, that it hardly seems fair to emphasize that quality in a subtitle.

"Champlain, renowned for valor," once wrote a Jesuit who probably knew of his exploits in the army of Henry of Navarre as well as in battle against the Iroquois. He was as good as he was brave: a kindly man in an age of cruelty, treating the Indians with tolerant consideration, and an honest man in an age of deceit, always faithful to his word and his duty. Above all, he was a man of vision, who discerned the necessity for careful attention to agriculture and other economic factors if a strong New France were ever to materialize in the New World. Great as an explorer, the hero of twelve voyages, he was equally great as an administrator.

Mr. Bishop was given opportunity for his biography by the broad range of source publications brought out since the earlier lives (Dix, Colby, Flenley); particularly in the seven-volume edition of Champlain's works completed only a few years ago by the Champlain Society. Not even Captain John Smith was readier with the pen than the French navigator and colonizer. Completing his first voyage to America in 1603—a voyage in

which he ascended the St. Lawrence to the Lachine Rapids, and heard enough from the Indians of the great lakes beyond to whet his desire for further exploration—he hastened to publish his first book, "The Savage." Thereafter, his busy life of action was matched by equal diligence with the pen. His career, so far as America is concerned, falls into two divisions, one concerned with discovery, the other with the governing of New France. It was in an interval of the second, spent in Europe, that he brought out the final edition of his voyages; a work as well worth acquaintance as (say) William Bradford's "History of Plymouth Plantation."

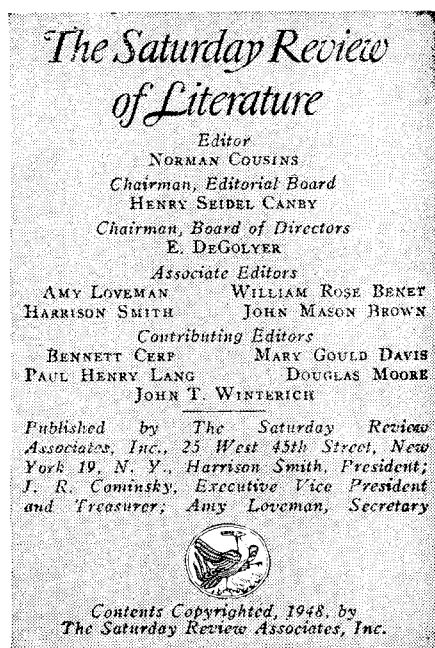
This compact, graphically written biography, uniting literary grace with scholarly accuracy and completeness, provides a means of knowing both the man and his writings. It is one of its virtues that it draws so heavily upon Champlain's books that it is an abstract of them as well as a history of the great adventurer himself. Mr. Bishop relates his hero's impressive labors: his exploits year after year in New England waters, along the St. Lawrence, in "Huronie," up the Ottawa, and south of Lake Ontario. He also gives us a long gallery of brightly drawn pictures as seen through Champlain's own eyes: peril among icebergs on the Banks, imminent dangers among the treacherous savages, battles of Hurons with the Iroquois (not least the engagement of 1615, which some historians would place among the decisive battle of American history, for the Iroquois victory barred what is now upper New York to the Huron-French alliance), life in the smoky wigwams and in the snow-choked forest, scenes of death

from scurvy, business interviews with fur-traders, activities in ship-building and fort-building, and above all the great labor of colony-building. As Mr. Bishop says, Champlain's happiest years were not those spent in mapping wild new coasts or threading the trackless forest but the period 1633-34, when he held sole command at Quebec, and, sustained by the affection of the colonists and the confidence of Richelieu and the royal authorities, could give full play to his ideas for the development of a great French province in the valley of the St. Lawrence, along the shores of the Great Lakes, and in that farther West which he sent Jean Nicolet to penetrate.

A remarkable man, whose fame is kept well burnished in Canada but who, despite Parkman's record of his work, is little known to Americans. Mr. Bishop's carefully planned and beautifully written book should do something to extend his renown among us.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Blake: "Songs of Innocence." 2. Coleridge: "The Ancient Mariner." 3. Southey: "The Battle of Blenheim." 4. Shelley: "The Indian Serenade." 5. Byron: "Maid of Athens." 6. Tennyson: "Idyll from The Princess." 7. Fitzgerald: "The Rubaiyat." 8. Browning: "Woman's Last Word." 9. Whitman: "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloomed." 10. De la Mare: "The Listeners." 11. James Stephens: "What Thomas an Buile Said in a Pub." 12. Brooke: "The Soldier." 13. Shakespeare: "Henry VIII." 14. Bible: "Ruth." 15. Foster: "Old Kentucky Home." 16. A. E. Housman: "Be Still, My Soul." 17. Kipling: "Mandalay." 18. Ralph Hodgson: "Time, You Old Gypsy Man." 19. Shakespeare: "Henry IV." 20. Charles Kingsley: "The Sands of Dee."



Down with the Inevitables

THE doorbell rang. It was my friend, the Connecticut farmer. "It's all right; you can let me in," he said, "I'm not going to pass along any more election jokes—not even the one about Dewey snatching defeat out of the jaws of victory."

I showed him into the living room and he warmed his hands behind him in front of the fire. I could tell he had something on his mind—probably the election, or he wouldn't have mentioned it. "Well," I probed, "you've had two weeks to percolate about the Great Reversal; what do you make of it?"

Apparently, I had touched the right button. The farmer's face lit up. "Just what I wanted to see you about," he said. "Was anxious to try some of my notions on you for size."

"Thing that struck me most about the election aftermath was that almost everyone seemed so happy about it—including those who voted for Mr. Dewey. There was something special in the air after the elections. I can't quite describe it. It had a real lift to it, a sort of tonic that gave America as a whole the type of pickup it needed and hadn't had for many years. Even the air seemed washed and clean—as it does after a heavy rain."

"Why did we all feel so good? I've got an idea that a large part of the uplift feeling goes beyond politics. Otherwise, so many people who voted on the losing side wouldn't have been so genuinely thrilled. I think it goes beyond the kick you get out of seeing the underdog put up a whale of a scrap against heavy odds and come out the winner. I think it even goes be-

yond the wonderfully perverse satisfaction you get when the professional know-it-all boys and the high-and-mighty scientific research specialists get their whiskers singed in public.

"My idea is that this election—again politics aside — satisfied something deep in human nature. Man loves the unpredictable. The certainties and the inevitables often either bore him or frighten him. He knows that the supreme certainty of life is death. But the unpredictables capture his imagination. He speculates. He gambles. He exalts chance. The stories he loves most in his literature are those in which the unexpected happens—the snapper endings, the unusual twists. The world's favorite question, in all languages, is: "What do you think will happen?" And staggering sums are spent each year in an attempt to find out. That is why experts are called experts, and why such huge sums are spent in marketing research and public-opinion polls.

"All of which brings us up to the Presidential campaign. It was a big event—not only for America, but for the world, considering how much of world history revolves about America these days. And the outcome was considered as predictable as the next phase of the moon.

"It is a healthy thing every once in a while to have so many people proved so wrong. It helps to restore more of a balance in your outlook on life. It helps to put back some of the essential mystery into life. It's a good idea to get over this fad of Inevitability about this thing or that. What we need is less omniscience about Inevitability and more cranial ventilation."

He paused. "Now," he said, looking at me over his glasses through nar-

rowed eyes, "you know what I'm leading up to. You. Yes, you. There's a lesson in all this that can do you a lot of good."

"I go along with those world government ideas of yours, but there's one thing about your approach that nettles me. It's that note of doom in so much of what you write. Every once in a while you strike something of a hopeful spark, but the net of your writing seems to be that things are closing in fast and that we haven't much of a chance."

"Come, now, fella, perk up; it's still a pretty unpredictable world and no one anywhere knows enough to say anything is inevitable or to know exactly how things are going to turn out. What do you say to all that?"

There wasn't anything I could say. My friend the Connecticut farmer had caught me with my Inevitables down.

—N. C.

Roark Bradford

ROARK BRADFORD'S recent death, following that of Lyle Saxon, one of his oldest friends, has taken from New Orleans two writers who helped to bring about the cultural and romantic revival of that ancient city. Mr. Bradford lived and entertained in the French Quarter, in the earliest apartment house built in the United States. The summer always found him in Santa Fé. While Lyle Saxon was devoted to the city and to the old plantations along the Mississippi, his younger friend was delving into Negro folklore and Negro life. His second short story won the O. Henry prize twenty-one years ago. The next year he wrote "'Ol Man Adam and His

Westerling

By Douglas V. Kane

THE WESTERING pennon of the sun waves toward California,
Where the sky is a blue helmet upon the heads of mountains;
The manzanitas sentinel the trails, with glazed leaves
Eyeing vacuities; and the winds are dry swords
That cleave away fungi clinging from the cities.
Up, up fly the peaks, floating in the hot air,
With ridges redwood-green, and trails scratchingly defined
Against the sheer slopes to the forest-ranger's eyrie
On Tamalpais—where birds pecked their morning bread
From the toss of that single watcher of fires,
Who peers toward Hamilton on the Peninsula,
And Diablo in the East, where the volcanic grape yields
Blond or garnet wine. On Lookout Point,
Where the rail leans against the emptiness
Of two thousand feet, and sturdy rock forms a nook
From the winds—there, O crusader of heights,
Sit and dream into the blue flame that roofs the day!
Ride bodiless through breath of conifers
Into the holocaustal sun, and with renewed, emblazoned wing
Hover, phoenix-free, above the deep Edens of the valley.