

Will Rogers, His Life and Times. By RICHARD M. KETCHUM. (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1973. Pp. 415. Illustrations, index. \$15.00.)

Will Rogers emerges from a background of the nineteenth-century problems which plagued the Cherokee Indian tribe. First, Richard Ketchum describes the seizure of the Cherokee lands in Georgia, then he leads us along "The Trail of Tears" as we follow the removal of the tribe to Arkansas and the Oklahoma Territory. It is appropriate for Ketchum to go into some detail about this period of history before beginning his actual biography, because Will Rogers was always proud of his Cherokee ancestry. In fact, he was billed as "The Cherokee Kid" in a number of the Wild West shows in which he appeared.

Quite a bit of space is devoted to Will's father, Clem Rogers. The two were opposites in nature and personality and often clashed when Will was a young man. Nevertheless, the humorist always respected his father greatly. Rogers's wife Betty attributed his modesty to his deep respect for his father.

In the preface is the statement: "No one ever had quite the same hold on the American public that Will Rogers did. Nearly four decades after his death people still recall the shy grin . . . the total absence of sham and . . . the way he had of putting things that went to the very heart of the matter." Ketchum reveals this personality in a number of ways. He had the assistance of Rogers's family, particularly his sons. Sometimes he quotes from conversations with them, sometimes the quotations are from Will's correspondence, his diaries, or letters from his family. The plenitude of pictures succeed in revealing Rogers's "shy grin" as well as his skill at rope throwing. Quotations of his lines on stage and in the movies show "the way he had of putting things that went to the very heart of the matter." An interesting literary device employed by the biographer is the use of bits of letters as marginalia outside the text.

The biography shows evidence of a good deal of scholarly research, as you would expect of anything written by Richard Ketchum. At the same time it is a very readable book. Rogers's adventures as a young bachelor, working his way around the world at everything from raising horses in Argentina to appearing in a circus in Australia, toughened him and gave him confidence that he could take care of himself on his own. Skillfully Ketchum lets us watch as Rogers develops

from a rodeo performer to a vaudeville rope specialist. Gradually Will begins to talk on the stage as he twirls his rope. Eventually his particular brand of humor emerges. He is a star.

In *Will Rogers, His Life and Times*, the subject emerges as a real person. There is no attempt to gloss over any of his faults. The pictures are excellent and scattered throughout the volume, in a variety of sizes. Anyone who has had the pleasure of seeing Will Rogers on the screen and stage will find his memories refreshed. Those who have not had this pleasure will be making the acquaintance of a very fine person.

Pittsburgh

RUTH SALISBURY

Frances Warde: American Founder of the Sisters of Mercy. By KATHLEEN HEALY. (New York, Seabury Press, 1973. Pp. 535. Preface, notes, selected bibliography, list of institutions founded by Frances Warde, index. \$14.50.)

A glance at Sister Kathleen Healy's book about Frances Warde inclines the reader to the assumption that this is principally a travelogue of the sojourns of Frances Warde in the United States. However, even to the uninitiated in the religious life, it is a work palpitating with the apostolic zeal of a woman wrapped in concern for her fellow-man. Wherever she saw a need for the help of the Sisters of Mercy in the latter half of the nineteenth century, she was there, principally in person, sometimes through a delegate.

But it was in person, specifically on the site of the present-day Horne's department store, that the first Sisters of Mercy began their apostolic endeavors in the United States. As soon as they were settled, however slightly, on December 21, 1843 (Thanksgiving Day in Pittsburgh that year), they set out to visit the sick poor and to instruct children and adults. (Old-time Pittsburghers will remember old St. Patrick's on the "strip," which Sister Frances Warde opened in 1846.)

Naturally a book about a founder includes "firsts," and this biography is necessarily weighted with firsts — the first boarding school west of the Alleghenies, the first hospitals in Pittsburgh and Chicago, the first Catholic schools in New England, the first permanent foundation of religious women in Illinois, and numerous other firsts of the kind that would surprise the welfare worker of today whose work was formerly done freely and lovingly by Frances and her companions.