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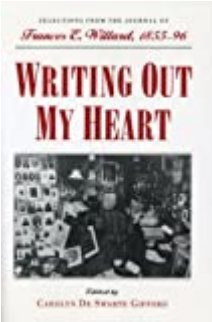

Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, ed. *Writing Out My Heart: Selections from the Journal of Frances E. Willard, 1855-96.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995. xxvii + 474 pp. $29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-252-02139-8.

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This is a patiently edited volume containing selections from the journals of nineteenth-century reformer and Woman's Christian Temperance Union leader, Frances E. Willard. The editor, Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, divides her selections into five parts, which cover Willard's early adulthood, her two-year journey overseas, and her final journal entries two years before her death. Like all editors of historical diaries, Gifford faced difficult choices in the selections she made from the forty-nine volumes–eight thousand pages–of Willard's journals, which were discovered in a pantry in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union library in 1982. Willard kept a journal in order to "make a daguerreotype of my mind," and that is also part of Gifford's purpose; the other part involves Gifford herself. The dialogue between Willard and Gifford forms the structure and content of this book. In describing her goal, Gifford writes, "I had long ago given up the notion that as an historian I must or could be objective. But I thought it should be possible to meet her (Willard) across generations and present that meeting to readers" (p. xv).

Three interrelated themes appear and reappear throughout this study. Willard's journal sheds light on Victorian notions of the strict division between one's public and private lives, and on intimate friendships between women. Willard conceived of her life in two separate parts: the inside, private life of the mind, and the outer, public self she presented to others. Her journal reveals the occasional tension between her private feelings and what she perceived to be "proper" public behavior. During her European travels, for example, the licentious public behavior of Paris prostitutes upset her, and yet, as Gifford notes, she painstakingly described every detail in her journal (p. 273).

Secondly, Willard both conformed to and resisted nineteenth-century attitudes regarding intimacy. She accepted the notion that intense loving friendships between girls must finally give way to mature love between men and women. Yet she found that the love she shared with her friend Mary Bannister–a love she expressed physically and verbally–became an obstacle in the path of her engagement to Charles Fowler. Willard finally broke her engagement because she could not return Fowler's physical displays of affection, which she felt must be present in a marriage. Furthermore, her aspirations of fame precluded the submissive behavior she knew would be expected of a married woman.

A third theme, though less apparent, is Willard's public life as a reformer as she revealed in her journal. Willard's restless need to do good in the world shaped her private thoughts at an early age. She enjoyed watching a circus performance, but worried that "no good re-

sulted from it" (p. 30). On her twentieth birthday, she lamented that she had "been of no use in the world" (p. 45). It was during her trip to Europe that she resolved to work for the betterment of womankind, or, as she put it, to "extend my sphere someday" (p. 206).

But readers looking for a complete analysis of Willard's political ideology and evolution of her feminism will be disappointed. In addition, the transition between her return from Europe in 1870 and her last journal entries beginning in 1893 may be too abrupt for readers unfamiliar with Willard's WCTU activities. This, of course, is not part of Gifford's intent. Willard's political attitudes were part of her public persona, not her inner self. Researchers interested in how Willard's private life related to her ideas about temperance reform and feminism may find Suzanne M. Marilley's "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear" enlightening when read in conjunction with her journal.[1]

But the rough transition does not detract from the enjoyment of looking in on the active and rich inner life of perhaps America's best-known nineteenth-century reformer. Gifford presents readers with the years she spent reading and researching Willard's journal in careful, thoughtful annotations, beautifully-written interpretive introductions, and illuminating photographs.

Notes

[1]. Suzanne M. Marilley, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 123-46.

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