

The White Ribbon

For God, and Home, and Humanity.

Thought for the Month.

"Hold high the Torch!
You did not light its glow—
'Tis yours to keep it burning bright;
And pass on, when you're through the fight;
For Christ once said, and says it now to thee—
'Go — shine — for Me'."

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"FRANCES WILLARD"

BY MRS. H. N. TOOMER,

Dominion Vice-President

How we often long to know the little details in the lives of those who have founded great movements, thus bringing them more intimately into our own everyday world of thought and emotion. So often those who lead, by their very greatness, seem so far removed from our daily lives that they tend to become creatures of a completely different world.

We sometimes go even further and excuse our own smallness of adventure with the fact that our particular environment is not conducive to our becoming great. Is it not rather that we perhaps are unwilling to be venturesome?

Frances E. Willard, as a girl, was just like other girls; both her parents were teachers, but the mother was ahead of her time in her determination to give her daughter every advantage in a generation where girls were considered of less importance than sons. How much Frances Willard owed to her far-seeing mother can never be measured, for Mrs. Willard held the view that woman's influence and enfranchisement were the fountains of healing for the majority of social ills.

Is it any wonder that Frances achieved so much, after absorbing such wide views from such a mother?

As a child, she, with her sister and brother, found amusement in much the same way as other children of that era. They played and romped together on the home farm, which Frances loved and spoke of with deep affection in later years. The three children organised a board of "Public Works"; laid out towns and villages; dabbled in clay, in their "Art Club." Frances also was the editor of a newspaper, wrote a novel, composed poems and kept a diary. She was a prodigious reader.

In reading through her diary, we catch glimpses of the woman she was to become. At the age of sixteen, she

was still interested in setting traps for game, and remarks in her diary that, having caught a blue-jay, she felt that this was, strictly speaking, not game and quite unfair to the bird, thus she unfastened the trap and freed the jay. Her sporting instinct would allow no unfairness—the same instinct, developed, caused her to rise in rebellion against men and women being unfairly trapped by drinking dens.

An amusing little sidelight is revealed where we read in her diary that she stood next to a boy in her class at school and he stood at the head! The same unassuming characteristic was in evidence when she became a woman of renown, humble, gentle, courteous, and therein lay much of her charm.

The age of seventeen, her diary records, was the age of her martyrdom, for her mother insisted that her hair must be done up woman fashion and her dresses made to trail. So, she sat like Samson, shorn of her strength, though, as she explained, her plight was worse than his, for her back hair was twisted up like a corkscrew and she carried the noble sum of eighteen hairpins in it—and her feet were tangled up in the skirt of her elegant new gown. Solemnly and sadly she remarks, "My freedom is gone!" Comical girl-child of long ago!

It was while she was touring abroad that she felt the first stirrings of her heart towards making a wider place for women. Though never at any time an extremist, as many women were, especially in the Suffrage Movement, Frances Willard believed with all her heart that whatever dwarfed a woman, also dwarfs man, and that to keep a woman inferior in status, kept a check on civilisation.

On returning to her native land, Miss Willard became Dean of the Women's College at Evanston—the salient feature of her work as a teacher was the

development of character of those under her control. Fully two thousand young people came under her influence and from her imbibed the true principles of Christian living.

The whole service of Frances Willard's life was changed after a speech she gave at a Women's Missionary Meeting, where her forceful speaking and striking personality so impressed a gentleman in the audience that he invited her to address audiences in Chicago.

This request came as a complete surprise, but on talking the matter over with her mother, was advised to accept this new call. "By all means, my child, enter every open door," said that remarkable woman, and so Frances embarked upon what eventually led to the founding of our Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Up to the time of the then "Women's Crusade" in Ohio, Miss Willard had not been particularly troubled over the Temperance question, but during that crisis she felt called to devote her whole life to the saving of men and women from the cruel temptation of the drinking saloons. Her decisions for total abstinence sprang from her broad philanthropy; she desired above all things that every tempted man and woman should be safeguarded and that none should meet their doom in the homes of their friends. **Total abstinence was her plan for the nation and for the individual.**

So today we follow in her footsteps; this woman who devoted her life and her talents to a grand and a glorious crusade; this woman, who believed in the promises of God and the liberty of those redeemed from sin by the salvation of Jesus Christ, who came to lift fallen humanity. We thank God for her venturesome spirit and we press on in our Temperance Movement for the sake of God, Home and Humanity.