

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 fellowman. 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.

Frances Warde, however, was more than a founder; she was a spirit that permeated the establishment of institutes to carry on the traditions of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy. Frances deserves this carefully researched biography by Sister Kathleen Healy.

Born about 1810 of a well-to-do family, and only nine or ten when the tenured land of her father was claimed by the British, Frances was a staunch Catholic. She learned of Catherine McAuley and her work among the poor when she was in her late teens. In order for the reader to understand the charisma of Frances Warde, it was necessary for Kathleen Healy to spend a large portion of the first six chapters unraveling the roles of Catherine McAuley, not only as founder of the Sisters of Mercy, but as dear and influential friend of Frances Warde, one of its first members in Dublin.

It was Catherine McAuley who saw in Frances Warde the qualities of spiritual and temporal leadership and who subsequently sent Frances, only in her twenties, to establish a foundation of the Sisters of Mercy in Carlow, Ireland. From letters between them, it is evident that these two women shared a truly great friendship, marred not in the least by a thirty-year difference in age.

Although Catherine McAuley had died two years before Frances set out for America to establish the first foundation of Sisters of Mercy in the United States in the newly created (1843) Diocese of Pittsburgh, Frances brought with her the traditions of the ten-years of Mercy existence — care for the ill, the poor, the uneducated, the lonely, the orphaned, the stranded. Pittsburgh was a river town in 1843, with a significant part of its population Irishmen who had come to participate in the making of the Gateway to the West. Even before the terrible famine in Ireland in 1846 and 1847, nearly half of the population of Pittsburgh was Irish. However, the Irish were not the only focus of Frances's attention. She directed her energies toward all who she knew needed her services.

In her early thirties at the time of her arrival in Pittsburgh, Frances Warde had with her six other women younger than she, all of whom had left Ireland to participate in "Mercy-fullness" in the United States, knowing that they would never see Ireland again. Frances was the only one who returned to her native land, and she did so only to "recruit" volunteers for services in America. Within three years of the founding of the Pittsburgh Congregation of Mercy, Frances set out for the "West" — to the rough, shanty, frontier town of

Chicago. This was her first American foundation from Pittsburgh. It set the precedent for dozens of other foundations, made either directly from Pittsburgh or from foundations made from Pittsburgh which in turn became centers for the establishment of Mercy congregations. If one were to map the journeys of Frances Warde as she took a group of sisters to make new foundations, the chart would show the crisscrossing of the United States — from Pittsburgh to Omaha, to Rhode Island, to Maine, with many stops between. The incredible vision of this woman, her amazing physical endurance, and her absolute trust in her fellowman, make her the woman of the century, which indeed she was. Despite demands made on her by the hierarchy of the Catholic church, by the many pastors whom she worked for, and by her own sisters, she found time always for hours in convent parlors (or church basements) to instruct those who came to her. She carried on voluminous correspondence with clergymen, fellow religious, friends, and old pupils.

Her early writings also include works of a spiritual nature for the instruction of young sisters — works she revised as she herself matured as a religious woman.

To define Frances Warde in a word is to say that she was a woman for the twentieth century, one who believed in her apostolate to mankind to the point of taking real risks. In the 1840s and 50s crossing an ocean or a prairie was a risk. To be not only a Catholic, but a religious woman in the midst of anti-Catholic areas, was a risk. But Frances Warde never seemed to think of the cost; the goods she purchased were invaluable.

Sister Kathleen Healy's peregrinations into history, politics, church history, and biography may seem peripheral and ponderous. However, in order for the reader to comprehend the remarkable spiritual and physical scope of this first American Sister of Mercy, it is essential that these literary asides be included. Sister Kathleen's chapter on Kent Stone, an Episcopalian turned Catholic priest, for instance, is the story of a beautiful friendship; it is also a real insight into the management of affairs in religious communities of the Catholic church in the 1870s.

At one point in her work, Sister Kathleen says of Frances Warde that the thought of failure never entered her mind. And so it was, always. In conflict with cholera, with Know-Nothingism, with ignorance, Frances never recognized failure. Young nuns died of the cholera, became tubercular because of the conditions of the early con-

vents, but this was not failure. It was simply a part of the price for the invaluable goods. Frances gladly would have given her own life.

And "give her life" is exactly what Sister Frances Warde did. In the forty-one years she spent in the United States, she established the Sisters of Mercy wherever she could, among Irish and Indians, in cities and frontiers, for old and young; she spent herself in the service of her fellowman. Sister Kathleen Healy has carefully researched the life of this venerable woman. This work should be a recognized contribution to the historical and religious life of the nineteenth century in America as well as a biography of a great woman doing great things, unobstructed by the heavy male dominance of the times. Frances Warde is a contemporary woman. One would like to call her a "woman's woman." But she is really a woman for all mankind.

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