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Jane E. Schultz, ed. *This Birth Place of Souls: The Civil War Nursing Diary of Harriet Eaton.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. xii + 338 pp. $74.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-539268-5.

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In October 1862, forty-two-year-old Harriet Eaton became one of the first nurses dispatched by the Maine Camp Hospital Association (MCHA) to provide relief services to soldiers in the field. From 1862-65, Eaton completed three tours for the MCHA. She worked in the muddied, inaccessible camps and trenches of warfare and in the highly bureaucratized City Point hospital at the confluence of the James and Appomattox rivers.

This Birth Place of Souls, skillfully edited by Jane E. Schultz, is comprised of an introduction, Eaton's diary, her personal letters and official correspondence, an extensive biographical appendix, and a bibliography. As Schultz points out, Eaton's papers are both a rare account of roving regimental nursing in the field and a fascinating glimpse into the operation of large wartime relief agencies. I also found the sectional portrait particularly interesting. While war constricted every aspect of domestic life in the South, and in so doing shaped Confederate women's expression of patriotism, Northern women like Eaton made sacrifices hundreds of miles from home when they traveled to the corners of bloodied battlefields. Eaton pursued the tenets of republican motherhood writ large in her efforts to minister to the wounds and the souls of Maine soldiers in the South, where suffering became "a conduit to Christian insight" and "the foundation of a moral (and patriotic) cause" (p. 15).

Harriet Hope Agnes Bacon was born in 1818 in Newton, Massachusetts, the last of fifteen children of Josiah and Agnes Ramsay Hope Bacon. Harriet received a common school education before marrying Baptist minister Jeremiah Sewall Eaton in 1840. The couple relocated to Portland and had three children–Frank in 1842, Agnes in 1848, and Harriet in 1855–before Jeremiah's death in 1856. Harriet kept her family financially afloat for nearly six years with the help of friends and congregants of Portland's Free Street Baptist Church, where Jeremiah had served as minister.

In October 1862, in the wake of the Battle of Antietam, the church organized the Maine Camp Hospital Association to minister to the needs of state troops in the field. Harriet Eaton and Elizabeth Fogg, a widow from Calais, Maine, were the first to enlist and formed part of the twenty-one thousand Northern women who provided domestic and administrative services to Union military hospitals throughout the war. With her son in the army, Eaton shipped one adolescent daughter off to school in Boston and sent another to stay with family friends. Schultz notes that while Eaton hoped that her work would allow her to catch a glimpse of Frank occasionally, her domestic circle of care had now extended to her statewide family, where Eaton's visible contribution became "central to the project of waging a civil war" (p. 2).

Harriet Eaton wrote extensively about her first tour, when she engaged in roving regimental nursing in northern Virginia. The tour required equal measures of ingenuity and quick thinking: Eaton and Fogg rode in ambulances in the wake of battle, cooked provisions on outdoor campfires, provided spiritual guidance to wounded soldiers in hospital tents, and assembled and distributed medicine on demand. "This morning very early I went over to camp with my two large pails full of broma, my pockets full of crackers," she wrote on January 16, 1863, "but I had to leave two companies unprovided, so home again I went, made another pail full, and carried over a basket of tea and apple sauce" (p. 107). Eaton sent requests for supplies and reports on the state of the troops back to MCHA headquarters, acting as a vital link between soldier and citizen.

After the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, Harriet traveled to the division hospital, where she made whisky punch and distributed crackers and marmalade to Maine men. In her diary, Eaton portrayed herself as a republican mother, a patriot, and a spiritual guide, documenting the supplies she distributed, the souls she converted, and the womanly touch she impressed upon

camp life. "On going to Hos. this morning every head was raised with exclamations of pleasure, one said 'there comes our angel,' others said they would soon get well if I would only stay," Harriet wrote proudly in December 1862 (p. 89). In sacrificing her personal domestic role, Schultz argues that Eaton reasoned "that if she cared for other women's sons, perhaps her own would meet with better care" (p. 1).

Harriet Eaton returned home in May 1863 due to illness and then returned to the field in October 1864. This time she did not carry her pail of crackers and marmalade through makeshift hospital tents but was instead stationed at City Point, Virginia–"a relief city in which were concentrated hundreds of the eastern theater's medical and relief personnel during the summer of 1864 through the spring of 1865" (p. 27). Unlike the haphazard and oftentimes deplorable medical conditions that dominated her previous tour, Eaton found City Point well supplied and well staffed with "surgeons, orderlies, laundresses, cooks, quartermasters, sutlers, chaplains, nurses, people employed by the Sanitary and Christian commissions to distribute supplies, state relief agents, and contraband men and women eking out a modest existence" (p. 27). Eaton suddenly found herself subject to hospital bureaucracy and the watchful eye of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, assigned to tasks not of her choosing and for men from other states, not her beloved "Mainers." "I am more than ever dissatisfied with this way of working," she wrote less than a month after her arrival. "I reach the suffering and destitute *so indirectly*. I do'nt [*sic*] want to sit here and do the polite for a mess table, but would much prefer to live on hard tack and a cup of tea untrammelled" (pp. 162-163).

The second tour–contrasting the differences between roving and hospital nursing–proved deeply unsatisfying to Eaton; while the Union war machine had made substantial improvements in the care of wounded soldiers, the inevitable bureaucratization of medical treatment robbed nurses of the opportunity to provide domestically centered care. For Eaton, patriotic devotion came from impromptu visits to camp and the personal exchange of home-manufactured goods and treats, not in the scripted service of a hospital roster. After completing her stint at City Point, Eaton concluded her service with two months in Alexandria, Virginia, where she nursed soldiers released from Confederate prison camps. In 1866, she moved to Tioga County, New York, to open a hardware store, later relocating to Hartford, where she became a lay minister for the First Baptist Church. She died in 1884 and was buried beside her husband in Portland's Evergreen Cemetery.

This Birth Place of Souls is a beautifully conceived book. Schultz provides both a useful interpretive lens and detailed supporting material, expertly situating the primary documents within the broader historiographical landscape of nursing, nationalism, and patriotic womanhood. The appended biographical dictionary, while somewhat unconventional for material of this length, is comprehensive and works well. Eaton's personal and official correspondence, which appears after the diary, has been cross-referenced to the main text. Schultz is to be congratulated on this fine volume that recounts one Northern woman's decision to abandon a life of "unobtrusive usefulness" in the cause of soldiers' aid.

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