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# DEACONESSES IN EUROPE

AND

## THEIR LESSONS FOR AMERICA

BY

JANE M. BANCROFT, PH.D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

EDWARD G. ANDREWS, D.D., LL.D.

*Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*

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“No life  
Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife,  
And all life not be purer and stronger thereby.”

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IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION,  
TO  
THE EARNEST AND DEVOTED WOMEN WHO,  
AS MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEACONESS WORK  
OF  
THE WOMAN'S HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY,  
HAVE AIDED IN EXTENDING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIACONATE  
OF WOMEN,

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY

Dedicated

BY THE AUTHOR.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE.

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The Author has aimed to present an accurate and concise statement of the deaconess cause as it exists at the present time.

In all cases where it was possible, original sources of information have been consulted.

Many friends, both in Europe and America, have given invaluable aid, for which words of thanks are an inadequate recognition.

The excellent Index at the close of the volume was kindly prepared by the Rev. J. C. Thomas.

Acknowledgments are also due to Mr. Gillett, Librarian of the Union Theological Seminary, and to Mr. C. H. A. Bjerregaard, of the Astor Library, for putting not only the facilities of the library, but their personal assistance, at the service of the writer.

JANE M. BANCROFT.

NEW YORK CITY, *June* 5, 1889.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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How far, and in what form, ought woman's work in the Church to be organized? What was the deaconess of St. Paul's epistles? What light on this subject do the primitive and the mediæval Churches yield us? Can "sisterhoods" be established without weakening the sense of personal responsibility in those Christian women who are not thus wholly set apart to charitable and spiritual work? Can they be multiplied without danger of introducing into Protestant communions the evils of the conventual life? Are there modern instances of safe and successful organizations? What good have they achieved, and what further good do they promise? In what relation should such organizations stand to the authority and fostering care of the Church? What should be their scope, spirit, methods? What regulations are funda-

mental and indispensable? What perils are real and possibly imminent?

To answer these, and other questions associated with them, this book is written. Its authoress is a gifted daughter of the Church, well known in literary and educational circles. During a protracted sojourn in Europe she enjoyed unusual facilities for studying the deaconess work as carried on in many places, and particularly in the institutions founded by Pastor Fliedner at Kaiserswerth in Prussia, and in those at Mildmay in England. She has also made a thorough and discriminating study of the subject as developed in the early centuries of the Church and in the Middle Ages.

The book itself will amply reveal these facts, and cannot but contribute largely to the guidance of the newly revived interest of the American churches in the far-reaching question how Christian women may best serve their Lord in serving the humanity which he has redeemed.

It appears at an opportune time. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at its session in May, 1888, inserted in the law of the Church a chapter on deaconesses, defining their

duties and providing for the appointment and oversight of them through the Annual Conferences. This action was the natural outcome of a wide and increasing appreciation of the service of Christian women in many departments of Church work; and it was greatly furthered by the advocacy of Dr. J. M. Thoburn, now the devoted and honored missionary bishop of India and Malaysia. But it had not been the subject of any considerable previous discussion in the periodicals of the Church, and there was not in the Church a widely diffused or an accurate knowledge of the history, scope, possibilities, or perils of such an organization. The promptness, however, with which the provision thus made by the General Conference has been seized upon by the Church in several of our large cities, indicates that the time was ripe for the movement. But information is still scanty; ideas concerning the aim and place of the deaconess work are crude; methods have been very little digested; the foundations of local homes evidently may come to be very imperfectly laid; and the movement may easily come to naught.

This book, it is hoped, will do a twofold work.

It will awaken a lively interest in a movement already arrived at large proportions in some parts of European Protestantism; and it will guide those among us who are studying how best to organize, against the sin and suffering of the world, the practically unlimited resources of Christian women. Whenever any one shall in some good degree apprehend what helpfulness for the lost as yet lies undeveloped in the hearts and hands of the daughters of the Church, and what honor may yet come to Christianity by the rightly directed use of this power, he will welcome a volume which, like the present one, offers such guidance as history, observation, and earnest reflection yield on the question at issue.

EDWARD G. ANDREWS.

NEW YORK, *May* 10, 1889.

# DEACONESSES IN EUROPE.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE DIACONATE.

IN the ruins of the old cities of Greece and Rome we find buildings that were used for public purposes of all kinds—forums, theaters, amphitheaters, circuses, and temples of worship. Every provision was made for the entertainment of the people, and for their political and intellectual needs. But nowhere do we find the ruins of structures, belonging either to the public or to private individuals, indicating that any attempt was ever made to care for the feeble-minded, the insane, the deaf, the blind, the sick, or the aged; those that in every nation of modern times are the wards of the State and the definite objects of religious ministrations.

The ruins cannot be found because such buildings never existed. No provision was made for those suffering from bodily infirmities, because so far as

the State could control circumstances they were not allowed to exist. Children who were defective in any way were put to death. In Sparta this measure was carried out under government supervision. Even Plato in his model republic has all children of wicked men, the misshapen, or the illegitimate put out of existence, that they may not be a burden to the State.\*

With the coming of Christ new elements were introduced into the civilization of the world; elements of kindness, of compassion, of sympathy of man toward his fellow-man, that up to this time had not been known. There was a new revelation of the brotherhood of all men in the fatherhood of God: "We are all one in Christ Jesus."

This spirit of compassion and of sympathy has grown with every century in the Christian era, and at no time has it been stronger in the history of the world than it is to-day. Well has one American historian said:

"To a generation which knows but two crimes worthy of death, that against the life of the individual and that against the life of the State; which has expended fabulous sums in the erection of reformatories, asylums, and penitentiaries, houses of

\* *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, von Döllinger, p. 692. Regensburg, 1857.

correction, houses of refuge, and houses of detention all over the land; which has furnished every State prison with a library, with a hospital, with workshops, and with schools, the brutal scenes on which our ancestors looked with indifference seem scarcely a reality. Yet it is well to recall them, for we cannot but turn from the contemplation of so much misery and so much suffering with a deep sense of thankfulness that our lot has fallen in a pitiful age, when more compassion is felt for a galled horse or a dog run over at a street-crossing than our great-grandfathers felt for a woman beaten for cursing, or a man imprisoned for debt." \*

The spirit of Christ has penetrated even where his rule is not acknowledged, and the humanitarianism of the present day is simply the leaven of Christian love working among the masses of men.

In the Christian world the effort to realize the brotherhood of all men in Christ is producing large results. Treasures of money, and infinitely more precious treasures of men, are every year devoted to this one object. The cause of Protestant foreign missions is not yet a century old, but the latest available statistics tell us that the following

\* MacMaster's *History of the United States*, vol. i, p. 102.

sums are being contributed annually for this great work : \*

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| 32 American societies contribute..... | \$3,011,027 |
| 28 British " " .....                  | 5,217,385   |
| 27 Continental " " .....              | 1,083,170   |
| <hr/>                                 | <hr/>       |
| 87 societies contribute.....          | \$9,311,582 |

With this large sum American societies are employing 986 men, and 1,081 women; British societies, 1,811 men, and 745 women; Continental societies, 777 men, and 447 women. Total, 3,574 men, 2,273 women.

Visible results of faithfulness in work:

|                                        |         |
|----------------------------------------|---------|
| Members in American societies.....     | 242,733 |
| "    British    "    .....             | 340,242 |
| "    Continental "    .....            | 117,532 |
| <hr/>                                  | <hr/>   |
| Total membership in foreign lands..... | 700,507 |
| Children in the Sunday-schools.....    | 626,741 |

The subject of home missions is to-day attracting greater attention than ever before. "Der Innere Mission" of Germany, the various forms the work assumes in England, the many societies in the United States occupied by the questions of city evangelization, work among the Mormons, the treatment of the Indians, care for the colored race, and

\* Statistics from *North American Review*, February, 1889, "Why am I a Missionary?"

other phases of home work show that Christians are fully understanding that it is wise to build over against our own house.

Certainly the reproach cannot justly be made that the Church of Christ is neglectful of the precept, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men."

This is genuine service of man to man, and the motive of the service is love to God. Every revelation of God is of ministering love and compassion, and the efforts of his disciples to imitate the divine love have indelibly stamped upon modern civilization the Christian impress.

The service of ministering compassion is so clearly one of the duties of Christ's Church that of necessity there must be ordinances touching the exercise of this duty. So in Acts vi, 3, we read of the appointment of the deacons, "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom," to see that the service of the tables was not neglected.

But Christian women have ever had special gifts in caring for the poor and sick and helpless, and the women of apostolic times must necessarily have had their part in these services of love. In addition to the diaconate appointed by the apostles recorded in the sixth chapter of Acts, we must look for a female diaconate as an office in the Church.

This we do not fail to find. In Rom. xvi, 1, we read: "I commend unto you Phebe, a deacon of the church which is at Cenchrea." Such at least would have been the form of the verse if our translators had rendered the Greek word here translated servant as they rendered the like word in the sixth chapter of Acts, the third of the First Epistle to Timothy, and in other passages of the apostolic writings.

"That ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also." These words of St. Paul are especially valuable as an apostolic witness for the existence of the office of deaconess at the time when he wrote. They are even more than that. They are an apostolic commendation of the office addressed to the Christian Church of all times to accept the deaconess in the Lord, and to assist her "in whatsoever business she hath need of you."

Whether Priscilla and Aquila, "my helpers in Christ Jesus," or Tryphena, Tryphosa, and the beloved Persis, who "labored much," or Julia and Olympas, all mentioned in the same chapter, were or were not deaconesses we have no means of knowing.

Outside of this chapter we do not find other references to the order in the New Testament, unless it be in 1 Tim. iii, 11. In the midst of a lengthy description of the qualifications of deacons is interjected the exhortation: "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." Now the word *wives* has no authority from the Greek word, which is simply *women*. Bishop Lightfoot remarks, in his book on the authorized version of the New Testament, "If the theory of the definite article (in the Greek) had been understood our translators would have seen that the reference is to deaconesses, not to wives of the deacons."

Many eminent scholars are of the same opinion, among whom are Chrysostom, Grotius, Bishop Wordsworth, and Dean Alvord. Dean Howson adds: "It should be particularly noticed in connection with this that in the early part of the chapter no such directions are given concerning the wives of the bishops, though they are certainly as important as the wives of the deacons; so that it can scarcely be thought otherwise than that the apostle's directions were for the deaconesses, an order which we find in ecclesiastical records for some centuries side by side with that of deacons." \*

\* *Deaconesses*, Rev. J. D. Howson, D.D., p. 236.

Those mentioned in Tit. ii, 3, and in 1 Tim. v, 9, cannot be considered as holding the office of a deaconess. They belong distinctively to the class of widows, who held a position of honor in the Church. St. Paul had clear conceptions of the administrative needs of the Church, and it is not probable that he would set apart to the service of deaconesses, which had many difficult duties, those who were already sixty years old.

The many names of faithful women mentioned in his letters as helpers in the Church are important witnesses for the great apostle's appreciation of woman's co-operation in the work of the Church, although his judgment was necessarily limited in some directions by the influence of the times in which he lived.

Let us examine the requirements for the diaconate of the early Church. The word diaconate means service; helpful service. We use the word to designate service for the Church of Christ; service that more particularly concerns itself with administering the charities of the Church and performing its duties of compassion and mercy. The men who were selected for this office were to be men of "honest report." They must have led a blameless life. Those who had repented of wrong-doing and reformed their lives were excluded from the office,

because they had lost a good report "of them which are without." Pre-eminently they must be men of spiritual experience, proven Christians, "full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom." They were also to have practical gifts that would make them efficient and capable in the duties of everyday life. 1 Tim. iii, 8.

These are some of the qualifications spoken of as belonging to the diaconate, and are the same in application to either sex. The woman deacon must, however, besides possessing the above qualities, be unmarried or a widow. The married woman has her calling at home, and cannot combine with that an official calling in the Church, although she may be a valuable lay helper.

The field of labor of the women deacons of apostolic times and of the present is essentially the same. The conditions of society and of the Church, however, are totally dissimilar. We must, therefore, look to see new adaptations of the same useful qualities. In other words, we shall not expect to take the female diaconate of the days of the apostles and transport it unchanged into nineteenth century environments. We shall rather expect to see the invariably useful qualities of the diaconate of women adapted to the needs of the sinful, sorrowing, ignorant, and helpless of the age in which we live.

## CHAPTER II.

## DEACONESSES IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

TO understand the position of the deaconess to the modern Church we must know something of the relation in which she stood to the early Church. Concisely as may be we must recall the story of the intervening centuries to the present, that we may learn the true position of deaconesses in modern times.

We have very little knowledge of the early Church. During the first century and the first half of the second century continued persecution compelled the religious communities of the new faith to live in almost complete seclusion. For the same reason little has been left on record of those years, and it is impossible to form clear conceptions of Church history during the period. The first trace which we find of the existence of deaconesses after the times of the apostles comes to us from an entirely outside source—from the official records of the Roman government. Shortly after the close of the first century the Emperor Trajan sent the

younger Pliny as prefect to Bithynia in Asia Minor. At the imperial command he began a persecution of the Christians, but interrupted it for a time to obtain further instructions from the emperor. His letter and the reply still exist. In the course of what he wrote Pliny says that he had sought to learn from two maids, who were called "ministræ" ("ex duabus ancillis, quæ ministræ dicebantur," Book x, chap. xcvi), or helpers, the truth of what the Christians had said, and had even deemed it necessary to put them to torture, but could obtain evidence of nothing save unbounded superstition. Here is independent testimony of singular interest that deaconesses, followers of Phebe, were found in Christian communities of Asia Minor at the beginning of the second century, and that they kept the faith, though exposed to martyrdom.

The clearest conceptions of the characteristics and duties of deaconesses of the early Church we obtain from the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a collection of ecclesiastical instructions that gradually grew up in the Eastern Church, and were gathered into one work in the fourth century. These instructions were of unequal antiquity, ranging from the earliest usages to the rules and practices last determined upon. Whether the *Apostolic Constitutions* have all the authority that some claim for them is a

question not here to be decided. If not genuine, they must have been written at a very early time, and from that fact possess a historical value of their own. "They prove beyond a doubt that there was a time in the history of the Church when a clear idea was held by some writer of the office of the female deacon as essential to the discipline of the Church."\* From them we learn of three distinct types of women connected with the administration of the Church—deaconesses, widows, and virgins. Deaconesses and widows date from apostolic times, the Church virgins from a somewhat later period. The distinction between widows and deaconesses was not at first clearly maintained. By some Church fathers widows were called deaconesses, and deaconesses widows. It was only after the lapse of time that we find the classes clearly distinguished, and when that time is reached the deaconesses have become exalted in office, being regarded as belonging to the clergy,† while the widows have lost somewhat the honorable position first accorded to them. The deaconesses are active ministering agents, caring for the necessities of others; the widows have passed the period of active service,

\* *Woman's Work in the Church*, J. M. Ludlow, p. 21.

† *Die Weibliche Diakonie in ihrem ganzen Umfang*, Theodor Schäfer, 3 vols. Stuttgart: D. Gundert, 1887. Vol. i, p. 45.

and having won the respect and protection of the Church are supported in old age from a fund set apart for that purpose. In the *Apostolic Constitutions* the order of deaconesses stands forth independently, its many official activities are mentioned, and the importance of its service emphasized.

By combining the different references we obtain a tolerably clear picture of the deaconess and her duties. She must be a "pure virgin," or "a widow once married, faithful, and worthy" (Book vi, chap. xvii). Her special duties were as follows:

(a.) She was a door-keeper at the women's entrance to the church. This was an ancient service, dating back to the oldest times.\* Ignatius died a martyr's death not long after the beginning of the second century, and in a letter which bears his name is written, "I greet the doorkeepers of the holy doors, the deaconesses who are in the Lord."

This guardianship was maintained not only in times of persecution, but as a matter of order and discipline in times of peace.

(b.) She showed women their places in the congregation, being especially bound to look after the poor and strangers, giving each due attention.

(c.) She instructed the female catechumens. She

\* *Der Diakonissenberuf nach seiner Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Emil Wacker. Guterslöh: E. Bertelman, 1888. P. 33.

also visited the women's apartments, where male deacons could not enter, carried messages to the bishops, and acted as a missionary. Teaching was an important part of the duties of the early deaconesses.

(*d.*) The deaconess had certain duties in connection with the baptism of women that were considered important and indispensable.

(*e.*) In times of persecution she visited those who were oppressed or in prison, and ministered to their bodily and spiritual needs. She seems to have been less endangered in performing these acts than were men. Lucian alludes to the service of these devoted women in prisons. She also cared for the sick and sorrowing, being especially "zealous to serve other women."

(*f.*) On occasion she was a mediator when there was strife in families, or among friends. Both to deacons and deaconesses "pertain messages, journeys to foreign parts, ministrations, services." The ever-to-be-remembered journey of Phebe to Rome, when a whole system of theology was committed to her keeping, was quite within the sphere of her duties. It has also been said that to them was given the safe-keeping of the holy books in periods of persecution. The enumeration of these principal duties implying so many lesser details helps us to understand that "deaconesses are needed for

many purposes" (Book ii, chapter xv). The deaconess was ordained to her work, as is attested by a great number of authorities.\* "It was because men felt still that the Holy Ghost alone could give power to do any work to God's glory that they deemed themselves constrained to ask such power of him, in setting a woman to do Church service." †

The following beautiful prayer of ordination, attributed to the apostle Bartholomew, bears within it certain proofs of the very early existence of the ceremony, as well as of the order of deaconesses:

"Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of man and women, who didst fill Miriam and Deborah and Hannah and Huldah with thy Spirit, and didst not disdain to suffer thine only-begotten Son to be born of a woman; who also in the tabernacle and temple didst appoint woman-keepers of thine holy gates, look down now upon this thine handmaid, who is designated to the office of deaconess, and cleanse her from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, that she may worthily execute the work intrusted to her to thine honor, and to the praise of thine Anointed, to whom, with thee

\* Neander, *Hist. of Chr. Religion and Church*, vol. i, p. 188; Schaff, *Hist. of Chr. Church*, vol. iii, p. 260; McClintock & Strong's *Encyclopædia*, art. "Deaconesses."

† J. M. Ludlow, *Woman's Work in the Church*, p. 17.

and the Holy Ghost, be honor and adoration forever. Amen."

The allusion to the creation of man and woman, to the women in the Old Testament who were called to special service, as well as to Mary, the mother of the Lord, while no reference is made to the women of the apostolic Church who were so highly commended, and held in veneration as worthy of all imitation, go to prove that the origin of this prayer was so near the time of the apostles as to be almost contemporary with them.

The office of the deaconess, as described by the *Apostolic Constitutions*, fitted into the needs of the Eastern Church and the requirements of Greek life. It was in the East that the diaconate of women originated, and here that it attained its greatest growth. In the West custom did not demand the careful separation of the sexes as in the East, and church relations were less bound by social usages; consequently we meet with fewer references to deaconesses in the works of the Latin fathers, and the diaconate of women is not so deeply rooted in the affections of the church communities as we have found it in the Greek Church.\*

The fourth century was the blossoming period of

\* Neander, *Hist. of Chr. Rel. and Church*, vol. i, p. 188; Schaff, *Hist. of Chr. Church*, vol. iii, p. 260.

woman's diaconate, when it attained its highest importance. All the leading Greek fathers and Church authorities of the age make mention of it. The office is spoken of as worthy of all honor, filled by women of rank from noble families, and those of wealth and ability. It found its special advocate and protector in Chrysostom, "John of the Golden Mouth," who was Bishop of Constantinople from 397 until 407 A. D. He seems to have had the ability, rare for that age, of understanding the value of the services of Christian women, and through his wise guidance and encouragement had over them almost unbounded influence. Forty-six deaconesses were under his direction—forty attached to the mother church at Constantinople, and six belonging to a small church in the suburbs. A number of these were closely identified with his history, either as relatives or friends, and through his writings their memory is preserved. Of these are Nicarete, of a noble family of Nicomedia. We are told she was of a modest, retiring nature, and would not take places of responsibility when urged to do so by Chrysostom. We note a strong tendency toward the later celibate life of the nuns when we read that she was extolled for "her perpetual virginity and holy life." Sabiniana was the aunt of Chrysostom. To Amprucla the bishop

wrote two letters still extant.\* They are filled with words of consolation for the religious persecution she has undergone. In one of them he says: "Greatly did we sympathize with your manliness, your steadfast and adamantine understanding, your freedom of speech and boldness." "Manliness of soul" seems to have held a high place in the bishop's favorite qualities. In another place, writing to the same deaconess, he praises "your steadfast soul, true to God; yea, rather, your noble and most manly soul."

Pentadia and Procla were closely associated with Olympias. In a letter to Pentadia, Chrysostom writes: "For I know your great and lofty soul, which can sail as with a fair wind through many tempests, and in the midst of the waves enjoy a white calm."† Reading such words of appreciation, words that in other places approach dangerously near to adulation, we better understand the influence Chrysostom exercised over the women of his time, and their steadfast devotion to him. They had the conviction that all their efforts met with his sincere and profound appreciation and quick responsive acknowledgment.

\* *Sancti Johannis Chrysostomi opera om.*, t. ii, pp. 659, 662. Paris, 1842.

† Chrys., *Op.*, vol. ii, p. 658.

Pre-eminent among the friends of the great bishop was Olympias, of whom Dean Howson said, "She is the queenly figure among the deaconesses of the primitive Church." To understand her life we must recall the scenes by which she was surrounded and the age in which she lived.\*

In the great capital of the Eastern Empire, where the luxuriance and magnificence of the Orient combined with the keen, quick intellectual life of the Greeks; in the circle of the imperial court, with its intrigues, its fashions, its favoritisms; at a time when outwardly much respect was paid to the forms of religious life, but when the great and vital dogmas of the Church were made the sport of witty sophistical disputations; when those who endeavored to lead an earnest Christian life met with nearly as much to oppose them as in periods of active persecution; such were her environments. They were little favorable to the strength of mind, the fixedness of purpose, the self-denial and Christian devotion that marked this noble deaconess. Born in 368 A. D. of a heathen family of rank, owing to her parents' early death she was educated a Christian. In her seventeenth year she married Nebridius, the prefect of the city, but after a married life of twenty months he died, leaving her at eighteen

\* *Die Weibliche Diakonie*, Theodor Schäfer, vol. i, p. 8.

years a widow, rich, beautiful, and free to decide her future. The Emperor Theodosius desired her to marry one of his kinsmen, but she refused, saying, "Had God designed me to lead a married life he would not have taken my husband ; I will remain a widow," and shortly after she was consecrated a deaconess by Bishop Nectarius. The emperor, angered at her refusal, took from her the use of her large fortune, and put it under the care of guardians until she should be thirty years old, whereupon she only thanked him for relieving her of the heavy responsibility of administering her estate, and begged him to add to his kindness by dividing it between the poor and the Church.

Shamed out of his anger, the emperor soon restored her rights, and when Chrysostom came to Constantinople her lavish and often unwise generosity was felt in every direction, being compared to "a stream which flows to the end of the world." He reproved her unbounded liberality, and advised her to administer alms as a wise steward who must render an account. This counsel guided her into safer paths. Finally, when Chrysostom was driven forth to banishment, by his advice she remained in the city, and became a support for his followers and those who had been dependent upon him. She met contemptuous treatment and judicial persecu-

tions, but continued her works of charity, and outlived the man whose mind and heart had so influenced hers by eleven years. Chrysostom wrote her many letters, of which seventeen are extant.\* They plainly show the estimate he set upon the diaconate of women, and his endeavor to wisely cherish it. Unfortunately, they also show exaggeration of compliment and praise which detract from his words of sincere and honest admiration. Too often, also, he gives undue value to works of mercy, and exalts acts of ascetic self-denial.

The question of the age at which deaconesses could be received is a vexed one. The confusion of apprehension touching deaconesses and widows led to differing enactments at different times and places. The restriction of age, however, must now have lost its force, as we find Olympias a deaconess when not yet twenty years of age, and Makrina, the sister of Gregory of Nyssa, was ordained when a young girl. Deaconesses retained control of their property. In truth, a law of the State forbade them to enrich churches and institutions at the expense of those having just claims on them. Deaconesses also existed in the Church of Asia Minor. Ignatius mentions them as at Antioch in Syria. They were in Italy and Rome. The

\* Chrys., *Op.*, vol. ii, p. 600.

Church of St. Pudentiana, in the Eternal City, keeps alive the memory of two deaconesses whose house is said to have stood on this site; Praxedes and Pudentiana, the daughters of a Roman senator, who devoted themselves, with all they had, to the service of the Church. Deaconesses also penetrated to Ireland, Gaul, and Spain, lingering in the last named country many years after they had passed out of knowledge elsewhere.

We find very little about this order of Christian workers in the Western Church. There is a passage of Origen in a Latin translation which speaks of the ministry of women as both existing and necessary, but in the great Latin fathers, the contemporaries of Chrysostom, scarcely a mention occurs. From the last half of the fifth century the diaconate of women declined in importance.\* It was deprived of its clerical character by the decrees passed by the Gallic councils of the fifth and sixth centuries. It was finally entirely abolished as a church order by the Synod of Orleans, 593 A. D., which forbade any woman henceforth to receive the *benedictio diaconalis*, which had been substituted for *ordinatio diaconalis* by a previous council (Synod of Orange, 441). The withdrawing of church sanctions made the deaconess cause a private one. But as such it

\* Schaff's *History of Chr. Church*, vol. iii, p. 260.

existed for hundreds of years, often under the patronage and protection of those high in authority. About the year 600 A. D. the patriarch of Constantinople, godfather of the Emperor Mauritianus, built for his sister, who was a deaconess, a church which for centuries was called the "Church of the Deaconesses." It is still standing and, only slightly changed, is now used for a Turkish mosque.\*

In the twelfth century there were still deaconesses at Constantinople. Balsamon, a distinguished professor of Church law, writing at the time, says that deaconesses were still elected in that city and took charge of conferences among women members, but in other places the order had passed completely away.

There was no historian of the diaconate of the early Church. We learn of it only from isolated and occasional references in works devoted to other subjects. Yet these references are sufficient to enable us to affirm that deaconesses were a factor in the life of the Church for from nine to twelve centuries, or two thirds of the Christian era.

The same influences led to its decay that affected the entire life of the Church during these centuries.

\* *Denkschrift zur Jubelfeier*, J. Disselhoff, Kaiserswerth, 1886, p. 5.

The superior sanctity attached to the unmarried state, that brought about the celibacy of the priests, gradually changed the active beneficent existence of the old-time deaconesses into the cloistral life of nuns. Statutes were passed forbidding her to marry. Gradually grew up the dangerous superstition of the marriage of the individual soul with Christ, that made of the nun the Bride of Christ in an especial sense. It was this false conception that led the vow of the nun to be regarded as the vow of marriage, and to be guarded from infringement in the same way as the human marriage tie, and like it to be lasting for life. The glorious doctrine of justification by faith was replaced by ascetic mortifications of the flesh based upon the belief in meritorious works. The cell of the monk and the nun were esteemed more sacred than the family circle, and in the darkness of mediæval times that settled down upon the life of the Church we lose sight of the busy, active ministrations of women deacons, who had once been esteemed so needful to her usefulness.

There are other minor causes that aided in the downfall of the order; the abuses that arose in some cases; the changes in the ceremony of baptism by which the aid of women was not so indispensable, and especially the fact that since the time

of Constantine the care of the sick and poor was placed under the charge of the State.\*

These causes combined removed from the life of the Church a powerful agency for good, and for centuries deprived it of the pre-eminent gifts of ministration which belong to Christian women.

\* Herzog's *Protestantische Real Enc.*, vol. iii, p. 589.

## CHAPTER III.

## DEACONESSES FROM THE TWELFTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

DURING these seven centuries whenever there arose a reviving spirit of true love to God, whether within the Church of Rome or in any of the churches formed from reforming elements that separated from it, then we find traces of the diaconate of woman assuming some form of devotion to Christ and work for him. One of these movements well worth our study originated in Belgium while the last of the Greek deaconesses were still daily walking the arched pathway that led to their church in Constantinople. Toward the close of the twelfth century great corruption of morals and open abuses prevailed in society, and also in the Church. One of those who protested against the evils of the times was the priest Lambert le Bègue, as he was called, meaning the stutterer. He lived at Liège, in Belgium, and just without the city walls owned a large garden. He determined to make use of this to found a retreat for godly women, where they

could lead in common a life of well-doing. Here he built a number of little houses, and in the center a church, which was dedicated to St. Christopher in 1184. Then he presented the whole to some godly women to be used and owned in common. His earnest words of rebuke brought persecution upon him from those whose consciences he disturbed, but he went to Rome and appealed to the pope, who not only protected him from his assailants, but made him the patriarch of the order he had founded. Only six months after his return, however, he died, and was buried before the high altar of the church he had erected in 1187. Whether he was indeed the founder of the Béguine houses has been called in question. Be that as it may, fifty years after his death fifteen hundred Béguines were living around St. Christopher's Church,\* and Béguine courts were found throughout Belgium, in the Netherlands, south along the Rhine, in eastern France, and in Switzerland. The Crusades made many widows, and both widows and young girls sought shelter in the community life of the Béguines. As a rule they lived alone, in separate small houses built closely together and surrounded by a wall. Each house bore on its door the sign of the cross, and with every Béguine court there

\* *Die Weibliche Diakonie*, vol. i, p. 67.

were invariably two large buildings—a church and a hospital; the one for the worship of the sisters, the other the field of their self-denying ministrations. At first they were in no wise distinguished in their dress from other women, but in time they wore a habit which varied in color with each establishment, but was generally blue, gray, or brown. The veil was invariably white. The sisters had to earn, or partly earn, their own livelihood. In the time remaining they rendered essential service in performing acts of charity. They received orphans to bring up and educate, taught little children, nursed the sick, performed the last offices for the dead, and bound themselves by good deeds closely with the lives of the people. They were in no sense isolated from the world, but lived busy, useful lives in the midst of the world. They could leave the community at any time, and after severing their connection with it were free to marry. They also retained control of their own property.

There were certainly many points of resemblance between these women who were so active in the sphere of Christian charity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the deaconesses of Europe to-day. The most prosperous period for the *Béguines* was the first half of the thirteenth

century, when they were numbered by thousands.\* Gradually persecution was directed against them. The nuns looked upon them with disfavor, and the pope withdrew his protection. In the Netherlands many became Protestants at the time of the Reformation, but the Béguines of to-day, changed in many respects from the original type, and now, closely resembling the other sisterhoods of Catholicism, are frequently to be seen in the cities of Belgium and north-eastern France.

A new current of spiritual life swept over the church in the fourteenth century, and again we find women living together in community life, and devoting themselves to common service in good deeds, and known as the Sisters of the Common Life. There was also a Brotherhood of the Common Life, as there were Beghards, communities of Christian men corresponding to the Béguines. The Brotherhood and the Sisterhood of the Common Life honored as their founder Gerhard Groot, of Deventer, who was born in 1340. Of a singularly attractive personality, a creative mind, and an

\* *Woman's Work in the Church*, Ludlow, p. 117, note. "Matthew Paris mentions it as one of the wonders of the age, for the year 1250, that in Germany there rose up an innumerable multitude of those continent women who wish to be called Béguines, to that extent that Cologne was inhabited by more than a thousand of them."

ardent, enthusiastic nature, he was born to influence and command. He was already known as a priest of eloquence and wide learning when, in 1374, he met with a deep spiritual change, and from that year dated his conversion. Henceforth, with every power of a rarely gifted nature, he sought to lead those who heard him to lives of purity and holiness. Gradually there grew up about him a circle of like-minded friends, occupied in writing books to spread his ideas, and aiding him as they could. His friend Florentius proposed that they live together and form a community. "A community!" answered Groot. "The begging orders will never permit that." But Florentius, the planner and organizer, persisted, offering his own house as a home, and held to the advantages of his plan until Groot yielded, and said, "In the name of the Lord begin your work."

Such was the origin of the Brotherhood of the Common Life, and from its circle proceeded that immortal book, the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, keeping alive in the hearts of choice spirits of every generation the thoughts and sentiments of the men of whom its author was the interpreter. For a community of women of similar aims and purposes it needed only that Groot should make a few changes in the house that he had al-

ready set apart from his paternal inheritance as a home for destitute women, and the first sister house began. Like the Béguines, the Sisters of the Common Life took no obligations binding them to life-long service, but they differed from them in living more closely together in one family, and had a common purse. They wore a gray costume, and also worked for their own support. The special virtues they inculcated were obedience to those above them in authority, humility that would not shun the meanest task, and friendliness to all. Their charitable duties were much the same as the Béguines; they cared for children, nursed the sick, and often acted as midwives. In the first half of the sixteenth century there were at least eighty-seven sister-houses, mostly in the Netherlands.\*

It will be noticed that these freer communities of religious women, that bear so much closer resemblance to the deaconesses of the early Church than to the sisterhoods of nuns contemporary with them, mostly existed in the great free cities of Germany and the Netherlands, which were the cradles of political and religious liberty, the centers of commerce and of civilization at that time.

Among the Waldenses, the Poor Men of Lyons, who were already prominent in the last half of the

\* *Die Weibliche Diakonie*, Schäfer, vol. i, p. 70.

twelfth century, we find there were deaconesses. We learn of them again, too, among the Bohemian brethren, the followers of Huss. With deep Christian faith they endeavored to form a Church after the apostolic model, and in 1457 appointed Church deaconesses. "They were to form a female council of elder women, who were to counsel and care for the married women, widows, and young girls, to make peace between quarrelers, to prevent slandering, and to preserve purity and good morals,"\* aims which keep close to the apostolic definition of this office.

Luther, the great master-mind of the Reformation, was too clear-sighted to fail to appreciate the importance of women for the service of the Church. Speaking of the quality which is an inherent part of the diaconate of women, he says: "Women who are truly pious are wont to have especial grace in comforting others and lessening their sorrows." In his exposition of 1 Pet. ii, 5, he uttered truly remarkable words, for the age in which he lived, concerning women as members of the holy priesthood. He says: "Now, wilt thou say, Is that true that we are all priests, and should preach? Where will that lead us? Shall there be no difference in persons? shall women also be priests? Answer.

\* *Der Diakonissenberuf*, E. Wacker, p. 82.

If thou desirest to behold Christians, so must thou see no differences, and must not say, That is a man or a woman, that is a servant or a lord, old or young. They are all one, simply Christian people. Therefore are they all priests. They may all publish God's word, save that women shall not speak in the church, but shall let men preach. But where there are no men, but women only, as in the nuns' cloisters, there might a woman be chosen who should preach to them. This is the true priesthood, in which are the three elements of spiritual offerings, prayer, and preaching for the Church. *Whoever does this is a priest. You are all bound to preach the Word, to pray for the Church, and to offer yourself to God.*" \*

There is no mention in Luther's writings, however, of the diaconate of women. It would be more natural that he should have tried to adjust the lives of the monks and nuns as he knew of them to the new relations arising from the Reformation rather than to bring to life an office of which he had no personal knowledge. This was what he did when he wrote to the burghers of Herford in Westphalia. In their new zeal they wanted to drive the inmates from the religious houses, although the latter had been the means of teaching them the re-

\* *Denkschrift zur Jubelfeier*, J. Disselhoff, p. 5. Gütersloh, 1888.

formed doctrines. In his letter of January 31, 1532, Luther says: "If the brothers and sisters who are by you truly teach and hold the true word it is my friendly wish that you will not allow them to be disturbed or experience bitterness in this matter. Let them retain their religious dress and their accustomed habits which are not opposed to the Gospel." \*

Certainly Luther would have seen no harm in allowing deaconesses the protection of a special garb.

Passing to another great reformer, Calvin, we find not only references to deaconesses as filling a "most honorable and most holy function in the Church," but in the Church ordinances of Geneva, which were drawn up by him, there is mention of the diaconate as one of the four ordinances indispensable to the organization of the Church.

In the Netherlands several attempts were made to revive the ancient office. The General Synod of the Reformed Church at Wesel, in 1568, first considered the question. A later synod, in 1579, expressly occupied itself with the work and office of the deaconess, but the measures taken were not adapted to advance the interests of the cause, and it was formally abandoned by the Synod of Mid-

\* *Die Weibliche Diakonie*, vol. i, p. 73.

dleburg in 1581. In the city of Wesel, however, there continued to be deaconesses attached to the city churches until 1610. In Amsterdam local churches preserved the office still later than at Wesel. Already in 1566 we read that in the great reformed Church not only deacons but deaconesses were elected. The terrible days of the Spanish fury swept away all Church organization for a time, but when it was restored in 1578 both classes of Christian officers again resumed their duties. From 1582 lists of deaconesses were kept, showing at first three; later, in 1704, twenty-eight, and in 1800 only eight. At the present time there are women directors of hospitals and orphanages in Amsterdam who are called by the title of deaconesses. The helpless, sick, and neglected children are now gathered in institutions instead of being cared for individually as was formerly the custom, and women having positions of control in these institutions are designated by the name formerly applied to those who had the personal care of the same needy classes.

It is interesting to note that there was one association of women in the century of the Reformation that bears close resemblance to the Béguines and the Sisters of the Common Life. These were the Damsels of Charity, established by Prince

Henry Robert de la Mark, the sovereign prince of Sédan in the Netherlands. In 1559 he, together with the great majority of his subjects, embraced the doctrines of the Reformed Church, and instead of incorporating former church property with his own possessions, as did so many princes of the Reformation, he devoted it to founding institutions of learning and of charity. These latter he put under the care of the "Damsels of Charity," an association of women which he had instituted. The members could live in their own homes or in the establishments, but in either case they devoted themselves to the protection and succor of the poor and sick and the aged. While taking no vows, they were chosen from those not bound by the marriage vow, and were subject only to certain rules of living. The Damsels of Charity have been held by some to be the first Protestant association of deaconesses, although not called by the name.\*

There are two evangelical societies, small in numbers, but one at least powerful in influence, which have retained deaconesses from their origin to the present time. These are the Mennonites or Anabaptists, and the Moravians. It was among the Mennonites in Holland that Fliedner saw the dea-

\* *Histoire de la principauté de Sédan*, Pasteur Pegran, vol. ii, chaps. i, ii.

conesses, who so interested him in their duties that he obtained the convictions which in the end led him to devote his life to their restoration in the economy of the Church. Among the Moravians, deaconesses were introduced at the instance of Count Zinzendorf in 1745, but only as a limited form of woman's service, by no means measuring up to the place accorded them to day in Germany.

We have now reached the nineteenth century, and from the early Church to the present time we find successive if sporadic attempts to incorporate into the Church the active diaconate of women. These constantly recurring efforts imply a consciousness, deep, if unexpressed, of the need to utilize better the especial gifts of women in Christian service. We have reached the moment when this consciousness is to take a suitable and enduring form; when the Church machinery, long defective in this particular, is to be re-adjusted and made complete.

## CHAPTER IV.

FLIEDNER, THE RESTORER OF THE OFFICE OF  
DEACONESS.

THE first years of the present century were sad years for Germany. There was a life-and-death struggle with an all-powerful conqueror to preserve existence as a nation. The Germans still call this "the war for freedom." Immediately thereafter followed a period of religious awakening, and this proved to be the hour when the diaconate of woman rose again to life and power. When the fullness of time arrives for a cause or a movement to take its place among the forces of society, many hearts become impressed with its importance. So, between the years 1820 and 1835, there were four several attempts to awaken the Christian Church to an enlightened conscience in this matter, the last of which obtained a wide and an enduring success. The first was made by Johann Adolph Franz Klönne, pastor of the church at Bislich, near Wesel. Stirred to admiration by the activity that the women's societies had shown in the Napoleonic

wars, he lamented the fact that the associations had dissolved, and complained that they had not taken a permanent form, in which the members might have performed the duties for the Church that deaconesses had done in the early years of Christianity. In 1820 he published a pamphlet entitled *The Revival of the Deaconesses of the Primitive Church in our Women's Associations*. This he sent to many persons of influence, trying to win their cooperation for the cause. He received a great many answers in reply, among them one from the Crown Princess Marianne. But while in a general way his project met with approval, no one could suggest a practical method by which his thought could be realized.

A distinguished woman, Amalie Sieveking, attempted the same task of utilizing the labor of Christian women as deaconesses in the Church. She belonged to a well-known patrician family in the old free city of Hamburg, and was well known for her philanthropic views and her generous deeds. "When I was eighteen years old," she relates, "I first learned about the charitable sisterhoods in Catholic lands, and the knowledge seized upon me with almost irresistible power. Like a lightning's flash came the thought, What if you were appointed to found a similar institution for our Protestant

Church?"\* The thought stayed by her, and disposed her to receive willingly a similar suggestion coming from the great Prussian minister Von Stein, the Bismarck of Germany during the first quarter of this century. He had been favorably impressed by what he had seen of the Sisters of Mercy in the camp and in hospitals. He consulted with one of his councilors about increasing their number, so that they could be employed in all the Hospitals, Insane Asylums, and Penitentiaries which had women inmates. To another minister he complained with warmth that the Protestant Church had no such sisterhoods by which the beneficent stream of activities among women could be directed into well-regulated channels. "The religious life of Protestantism suffers from the want of them," he said. These words were repeated to Amalie Sieveking and stirred her to make the endeavor to fulfill her own long-cherished wishes, which were those of Stein. Just at this time, in 1831, the cholera broke out in her native city. She took this as a providential opening, by means of which deaconesses could begin their work, and went at once to one of the cholera hospitals, offered her services as a nurse, and at the same time issued an appeal for sister-women to

\* *Denkschrift zur Jubelfeier*, J. Disselhoff, Kaiserswerth, 1886, p. 8.

join her. But no one came. The only outcome of her effort was a woman's society which she formed to care for the sick and the poor of her native city, and to work for this she devoted the remainder of her life. Stein and Amalie Sieveking had in mind an order of women closely resembling the Sisters of Charity. That their efforts were not crowned with success seemed to the evangelical Protestant promoters of the deaconess cause in later times providential.\*

Shortly after, in 1835, Count von der Recke, already well known as the founder of two charitable institutions, issued the first number of a magazine called *Deaconesses; or, The Life and Labors of Women Workers of the Church in Instruction, Education, and the Care of the Sick*. Only a single copy appeared, but his earnest plea for deaconesses, and the elaborate plan he devised for an institution and officers, aroused wide attention, and brought him a letter of warm commendation from the crown prince, afterward King Frederick William IV. Evidently the idea was ripening, and a near fruition could be anticipated. But neither to minister of state, count, nor prince—to no one among the distinguished of the earth—was the honor given of

\* Schäfer, *Die Weibliche Diakonie*, vol. ii, p. 86; *Denkschrift zur Jubelfeier*, p. 9.

reviving the female diaconate. It was to a humble pastor of an obscure village church that this work was committed.

The little village of Eppstein lies in a beautiful country, full of high mountains and deep-lying valleys, about a dozen miles from Wiesbaden. At the village parsonage of the little hamlet was born, January 21, 1800, a son, the fourth of a family that numbered twelve children. The pastor, whose father before him had filled a like office, was a favorite among his people for his pleasant speech, sound advice about every-day matters, and his faithfulness in instructing the children in the Bible and the catechism, and caring for the sick and the afflicted.

The little boy proved to be a strong, healthy child, and as he grew older developed a liking for books. His father taught a class composed of his children and some boys in the neighborhood, and when Theodor became old enough to join it he soon outstripped the rest, giving his father no little pride by his fluent rendering of Homer. Theodor Fliedner was not quite fourteen years old when the sudden death of the father changed the whole life of the family, and left the mother with eleven children to maintain and educate. Now began for Fliedner a struggle to complete his

education. The simple, kindly hospitality that had been so generously exercised in the village parsonage met its reward. Friends came forward to offer help, and at the beginning of the New Year Fliedner and his brother went to the gymnasium at Idstein. Here he was obliged to live sparingly, and earned his bread by teaching, but he was happy and contented, and found in study his great delight. He was fond of reading books of travel and the lives of great men, which stirred him to emulation. In 1817 he went to the University of Giessen. Here he kept aloof from the political agitations among the students. Neither was he affected by the rationalistic teachings of the professors. His shy, retired nature aided him in this course, and his leisure hours were passed in reading the writings of the Reformers. The jubilee festival of the Reformation occurred in 1817, and the lives of the heroes of the faith were brought freshly home to him. Their strength of faith shamed him, but he had not yet learned the secret of their power. He was yet without a deep, spiritual life. From Giessen he went to Göttingen, where he devoted himself to a year's study of history, philosophy, and theology. During the holidays, as is the custom with German students, he made repeated pedestrian tours. In this way he visited the great free cities of the north,

Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck. From Göttingen he and his brother went to the theological seminary at Herborn, where the following summer he passed with credit his theological examination. He was now ready to enter God's great school of practical life to be further fitted for the mission he was to accomplish. In September he went to Cologne and was employed in the house of a wealthy merchant as a private tutor. This was a great change for the quiet youth of country habits. He took great pains to accommodate himself to his surroundings, and to acquire the truly Christian art of becoming all things to all men. In after life, when speaking of this period and its usefulness to him, he wrote: "It is a great hinderance to a man, even to his progress in the kingdom of God, not to have been brought up in gentle and refined manners from his childhood." Although a faithful and devoted teacher his life-work was not forgotten. He constantly sought to widen his knowledge and experience, was made assistant secretary of the local Bible society, and formed friendships which led to his appointment to the pastorate at Kaiserswerth. This was a Catholic town formerly of some importance. The ruins of an imperial palatinate are still to be seen there, but in Fliedner's time it had become a little village of workmen dependent

on a few manufacturers. On January 18, 1822, alone, and on foot, to save his poor society the expense of his journey, Fliedner entered the town where his life was henceforth to be centered. He was to share the parsonage with the widow of a previous pastor, and his sister was to be his housekeeper. His income was one hundred and thirty-five dollars a year. Only a month after his arrival the great firm of velvet manufacturers who provided the work-people with employment failed, and the little church community seemed about to be dispersed. The government offered him another and better appointment, but he felt that he must be a true shepherd, and not a hireling, and would not leave his people. He decided to make a journey to collect money to form a permanent endowment for his church. A journey over sixty years ago, to a young German of quiet habits, was a very different matter from a similar trip taken in this day of railroads and steam-boats. To Fliedner it seemed a very important matter; and so it was in its results, which reached far beyond the little congregation he served. With great hesitation he began at Elberfeld, a town near at hand. A pastor of the city, to encourage him, accompanied him to friends, and on parting gave him a friendly suggestion that, in addition to trust

in God, such work required "patience, impudence, and a ready tongue." Before starting on the longer journey to Holland and England he returned to his congregation and encouraged them by the sum of nine hundred dollars that he had so far secured. He was now absent for nine months, and during that time obtained an amount sufficient to put the little church in a position where a certain, if modest, annual allowance was assured. The pastor had also, in serving others, greatly strengthened and broadened his own faith. As he says, "In both these Protestant countries I became acquainted with a multitude of charitable institutions for the benefit both of body and soul. I saw schools and other educational organizations, alms-houses, orphanages, hospitals, prisons, and societies for the reformation of prisoners, Bible and missionary societies, etc., and at the same time I observed that it was a living faith in Christ which had called almost every one of these institutions and societies into life, and still preserved them in activity. This evidence of the practical power and fertility of such a principle had a most powerful influence in strengthening my own faith, as yet weak." It was while in Holland that he wrote to Klönne concerning the deaconesses, whose duties he had observed among the Mennonites. After his return

he applied himself with zeal and success to his pastoral duties. Work was a delight to him, and his energy and force of character were constantly seeking new ways by which to make his church services more attractive, and to increase his influence over each member of his congregation. "He never asked himself what he *must* do, but always what he *might* do."\* But, work as industriously as he would, his small society left him time for other activities. While in London he had been profoundly impressed by the noble labors of Elizabeth Fry in the prisons of England. It was this woman's hand that pointed out the way for Fliedner in Germany. The prisons in his own land had remained untouched by any spirit of reform. The convicts were crowded together in small, filthy cells, and often in damp cellars without light or air; boys, who had thoughtlessly committed some trifling misdemeanor, with gray-headed, corrupt sinners; young girls with the most vicious old women. There was no attempt at classification of prisoners. Some of them might be innocent people waiting for trial. Neither was there oversight, save to keep the prisoners from escaping. No work was provided, and as for schools, where the larger number of convicts could neither read nor write, no one

\* T. Fliedner, *Kurzer Abriss seines Lebens*, p. 43.

thought of such a thing.\* That such idleness, the beginning of all vice, was here especially pernicious and corrupting can be readily seen. But few knew of this state of things, and those few left it for the government to provide a remedy.

Fliedner, however, could not rest in this indifference. He says: "The smallness of my charge left me more leisure than most of my clerical brethren, and the opportunities I had enjoyed on my travels of at once collecting information and strengthening my faith imposed a more urgent obligation on me to try to make up by the help of our God for our long neglect." He tried to obtain permission to be imprisoned a few weeks in the prison at Düsseldorf, that he might view prison life from within the walls, but his request was refused. He then obtained leave to hold services every other Sunday afternoon in the prison at Düsseldorf. The efforts that he put forth succeeded in waking the interest of a great many persons, and at last there was formed by his efforts the first society in behalf of prisoners in Germany.

It was while engaged in this work that he met his wife, Frederika Münster, who was occupied in bettering the condition of the prisoners in the penitentiary at Düsseldorf. He married her in 1828,

\* T. Fliedner, *Kurzer Abriss seines Lebens*, p. 48.

and she became a helpful, inspiring co-worker with him in all his undertakings.

In 1832 he was commissioned by the government to revisit England, to furnish a report on the various charitable organizations, especially those connected with prisons and alms-houses. This brought him into closer relations with Elizabeth Fry, as well as with many other noble men and women of all ranks who were caring for the poor and neglected of England. He extended his journey to Scotland, met Dr. Chalmers, and found his heart strangely touched by what he saw. His spiritual experience had deepened with the years, and while here he wrote to some friends, "The Lord greatly quickens me."

His heart became still more open to works of mercy and love, and he gathered rich experiences which were afterward utilized in his work.

Fliedner had now attained a certain reputation of his own as a friend to prisoners and outcasts. It was not surprising, therefore, that a poor female convict, discharged from the prison at Werden, should have taken the weary six miles' walk to Kaiserswerth September 17, 1833, to ask the good pastor for help. There stood in the parsonage garden a little summer-house twelve feet square, with an attic. This was offered to the convict Minna as

a temporary refuge, and she became the first inmate of the Kaiserswerth institutions. She had arrived at an opportune moment. In the previous spring Count Spee, the President of the Prison Society, had urged the founding of two institutions, one Lutheran and one Catholic, to receive discharged female convicts. Fliedner, who had seen such refuges in England, declared himself ready for the plan, and tried to induce the pastors of the larger and wealthier communities in the neighborhood to locate the Protestant asylum in some one of these cities. No one responded to his appeal. His wife, whose courage was often greater than his own, urged him to make a beginning in the little village where he lived, unpromising as the conditions seemed, and after a little hesitation, seeing no one was ready to assume any responsibility in a matter that he took so deeply to heart, the good pastor decided to follow her advice. The old parsonage was for rent, and he secured it on low terms.

Frau Fliedner had a friend of her school-days and early youth, now a woman of experience and ability. She sent for her to come and visit them to see if she would become the superintendent of the refuge, but shortly after her arrival she was taken sick, and her friends sent letters of expostu-

lation urging her to return. Just now, when affairs were in rather an untoward state, appeared the first inmate. Let Fliedner tell the story :

“ We at first gave her lodging in my summer-house, and the necessity of attending to her did more good to the poor, distressed superintendent than all her quinine and mixtures. Countess Spee, the wife of our president, had prophesied that our inmates would never remain with us a month, they would certainly run away. So when the first month was over I marched over to Heltorf and triumphantly announced, ‘ Minna is yet there.’ Minna was followed by another, and the garden-house became too small.”

Finally Fliedner obtained possession of the house he had hired, after some delay on the part of the former tenants, and the asylum was opened. The number of inmates increased, and Fräulein Göbel soon had more than she could manage. She must have an assistant. The need of trained Christian workers, who could care for these poor women, grew daily more apparent.

Fliedner’s thoughts constantly dwelt on the subject ; they gave him no rest. He had discovered with joyful surprise in 1827 the traces of the apostolic deaconesses among the Mennonites, and two years later he wrote :

“Does not the experience of this our sister Church, do not the women societies in our last war, does not the holy activity of an Elizabeth Fry and her helpers in England, and the women’s associations of Russia and Prussia formed after their model to care for the bodies and souls of women prisoners—do all these not show what great power God-fearing, pious women possess for the up-building of Christ’s kingdom as soon as they have opportunity to develop it?” \*

His practical experience with the work he had in hand brought him to the same conclusion; namely, that there must be training-schools where Christian women, especially set apart for such service, could have instruction and practice in the duties they had undertaken. As a consequence there were drawn up in May, 1836, and signed by Fliedner and a few friends, the statutes of the Rhenish-Westphalian Deaconess Society.

Fliedner had now reached the work that was henceforth to be his life mission; that is, the restoration of deaconesses to the Christian Church of the nineteenth century.

\* *Kurzer Abriss seines Lebens*, p. 60.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE INSTITUTIONS AT KAISERSWERTH.

FLIEDNER saw clearly that if the office of deaconess were to be planted in the Church there must be soil suitable to nourish it; in other words, there must be an institution founded which could furnish not only instruction, but practice in their duties, and a home for those who should offer their services for this office. "But," he says, "could our little Kaiserswerth be the right place for a Protestant deaconess house for the training of Protestant deaconesses—a village of scarcely eighteen hundred people where the large majority of the population were Roman Catholics, where sick people could not be expected in sufficient numbers for training purposes, and so poor that it could not help defray even the yearly expenses of such an institution? And were not older, more experienced pastors than I better adapted for this difficult undertaking? I went to my clerical brethren in Düsseldorf, Dinsberg, Mettmann, Elberfeld, and Barmen, and entreated them to start

such an institution in their large societies, of which, indeed, there was pressing need. But all refused, and urged me to put my hand to the work. I had time, with my small congregation, and the quietness of retired Kaiserswerth was favorable to such a school. The useful experiences I had gained on my journeys had not been given me for naught, and God could send money, sick people, and nurses. So we discerned that it was his will that we should take the burden on our own shoulders, and we willingly stretched them forth to receive it. Quietly we looked around for a house for the hospital. Suddenly, the largest and finest house in Kaiserswerth was offered for sale. My wife begged me to buy it without delay. It is true it would cost twenty-three hundred thalers, and we had no money. Yet I bought it with good courage, April 20, 1836. At Martinmas the money must be paid."

It is not possible to give here in detail the occurrences by which loans were made, and the money that was needed obtained at the required time. God gave friends for the cause, and through them provided the means. The house was furnished with a little second-hand furniture which had been given him, and October, 1836, was opened as a hospital and training school for Christian women. Serv-

ices of praise and thanksgiving consecrated this deaconess home yet without deaconesses, this hospital without patients. Both, however, soon became inmates of the building. The first deaconess was Gertrude Reichardt, the daughter of a physician. She had assisted her father in the care of the sick, and had become experienced in looking after the welfare of the poor and the destitute. She was an invaluable helper in the new enterprise, and shared with the doctor the duty of giving instruction in nursing and hospital duties. Fliedner's wife was the superintendent. She had the oversight of the house, gave the deaconesses practical direction in housekeeping, and in their early visits to the sick and poor accompanied them from house to house. Fliedner was the director, and took upon himself the religious instruction of the sisters. Every effort was taken to make the house a home in which a cheerful, loving spirit should prevail. Nearly every evening Fliedner or his wife would go over to the home, and read to the sisters, or tell them interesting facts outside their lives. When he went away on his journeys he would write in full every thing pertaining to the interests of the common cause, and the letters would be read aloud. This was to be a home in every sense of the word, in which the members were to feel themselves be-

longing to one great family, bound together by the common tie of unselfish devotion to others "for Christ's sake." The spirit of the founder has permeated the institution even to the present time. Those who know any thing of Kaiserswerth testify to the strong affection for the common home, the "mother-house," as they beautifully term it, felt by all its children. Every pains is taken to preserve it. There is correspondence, frequent and regular, from here to every sister. No matter in what distant land she may be, her birthday is remembered, and she is taught to look to this as a waiting refuge for the days of trouble, sickness, and old age.

There was soon arranged a series of house regulations and instructions for work which became the basis for after regulations in nearly all existing institutions.

Almost contemporary with the mother-house arose the normal school for infant-school teachers. It had first started as a child's school, and afterward young women who had taste for the care of children were received to be taught their duties. Fliedner took great interest in the instruction of children. He devised little games for them, and arranged stories to be told. His simplicity and his child-like nature led him to disregard formalities, and

to think solely of the end he had in view. On one occasion, when picturing the combat of David and Goliath, reaching that point in the narrative when the young shepherd lad slings the stone that brings the giant to the ground, he cast himself headlong, to the great delight and amazement of his little audience, who enjoyed to the full this object-lesson that made the story so vivid to them.

Then he took special pains that his teachers should learn to tell the stories of the Bible so as to make them clear and interesting to the youngest child. Every day a story was told in school, and each evening the teacher whose turn it was to relate the story the following day came to Fliedner and rehearsed it to him as though he were a child, afterward receiving his suggestions as to how the narrative could be improved. The work went along quietly, ever growing, ever advancing. "Among all others, and more than all others, was Fliedner's wife his best help. Her keen glance, made pure and holy by her Christian faith, preserved him from mistakes. With the household virtues of cleanliness, order, simplicity, and economy she united large-hearted compassion toward those needing help of any kind, yet knowing withal how, with virile sense and energy, to prevent the misuse of ministering love. She became a model for the

deaconesses, as well as a mother to them, and her name deserves to be mentioned with honor, as one who had an important part in the Protestant renewal of the diaconate of women."\*

In 1842 a new building was erected for the normal school for infant-school teachers. The publishing house of the institution was also started, which issues religious books and tracts. The first work sent forth was a volume of sermons, presented to the new enterprise by the late Professor Lange, which went through several editions.

The same year the *Kaiserswerth Almanac* appeared and a large picture Bible for schools was published. In 1848 the magazine *Der Armen und Kranken Freund* was sent forth as an organ for the deaconess cause, not only for Kaiserswerth, but for all the institutions that are represented at the triennial Conferences. The publishing house is an important source of income, as the institution has little in the way of endowment beside the produce of the garden land attached to it. At present about three fourths of the expense are met by the sale of publications and the fees of patients; the remaining sum is given by friends.

The financial story of Fliedner's life could form a tale of thrilling interest, if it were separated from

\* *Der Diakonissenberuf*, Emil Wacker, Gütersloh, 1888, p. 116.

other facts and told by itself. He constantly went forward, purchased houses, added lands, and erected new homes when he had no money in reserve, but unfailingly when the time came for payments to be made the sum was obtained in some way or other to meet them. "We have no endowment," he once said, "but the Lord is our endowment."

The same year, 1842, the orphan asylum was opened. For a very moderate sum this receives children who are both fatherless and motherless, and who belong to the educated middle class, having fathers who were pastors or professors, or the like. Fliedner hoped not only to provide a home for these girls befitting their station in life, but to develop among them those who should make a vocation of the care of children and the sick, and in this hope he was not disappointed.

In the midst of these successes the hand of God often lay heavily on Fliedner's family. Brethren and children passed away, and, sorest affliction of all to him, his wife, who had so closely and sympathetically shared all his labors, died April 22, 1842. "She was the first of the deaconesses to die," writes Fliedner. "As she, their mother, had always led the way for her spiritual daughters in life, so she was their leader into the valley of the shadow of

death." \* Not long after this a normal school for female teachers in the public schools was started, for this practical believer in woman's work was one of the first to advocate the introduction of women teachers in the public schools of Germany, against which there then existed a strong prejudice. The Board of Education looked favorably on his project, and afterward sent a government commissioner to attend the examinations and award the certificates at Kaiserswerth. At a later period provision was made for teachers of girls' high schools, as also for those who desired to become teachers but were too young to enter the normal school. Over two thousand teachers have gone forth from these schools, carrying with them a love for the institution which has brought back to it many returns in money and service. Fliedner well called them his "light skirmishing troops."

In 1849 he resigned his pastorate, and henceforth, with singleness of purpose, devoted himself to his one calling. From time to time new buildings were added to meet new needs. In 1852 an insane asylum for Protestant women was founded, as sisters were often called upon to nurse patients of this class. The building set apart for the purpose was

\* *Life of Pastor Fliedner*, translated by C. Winckworth, London, 1867.

formerly used as military barracks and was given to Fliedner by King Frederick William IV. In 1881 this, as with so many others of the original buildings at Kaiserswerth, became too small for the increase in numbers, and a new building took its place. It stands on an eminence just outside of the village, and is provided with every modern appliance. Fliedner's practical good sense and administrative ability led him to care for all the minor details that were needed for the success of so great an undertaking. He added a dispensary to the hospital, where a sister who had passed a regular examination before the government medical board made up the medicines required for the hospital. Many deaconesses have been trained to the same knowledge, which has been an especially valuable acquisition in the hospitals situated in Eastern countries. Little by little he secured land for farming operations, until there were one hundred and eighty acres in garden and meadow land, generally lying close about the various buildings, and affording means of recreation as well to the inmates. Nearly all of the vegetable and dairy products that are needed are so provided. A bakery, bath-houses, homes for laborers and officials, were added, and bakers, shoemakers, carpenters, and blacksmiths formed part of the staff of the great establishment.

Gradually every variety of institution that could furnish active practice to the deaconesses took its place here, and the whole might be denominated a great normal training-school for Christian women. The refuge for discharged female convicts, which was the starting-point of the movement, still continued its good work during all these years. The last report\* states that nine hundred and nineteen women of different ages and different degrees of wrong-doing have been its inmates. Parents send insubordinate girls; societies forward those who profess penitence, magistrates sentence degraded creatures often too late for any reasonable hope to reform them. The old experience of the refuge is repeated in this last report: one third are saved, one third are irredeemable, and the judgment as to the remaining third, doubtful. There were two buildings erected during the later years of Fliedner's life in which he took great interest. One of these was a cottage among the neighboring hills, where deaconesses who had become exhausted by long days in the sick-room, or whose health was suffering from over-toil, could retire for a few weeks of mountain air and quiet rest during the summer months. This pleasant retreat was well named Salem. Soon afterward was

\* *Ein und fünfzigster Jahres-Bericht*, p. 30.

laid the corner-stone of the second building, regarded with peculiar favor not only by the good pastor, but by all friends of the institution. This was the "Feierabend Haus," the House of Evening Rest, where, somewhat apart from the busy activity of the great household, those deaconesses whose best strength had been given to faithful labor in the service could pass the evening hours of life in quiet waiting for the last great change, while using the experience they had gathered and the strength still remaining in behalf of the cause they had faithfully served.

Such are the main features of the great establishment that year by year grew up in this village on the Rhine. But from this as a center had gradually branched off manifold lines of service, and many daughter-houses both in Germany and foreign lands. It was only a year and a half after the home was opened that the first appointment of deaconesses to work outside of Kaiserswerth was made.

This was an important victory for the new institution. It took place January 21, 1838, on Fliedner's birthday, when he and his wife escorted two of the sisters to Elberfeld, where they were to act as trained nurses in the city hospital. From that time to the present the hospital has continued under the management of the Kaiserswerth deaconesses.

Soon afterward sisters were sent out to nurse in private families, and in 1839 two more were sent to superintend the workhouse in Frankfort. As the institution became known there was a constant demand for superintendents, and matrons for public reformatories, prisons, and charitable establishments. Between 1846 and 1850 more than sixty deaconesses were at work at twenty-five different stations outside of the mother-house. About the same time deaconesses began to work in connection with special churches which called for their services, having the duties which in England are assigned to those called "parish deaconesses."

King Frederick William IV., from the beginning Fliedner's faithful friend and supporter, had long desired a deaconess home in Berlin. This was finally obtained, and set apart under the name "Bethanien Haus," or Bethany House, October 10, 1847, at a special dedicatory service, at which the king, with his court, was present. It was while seeking a superintendent for this home in Berlin that Fliedner learned to know Caroline Bertheau, of Hamburg, a descendant of an old Huguenot family that was driven from France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He led her home as his wife in May, 1843, and she became to him a true helpmeet for his children, his home, and his

institution. She is still living, having survived her husband over twenty-five years, and in an advanced age still retains a place on the Board of Direction at Kaiserswerth.

In one place after another deaconess homes arose, sometimes simply through Fliedner's advice, more often by his direct co-operation. From 1849 to 1851 he was chiefly engaged in traveling from one land to another, occupied in kindling the zeal of Christian women to devotion to the sick and sorrowing, and finding fields of service for their priceless ministrations. He visited the United States, England, France, and Switzerland, as well as various cities of the East, including Jerusalem and Constantinople.

The work in our own land was begun at Pittsburg, where Fliedner came with four sisters in the summer of 1849, at the invitation of Pastor Passavant, of the German Lutheran Church.

The deaconesses at once entered upon hospital work, and their care of the sick met with warm appreciation, but their numbers did not increase. An orphanage was afterward started at Rochester, and hospitals under the same auspices exist at Milwaukee, Jacksonville, Ill., and Chicago. Still the work has not grown, and it has proved the least successful of any initiated by Fliedner. Upon his

return he aided in opening mother-houses in Breslau, Königsberg, Dantzic, Stettin, and Carlsruhe.

We have now come to the period when Kaiserswerth institutions met with a notable extension. Fliedner had long been looking toward Jerusalem, hoping to found a deaconess home there. "Who would not gladly render service on the spot where the feet of the Saviour once brought help and healing to the sick?" he had said.

Now, through Dr. Gobat, the Bishop of Jerusalem, the opportunity was given. The king offered two small houses in Jerusalem that were his private property, and volunteered to pay the expenses of the journey. Associations were formed in all parts of Germany to provide an outfit for the mission. Gifts flowed in rapidly, and March 17, 1851, Fliedner, accompanied by four deaconesses, two of them being teachers, set out on this new and peaceful crusade to the holy city. From that beginning has resulted a net-work of stations throughout the East.

There is at Jerusalem a hospital\* where, during 1887, four hundred and ninety-three patients were given medical aid and nursing, and seven thousand seven hundred and two patients were treated in the

\* *Achtzehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen Stationen im Morgenlande*, 1888.

dispensary. No woman in the city is better known or more justly honored than Sister Charlotte, the head-deaconess.

The Mohammedans at first regarded the work of the sisters with fanatical distrust, but a glance at the statistics of the last report will show how completely they have cast aside their prejudices.

Of the 493 patients in 1887, there were 404 Arabians, 43 Armenians, 30 Germans, 5 Abyssinians, 4 Greeks, 3 Roumanians, 2 Russians, 1 Italian, and 1 Hollander. As to religion, there were 235 Mohammedans, 97 Protestants, 78 Greeks, 23 Roman Catholics, 45 Armenians, 6 Copts, 3 Syrian Christians, 4 Proselytes, 1 Jew, and 1 Maronite; so that in all nine nations and nine religious faiths were represented in the hospital.

There is also a girls' orphanage, called "Talitha Cumi," just outside the city walls at Jerusalem, where one hundred and fourteen native girls were last year taught by the Kaiserswerth deaconesses. Over a hundred more made application to enter, but there was no room to receive them. In Constantinople, Alexandria, Cairo, Beirut, and Pesth there are also well-appointed hospitals, some of them of spacious dimensions, and all having excellent medical service and nursing that cannot be surpassed.

The orphanage and school at Beirut had a sad foundation. In 1860 came the terrible news of the massacre of the Maronite Christians by the Druses in the Lebanon mountains.

Kaiserswerth deaconesses were immediately sent out, and were among the first to arrive to join the resident Europeans and Americans in caring for the sufferers. Numbers of children were left fatherless and motherless, and the sisters started the orphanage at Beirut to shelter them. When its twenty-fifth anniversary was celebrated in 1885 over eight hundred girls had received a home and education here, and had gone forth to eastern homes, carrying with them the light and knowledge of Christian faith into the dark, degraded social life of the Orient.\*

From the two orphanages at Beirut and Jerusalem over forty have gone out as teachers in girls' schools in Palestine and Syria. Twelve others have become deaconesses, and are ministering in this capacity to their own countrymen and to foreigners in eastern hospitals. †

In Smyrna there is also a girls' school, that was opened at the request of some wealthy Protestants

\* *Vierzehnten Bericht über die Diakonissen Stationen am Libanon.*

† *Der Rheinisch Westfälische Diakonissen Verein*, p. 64, J. Disselhoff.

residing there. The school is not so needed as formerly, since the government has started girls' high schools, but it is still maintained, and aids in bringing new life into the hopeless society of the East. There is also an orphanage at Smyrna, where some girls of the poorer classes were gathered after the ravages of the cholera had left them without parents or homes.

The eastern deaconesses have also their Salem. Just above the little village of Areya, in the Lebanon, on the summit of a hill overlooking the Mediterranean, stands the house of retreat, where, during the summer months, the more than forty sisters stationed in Beirut, Alexandria, Cairo, and Jerusalem can take refuge in seasons of overpowering heat.

The deaconess who superintends the house has a school for the native children of the village, which is taught by one of the girls educated at the Beirut orphanage.

Prosperous girls' schools are also in existence at Bucharest, and at Florence, Italy. The Italian school was started in 1860 with four girls in the upper floor of a rented house. It now possesses a beautiful house and grounds of its own, and had one hundred and forty-five girls under its charge the past year. Most of these were Italians, but

different foreign residents also availed themselves of the opportunity to send their children to an excellent Protestant school. There is also a mission at Rome maintained by deaconesses during the winter months.

The large majority of the undertakings outside of Kaiserswerth were initiated personally by Fliedner. When we recall the complex demands of the home field in Germany we marvel at the versatile executive ability of this man, who started life as the humble pastor of an obscure village church. But he loved work. He possessed "iron industry." He was ever hopeful, courageous, and indefatigable. Above all, he trusted completely in the leadings of Divine Providence, and constantly went forward with sure confidence. Then he was a true leader. He knew men. He put the right person in the right place, gave him full liberty of action, and held him to a strict responsibility for results. So, while Fliedner remained the soul of the great institution, he knew how to make himself spared, which was not the least of his qualifications for his calling.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE REGULATIONS AT KAISERSWERTH, AND THE DUTIES AND SERVICES OF THE DEACONESSES.

THE regulations in daily use at Kaiserswerth are based on those that Fliedner drew up in the early days of the institution. They have been adopted with few alterations by the larger number of deaconess institutions that have since arisen, so that to understand the spirit and usages prevailing in them it is well to give these rules some study. They are contained in a book numbering one hundred and seven pages,\* treating with great minuteness every question that affects the daily lives of the deaconesses. The qualities that the office demands are first dwelt upon as they are described in Acts vi, 3, and 1 Tim. iii, 8, 9. The sisters are reminded that their life is one of service; that they serve the Lord Jesus; that they serve the poor and the sick and helpless "for Jesus' sake;" and that they are servants one of another.

\* *Haus Ordnung und Dienst-Anweisung für die Diakonissen und Probeschwestern des Diakonissen Mutterhauses zu Kaiserswerth.*

Special stress is given to the importance of cultivating unity, love, and forbearance in the relations of daily life, and the deaconesses are enjoined "to protect and further the honor of other sisters," "to form one family living unitedly as sisters, through the tie of a heartfelt love for the one great object that brings them to this place."

There are two classes of deaconesses formally recognized, nurses and teachers; although there is another deaconess whose work is year by year becoming more important, and that is the deaconess who is attached to a church in the capacity of a home missionary. She is designated by the term "commune-deaconess," or, as the English translate it, "parish-deaconess."

Those who desire to become nurse-deaconesses must have the elements of a common school education, must be in good health, and, as a general rule, be over eighteen and not over forty years of age. Most important of all is it that she possess personal knowledge of the salvation of Christ, and a living experience of the grace of God. Those who desire to become teacher-deaconesses must, in addition, present certain educational certificates, and be able to sing. All must pass some months at the mother-house, taking care of children and assisting in housework, so that their fitness for the office can

be proven. A great deal of care is taken to test the efficiency of the candidates, and only about one half the probationers finally become deaconesses in full connection. The teachers have, further, a seminary course of one year for those who are to teach in infant schools, of two years to prepare for the elementary schools, and of three years for the girls' high schools.

While probationers, they receive, free of charge, board and instruction, and the caps, collars, and aprons that are their distinctive badges. Their remaining expenses they provide for themselves. Those who have completed the full term of probation, and have proved their fitness for the office, must pledge themselves to a service of at least five years. At the end of the time they may renew the engagement or not, as they wish. Should a deaconess be needed at home by aged parents, or should she desire to marry, she is free to leave her duties, but is expected to give three months' notice of her intention to do so.

The deaconess performs her duties gratuitously. This is a main feature of the system. She is not even free to accept personal presents, for envy, jealousy, and unworthy motives might then creep into the system. She is truly "the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." All of her wants are supplied, and

her future needs anticipated, so that, literally "taking no thought for the morrow," she can give herself with single-hearted devotion to the work in hand. The deaconess at Kaiserswerth receives from the institution her modest wardrobe, consisting of a Sunday suit, a working-dress of dark blue, blue apron, white caps and collars. A deaconess attired in her garb, with the placid, contented countenance that seems distinctively to belong to her, is a pleasant, wholesome sight that is constantly to be seen on the streets of German cities. Her deaconess attire is not only a protection, assuring her chivalrous treatment from all classes of men, but it is a convenient identification that insures her certain privileges on the State railroads and steamboats, for the German government recognizes the sisters as benefactors of society, and treats them accordingly. For her personal expenses the Kaiserswerth deaconess in Germany receives yearly twenty-two dollars and fifty cents; sometimes when in foreign lands she is paid a slightly larger sum. When she becomes unfitted for service by reason of sickness or old age, and has no means of her own, the Board of Direction provides for her maintenance.

The rules for probationers are full of practical suggestions touching the details of daily life. There is not space to transcribe them here, but those who

have charge of training schools will find them valuable reading. Every kind of house and hospital service is clearly defined. The deaconesses are instructed what duties are theirs in hospitals for women and in hospitals for men. In the latter the sister undertakes only such nursing as is suited to her sex, and for that reason she has a male assistant. She must follow strictly the doctor's orders in all matters pertaining to diet, medicine, and ventilation, and must inform him daily of the patient's state. She also assists the clergyman, if desired, in ministering to spiritual needs. But she must not obtrude her religion, when it is distasteful to her patients; rather manifest it in her deeds and manner of life.

Every portion of the day has definite duties assigned to it. On reading them over you say, Can much be accomplished when the hours are subdivided into so many portions, and given over to so many objects? But the unvarying testimony is that no nurses accomplish more than the German deaconesses. No matter how busy they may be, the effort is made for each to have a quiet half hour for meditation and private devotion. Every afternoon the chapel is opened for this purpose, and all the sisters who can be spared meet here. A hymn is sung, and afterward each spends the

time as she will in meditation, reading the Bible or silent prayer, the quietness and stillness being unbroken by words. The "Stille halbe Stunde," as it is called, is greatly prized by the sisters, and is observed by them in all their institutions, and in all lands. There are Bible-classes and prayer-meetings for the deaconesses during the week, and the first Sunday of every month there is a special service of prayer and thanksgiving for all sisters, all the affiliated houses, and similar homes wherever they exist. Fliedner prepared a book of daily Bible readings for the use of the sisters, and a hymn-book, used in all the Kaiserswerth institutions at home and abroad. "We have no vows," he said, "and I will have no vows, but a bond of union we must have, and the best bond is the word of God, and our second bond is singing."\* The sisters of each house meet together to give their votes for the admission of new deaconesses and the election of the superintendents. Each deaconess is expected to obey those who are placed over her, and to accept the kind of work assigned her, except in the case of contagious diseases, when her permission is asked. What a tribute it is to these women that such a refusal has never yet been known! Every effort is made to harmonize the

\* *Deaconesses*, Rev. J. S. Howson, D.D., p. 81.

right of the individual with the needs of the whole body, a marked characteristic of the Protestant sisters of charity.

When a probationer becomes a deaconess she is consecrated to her work by a service the main features of which it may be well to indicate. They are as follows :

Singing. Address commending the deaconesses for acceptance. Address to the deaconesses, recalling the ever-repeated thought, "You are servants in a threefold sense : servants of the Lord Jesus ; servants of the needy for Jesus' sake ; servants one of another." Then, having answered the question, "Are you determined to fulfill these duties truly in the fear of the Lord, and according to his holy will?" the candidate kneels and receives the benediction : "May the Triune God, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you ; may he give you fidelity unto death, and then the crown of life." After this is repeated the prayer of the *Apostolical Constitutions*, that beautiful prayer which has been said on similar occasions in many lands and in many tongues.\* The service ends with the communion.

A similar consecration service is used by nearly all the German deaconess houses. The features of

\* Refer back to page 23, chapter ii, where it can be found.

those that meet together in the triennial Conferences at Kaiserswerth are strikingly similar; the spirit of the original founder pervades them all.

The first of the Conferences was held in 1861, just twenty-five years after the founding of the first deaconess house at Kaiserswerth. It was celebrated as a Thanksgiving festival for the restoration of the diaconate of women to the Church. The representatives of twenty-seven distinct mother-houses met together to exchange their experiences, and to deliberate on matters touching the further usefulness of the order.

Since then the Conferences have been continued at intervals of three and four years. The last General Conference assembled at Fliedner's old home in September, 1888.

Just before it convened, as is the custom, statistics were obtained from the different mother-houses represented in the association, and pains were taken to verify their correctness. The results so obtained are given in the following table :\*

| Conferences. | Mother houses. | Sisters. | Fields of Work. |
|--------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|
| 1861         | 27             | 1,197    | ?               |
| 1864         | 30             | 1,592    | 386             |
| 1868         | 40             | 2,106    | 526             |
| 1872         | 48             | 2,657    | 648             |

\* *Der Armen und Kranken Freund*, August Heft, 1888.

| Conferences. | Mother-houses. | Sisters. | Fields of Work. |
|--------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|
| 1875         | 50             | 3,239    | 866             |
| 1878         | 51             | 3,901    | 1,093           |
| 1881         | 53             | 4,748    | 1,436           |
| 1884         | 54             | 5,653    | 1,742           |
| 1888         | 57             | 7,129    | 2,263           |

Five additional houses had made application for entrance at the time the table was made, and were received at the ensuing Conference, among which was the Philadelphia mother-house of deaconesses in connection with the Mary J. Drexel Home.

Over sixty mother-houses now belong to the association, and notwithstanding the necessary loss of deaconesses from death or removal from work since the preceding Conference, there are 1,476 more in number now than then. Surely the deaconess cause is striking deep root in the religious life of Protestant Europe. During Fliedner's life-time occasions arose which called the deaconesses outside their accustomed fields of work, and proved their value in the exceptional emergencies that so often arise. Here is an instance that occurred during the early days of the establishment : \*

“An epidemic of nervous fever was raging in two communes of the circle of Duisburg, Gartrop, and

\* *Woman's Work in the Church*, p. 273, J. M. Ludlow. A. Strahan, London, 1866.

Gahlen. Its first and most virulent outbreak took place at Gartrop, a small, poor, secluded village of scarcely one hundred and thirty souls, without a doctor, without an apothecary in the neighborhood, while the clergyman was upon the point of leaving for another parish, and his successor had not yet been appointed. Four deaconesses, including the superior, Pastor Fliedner's wife, and a maid, hastened to this scene of wretchedness, and found from twenty to twenty-five fever patients in the most alarming condition, a mother and four children in one hovel, four other patients in another, and so on, all lying on foul straw, or on bed-clothes that had not been washed for weeks, almost without food, utterly without help. Many had died already; the healthy had fled; the parish doctor lived four German leagues off, and could not come every day. The first care of the sisters, who would have found no lodging but for the then vacancy of the parsonage, was to introduce cleanliness and ventilation into the narrow cabins of the peasants; they washed and cooked for the sick, they watched every night by turns at their bed-side, and tended them with such success that only four died after their arrival, and the rest were only convalescent after four weeks' stay. The same epidemic having broken out in the neighboring commune of Gahlen,

in two families, of whom eight members lay ill at once, a single deaconess was able, in three weeks, to restore every patient to health, and to prevent the further spread of the disease. What would not our doctors give for a few dozen of such hard-working, zealous, intelligent ministers in the field of sanitary reform?"

The Schleswig-Holstein war of 1864 was the first in which Protestant deaconesses were active as nurses. Already in the Crimean war the Greek Sisters of Charity among the Russians, the Sisters of Mercy among the French, and Florence Nightingale and Miss Stanley among the English, had wakened the liveliest gratitude on the part of the soldiers, and secured the respect and approbation of the surgeons.

In the Austrian war of 1866 two hundred and eighty-two deaconesses were in the hospitals and on the battle-fields, fifty-eight of whom were from Kaiserswerth. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870 was on a greater scale, and afforded wider opportunities for the unselfish, priceless labors of these Christian nurses. Nearly eight hundred deaconesses, sent from more than thirty mother-houses, cared for the sick and wounded in the camp hospitals or on the field. The willingness of a number of boards of administration to release sisters who were in their

service, and the voluntary offers of other women to take their places, enabled Kaiserswerth to send two hundred and twenty of the number. Their experience in improvising hospitals, in aiding the surgeon in his amputations, and in ministering to the wounded and dying, throws a tender glow of compassionate sympathy over the terrible scenes of war.\*

The importance of trained deaconesses in times of war is now well understood by the military authorities at Berlin. In the winter of 1887, when war seemed imminent, the directors of the German deaconess houses were summoned by the government to a conference at the German capital to take measures for supplying nurses in case war should be declared.

Deaconesses are now thoroughly incorporated into the religious and social features of the German national life, as must be admitted by any one who has weighed the facts that have been given.

The example of Kaiserswerth has been far-reaching; the mission of Fliedner, that simple-hearted, true-souled, practical, energetic pastor, has been wonderfully successful.

In this rapid sketch I have said but little of the

\* *Denkschrift zur Jubelfeier*, p. 215.

hinderances he met, nothing of the ridicule which at first attacked him unsparingly. He paid no heed to these obstacles, and why should we waste time in detailing them? Steadfastly and undeviatingly he went forward toward the end he had in view; that is, to restore in all its aspects the devoted disciplined services of Christian women to the Church. He passed away from life October 5, 1864, leaving the great establishment that he had watched over in the charge of his son-in-law, Pastor Disselhoff, and other members of his family.

The institution has become an imposing mass of building, forming an almost absurd contrast to the little garden house, the cradle of the whole establishment, which is still standing in the parsonage garden.

When the fiftieth anniversary of the rise of the deaconess cause was celebrated in 1886 the Kaiserswerth sisterhood put their mites together and purchased the little house, to hold it in perpetuity as a monument of God's providence.

The symbol of Kaiserswerth is a white dove, carrying an olive branch, resting against a blue ground. The blue flag floats from the old windmill tower on the river-bank, attracting the attention of the traveler as he floats up the Rhine.

Other flags bear messages of conquest, of victory, of battles fought and won, of storm and stress and endeavor in the conflict of man against his fellow-man. But only peace and good-will, the victory of goodness and of love—these alone are the messages that are waved forth to the wind by the blue flag of Kaiserswerth.

## CHAPTER VII.

## OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS ON THE CONTINENT.

IN a book of these dimensions no exhaustive historical account can be given of all the developments of the deaconess movement in the various countries on the Continent. Only a few of the leading houses can be spoken of, but through a knowledge of these we can gain an insight into the life and characteristics of the movement as a whole.

The mother-house at Strasburg is one of the oldest ones, dating from 1842. It owes its origin to the holy enthusiasm and life experiences of Pastor Härter, who exercised a deep religious influence in the city where he lived. In 1817, when he was a young man of twenty, the great Strasburg hospital was re-organized. The six to eight hundred patients were divided according to their religious faith. To the Catholics were assigned as nurses Sisters of Charity. For the Protestants there were paid women nurses.

The magistrates appealed to the pastors to find

at least two Protestant women of experience and ability to oversee the nurses, but the most persistent search in the various churches of Strasburg failed to procure suitable candidates. Years afterward, when death entered Härter's family circle, and his life became clouded and darkened, he was called as a pastor to the largest church in Strasburg. He entered upon his new pastorate with a heart heavy and sad, and not until after ten months of struggle, in which the depths of his soul were stirred, did he come forth strong, confident, and positive as never before that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Henceforth there was force to his life, conviction in his words, and never-ceasing energy in good works.

When he heard of Fliedner's new undertaking below him on the Rhine he remembered the difficulty in finding Protestant nurses for the hospital, and declared that Strasburg must have a similar institution. He won the support of a number of Christian men and women, and the house was opened in October, 1842. From its beginning many branches of charitable and religious work were undertaken. Especial attention was at first given to preparing Christian teachers, and the schools in connection with the deaconess house were filled with pupils. The

success in this particular aroused apprehension lest the deaconesses should be diverted from their legitimate duties in caring for outside interests, so for a time the schools were discontinued. They have been resumed, however, and are to-day prosperous as of old.\* There are also a hospital, a home for aged women, a servants' training-school and a foundling asylum under the charge of the deaconesses. They are, as a class, of higher social rank than these of Kaiserswerth, the preponderating number of whom are from the lower grade of social life. They are also better educated. This is partly a necessity, from the fact that the city is on the border-land between two great nations and if the deaconesses are to be effective they must be familiar with the spoken and written speech of both peoples. Strasburg continues to be a great and powerful center of deaconess activities, having a number of branch houses and various fields of work.

The affiliated house at Mülhausen has obtained an especially good report for its successful use of parish deaconesses. No other house has so systematized their labors or developed their possibilities as has the deaconess house at Mülhausen. All the authorities on deaconess work agree that the

\* Schäfer, *Die Weibliche Diakonie*, vol. i, p. 21.

office of the parish deaconess is the crown and glory of the diaconate, and approaches most nearly the type of the deaconesses of the early Church.

The parish deaconess has occasion to use every gift which she can possibly acquire in the varied training of the deaconess school. She must know how to care for the poor, the weak, the sick, and those needing help for either body or soul, as she finds them in her visits from house to house. She must be able to pray at the bedside of the rich man, and to serve in the kitchen of the poor man; to be motherly to children, sympathetic with the sorrowing, and silent with the complaining. She must be an intelligent nurse, having some knowledge of medicine, able to faithfully carry out the instructions of the physician. She must be keen in detecting imposition, and wise in the administration of charity, knowing that "to deny is often to help, and to give is often to corrupt." Truly, there is no gift of Christian womanhood which has not here its use.

For many reasons Mülhausen was well adapted for a field of labor for parish deaconesses. It is an old city, dating back to mediæval times, having a population of about sixty thousand inhabitants, half of whom are workmen. It has long been known for its noble and successful endeavors to promote

the well-being of the working class. One of the first building and loan associations was started here to enable the operatives to earn their homes by gradual payments. Other organizations whose object is the moral elevation of the employees have united the different social circles by strong ties of sympathy. It was an easy matter, therefore, to raise a subscription of two hundred thousand francs to provide a home for the deaconesses who were invited here from Strasburg in 1861. There are now fourteen sisters in the deaconess house. Half of the number remain at the home to nurse the sick, and perform house duties. The remainder are parish deaconesses, who go forth early in the morning, each to her own quarter of the city, where she is busy at her labors during the day. In the evening she returns to the central home. In each of the seven districts into which the city is divided is located a district house; a pleasant, well-kept place. This contains a waiting-room for the deaconess and a consultation-room for the district physician, who comes at stated hours during the week. The poor who are recommended by the sister he treats gratuitously, and, so far as the physician directs, she furnishes food gratuitously. She keeps on hand a good stock of lint, bandages, and instruments. Each house has a kitchen and cellar. Every morn-

ing a woman comes in and prepares a large kettle of nourishing soup, and at 11 A. M. this is given out to the sick and poor.

In the store-room are rice, sugar, coffee, meal, and similar articles of food. From here she sends out at noon such portions as are needed for the most destitute of the district. In winter she also sells from her stores to the poor. Then there is a closet amply provided with sewing materials, and when the deaconess obtains work for seamstresses she furnishes them at a small price the necessary outfit to begin sewing. At two o'clock the deaconess ends her duties at the district house, and spends the remainder of the day in making visits in her quarter. To provide means to support the constant expenditure, there is in each quarter of the city a committee of fifteen ladies and three gentlemen, being in all more than one hundred ladies and twenty gentlemen, who are responsible for the administration of the charity. Each committee has a yearly collection in its district, and in this way about forty thousand francs are gathered annually. In each quarter nine hundred francs (one hundred and eighty dollars) is set apart for the maintenance of the sister and the rent of the district house. The remaining sum is expended by the deaconesses in their several districts in caring for the sick and des-

titute. Every month each one receives the sum allotted her from the treasurer, and in return reports her expenditure. The ladies on the committee often give personal assistance to the deaconess, and sometimes assume responsibility for individual cases, or for an entire street. The arrangements are constantly being improved upon as knowledge is gained by practice. The experience that has been gathered at Mülhausen is very practical, and therefore very valuable. Similar work could be undertaken in any of our large American cities, with the anticipation of like beneficent results. For that reason the above detailed description has been ventured upon, with the hope that the Old World example will find imitators in the New.\* Similar institutions, although not so carefully perfected, are found in Gorlitz and Magdeburg.

In Berlin are a good many deaconess institutions. Among them is the Marthashof, a training-school for servants, and a home for those out of employment.

The first impulse to care for the girls who come to large cities to obtain work, and to provide them a home where they can have respectable surround-

\*The details of the deaconess work at Mülhausen are largely taken from Schäfer's *Die Weibliche Diakonie*, vol. ii.

ings, came from Pastor Vermeil, the founder of the deaconess house at Paris. When Fliedner visited the Paris house his heart was touched by what he saw. He thought of the thousands of girls coming annually to Berlin from the provinces, and of the exposures and temptations to which they were subjected. He knew that many of them in their ignorance and inexperience were ruined body and soul in the lodging-houses to which they resorted, and drifted away on the streets of the city, only to find a place eventually in the hopeless wards of the great hospital, La Charité.

He determined to do what he could to provide a remedy, and, as was his wont, "without money and without noise" he set to work. In the north of Berlin, at quite a distance from the railroad stations, he hired a small house on a street then called "The Lost Way"—a street well named, as it was unlighted and unpaved, and so poorly kept that when the queen came to visit the home, shortly after it was opened, her carriage, in spite of the strong horses, got stuck in the mud.

By the aid of some ladies in the city the home was furnished with twelve beds, three deaconesses were put in charge, and after perplexing difficulties the authorization to open a registry for servants was obtained. The idea at first met with

derision. It was said that such an institution was rightly located on "The Lost Way," for no one would ever come to it. But they came. In two years the number of beds increased to twenty, and the same year Fliedner purchased the entire court in which the house stood, containing five houses and a fine garden. Queen Elizabeth of Prussia became the patroness of the institution, and it grew in favor with the people. A training-school was added in which the girls were taught to wash, iron, cook, and sew, and also to work in the garden and to care for cows, the last two branches of domestic service being required of servant-girls in Germany. Later an infant school was added in which nursery girls were practiced in taking charge of children, a pleasant, helpful demeanor being made one of the requisites. Over two hundred children, mostly coming from the poorest and gloomiest homes, are in daily attendance. About three hundred and fifty more attend the girls' school for children of the working classes. In the home and training-school for servants about eight hundred girls are received annually, and sixteen thousand have been sheltered and taught during the years it has been open. They readily secure situations, over two thousand applications being annually received for the servants of the Marthashof. They remain in

friendly relation to the home, receive good counsel and advice, and are encouraged to spend their free Sundays there.

The Marthashof has had a beneficent influence over the moral and spiritual welfare of servants throughout Germany. In nearly all the cities similar homes are now established, while in the larger cities Sunday associations are formed to provide suitable places of meeting for the entertainment and instruction of those who are free Sunday afternoons and evenings. So far as I am aware, no similar work has been attempted for servant-girls in the United States. It is true that training-schools exist, but not with religious supervision, and with the moral and religious instruction of the inmates made a prominent feature. The Marthashof offers us a lesson well worth our learning.

The deaconess house, "Bethanien," in Berlin, was founded by King Frederick William IV., who as the Crown Prince took a warm interest in Fliedner's undertakings.\* It still remains under the protection

\* *Life of Pastor Fliedner*, translated by C. Winckworth, London, 1867, p. 133. "The favor of the great, especially the condescending kindness of our late Sovereign, he took as a gift from the King of kings, who allowed his own work to be thus promoted. He strenuously avoided all personal distinction, and never wore the order which had been sent him; 'for a servant of the Church,' he said, 'there should be but one order—the Cross of the Lord.'"

of the emperor, and is one of the most important mother-houses. Over three thousand patients are annually admitted to the hospital connected with the house, and five hundred children are treated at a dispensary devoted solely to cases of diphtheria. Outside of the city it has thirty-three stations. There are also the Lazarus Hospital and Deaconess Home, the Paul Gerhardt Deaconess Home, provided for parish deaconesses, and the Elizabeth Hospital and Home, which started independently but is now allied to Kaiserswerth.

The deaconess house in Neudettelsau stands in closest union with the Lutheran Church. The sisters are mostly from the higher ranks of society, and intellectual training is made prominent. Certain liturgical forms are used, and in the main deaconesses are employed in preparing ecclesiastical vestments and embroideries for church adornment.

In marked contrast to Dettelsau is the deaconess house at Berne. It is almost a private institution, having only slight connection with the State Church. It owes its origin to Sophie Wurdemberger, a member of one of the old patrician families of Berne. A visit to England made her acquainted with Elizabeth Fry, with the usual beneficent result of increased interest and activity

in good works. On her return to Berne she gained the support of a society of women, and through their aid secured a hospital and deaconess home. It is now fourth in number among the largest mother-houses, has two hundred and ninety-seven deaconesses, five affiliated houses, and forty-five different fields of work.

The oldest mother-house in Switzerland is at St. Loup, not far from Lausanne, standing on one of the beautiful heights of that picturesque region. It was founded by Pastor Germond in 1841, through the direct influence of the work at Kaiserswerth. There are now seventy-three deaconesses, mostly acting as nurses either in private homes or public institutions.\*

There is also a large institution at Riehen near Basel, which sends out two hundred deaconesses. The greater number are of the peasant class, and are nearly all employed as nurses. The home at Zurich was at first a daughter-house of Riehen, but is now an independent institution with twenty-seven stations. In Austria there is a mother-house at Gallneukirchen from which sisters are sent forth, four of them working in as many Vienna parishes. The story of deaconess work in Austria is an interesting one, and is told by Miss Williams in a recent

\* *Der Armen und Kranken Freund*, August, 1888.

number of *The Churchman*, from which the following extracts are taken :

“The Protestants of Gallneukirchen were first formed into an independent parish in the year 1872, and it is the only one lying between the Danube and the Bohemian frontier. It is very widely extended, but numbers only three hundred and eighteen souls, and is so poor that with the greatest effort it can raise only four hundred florins a year (about one hundred and sixty dollars) for church and school. With the aid of those interested in the work a parish-house has been secured, where the pastor and his wife reside, and in which is the deaconess asylum for the aged, infirm, and insane of all classes. It has not as yet been possible to clear off the debt on the purchase. Still the sisters strive in every way to enlarge their usefulness, so that they now possess extensive buildings and farms—only partly paid for, it is true—wherein to house the many afflicted who apply to them for aid. In one building, standing alone on a hill, they purpose to collect the insane patients, and suitable additions are now being made to insure their safety and comfort. In another village, two hours’ drive from here, is their school, where more than sixty boys and girls are taught, fed, and clothed, in most cases gratuitously, at worst at a nominal charge.”

“The sisters are bright and cheerful, and keep their various dwellings so exquisitely neat and clean, with their white-washed walls adorned with Scripture texts and pictures. No work, however menial, is beneath them. I have myself seen one scrubbing the stairs, and in turns they sleep on a hard straw bed on the floor, ready to rise in the night as often as a bell summons them to the aid of a suffering invalid or a refractory lunatic.”

There are a few institutions that exist independently of those represented at the Kaiserswerth General Conference. They stand alone for various reasons; perhaps they have not met the conditions required of those which belong to the association. Any house whose administration rests exclusively either in the hands of a man or a woman is excluded from the Conference. In every mother-house there represented the administrative head is twofold, consisting of a gentleman, who, with rare exceptions, is a clergyman, and a lady who is a deaconess. The Kaiserswerth authorities regard this joint management as an indispensable condition.

The rector, as he is usually called, cares for the intellectual and spiritual instruction of the probationers, conducts public services in the chapel, and issues the publications and reports of the house.

The oberin, or house-mother, is the direct head

of the sisters. She is responsible for the interior management, regulates the duties of the sisters, and gives practical instruction. The two are jointly responsible for the acceptance and dismissal of probationers, for the assignment of the sisters to different fields of labor, and the kind of labor required. Every mother-house has its own peculiarities. The personal characteristics of those who conduct it are naturally impressed upon the house.

Then, too, the influence of environment is to be reckoned with. The house may be located in a large city or in a small one; in the country or in towns. It may be under the influence of a State Church, as in Germany, or of Christians of all Churches, as at Mildmay. It will share the characteristics of the race of people from which come its workers. Doubtless in the Methodist Episcopal Church in America the deaconesses that eventually become recognized as set apart to special Christian service, through the training that is provided for them, will be women who are peculiarly adapted to the needs of that Church, with all the distinguishing American traits that will prepare them to understand the people whom they are to serve, and that will give them access to the hearts of this people.

If the deaconess cause should gain favor with us as it has in Europe, and should the deaconesses

become as established in the social life of the people as they are there, the effective agencies will be largely increased that are to deal with the questions that come to the front whenever, as in great cities, large numbers of people are massed together.

Deaconess institutions now exist in Switzerland, France, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Austria, England, and Germany, while the countries in which these homes have stations are literally too numerous to mention. Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, the countries of Northern Africa, and of Asia Minor, as well as isolated mission stations throughout the entire world are now served by deaconesses.

If there were ten times the number of sisters, places could be at once found for them. It is instructive on this point to read what Pastor Disselhoff says\* in the account he gives of the various demands made upon him, which he has been unable to meet. One of the letters he quotes was from an English missionary on the Cameron River. "Send us deaconesses for our hospital," he says. "It was built for European sailors, especially Germans. We hope and trust to overcome the superstitions of the natives, and that they too, may come to be healed." But there were no sisters to send.

\* *Denkschrift zur Jubelfeier*, pp. 248, 249.

A similar call came from Shanghai, but as it was impossible to return a favorable answer, although the hospital was a Protestant institution, the Sisters of Mercy were invited in, and given control. From 1870 up to 1886 over two hundred and twenty-seven places at widely remote distances, such as Madras, New Orleans, Port Said, Rio de Janeiro, and elsewhere, sent most urgent appeals for Kaiserswerth deaconesses to be assigned them, but invariably the same answer must be returned: "There are none to send." Disselhoff closes by saying, "How many open doors has God given! Whose fault is it that they remain closed?"

## CHAPTER VIII.

## DEACONESSES IN GERMAN METHODISM.

THE good results of the work of deaconesses in the other Protestant bodies of Germany doubtless had their influence upon German Methodism. As far back as 1868 in Wurtemberg, and later in Frankfort, some preachers introduced parish deaconesses for the care of the sick; but well-directed efforts, and unity in management, were lacking.

The existing association was started July 8, 1874, under the title of "Bethanienverein," or the Bethany Society, through the efforts of several members of the German Conference, among whom were Rev. G. Weiss, who, with two deaconesses, initiated the work in Bremen, Rev. Frederick Eilers, the present inspector, and Rev. G. Hausser, who for several years was president of the board of direction, and now resides in America.\* A further number of ministers showed themselves inclined to stand by the society, both by their influence and through contributions taken in their churches, so that in

\* *Jahresbericht des Bethanienvereins*, 1884, Bremen.

1876 the first trained deaconesses were set at work in the city of Frankfort.

As has been said,\* the little institution in its early days had to pass through a series of critical experiences, as a young child has to encounter the series of childhood diseases that assail it; but it outlived them all, and is now enjoying a vigorous youth. It was but another illustration of the truth that all beginnings are difficult, and that successful experience has to be bought by overcoming hinderances and obstacles.

To-day there is no branch of German Methodism more successfully and substantially incorporated into the Church life than the deaconess society, and none that wins greater favor among those outside of denominational lines.

The first printed report was issued in October, 1884. In this the inspector says: "Our society is now in three cities, Frankfort, Hamburg, and Berlin, and our sisters are not able to meet all the demands upon them for service." At that time there were thirteen deaconesses and twenty probationers. The last report, issued in July, 1888, shows an increase in numbers both of deaconesses and their stations. There are now eighty-nine deaconesses,

\* *Der Christliche Apologete*, article by Rev. G. Hausser, September 20, 1888.

eleven of whom are probationers, and there are stations in five places. Besides the ones previously mentioned in Germany, two additional stations have been started in Switzerland: one in Zürich, and one in St. Gall.

Nearly all the Methodist German deaconesses are engaged in caring for the sick; it is only recently that attempts have been made in some other directions of charitable endeavor. In the last report we are told that at Frankfort steps have been taken to reform fallen women. One of the sisters seems to be especially endowed with tact and ability for this difficult work. She has already induced twenty-two of these girls to enter the asylum at Sachsenhausen. The police authorities and city magistrates have given this same sister access to the women prisoners, which is a decided favor, coming from German officials. Besides her work in this particular, she has devoted her remaining time to the care of the poor and the sick.

Many deaconesses were called upon to go out as nurses in private families, and, in order to obtain room to accommodate the added number these services required, it has been necessary to rent an additional house. There are two clinics in connection with the institution; one for those suffering from nose, throat, or lung diseases, the other for dis-

eases of women. In both, the hours of consultation are free, and attract numerous visitors. Two hundred and forty-six people were received in the hospital last year, and were cared for in four thousand one hundred and fifty days of nursing. Spiritual results are also anticipated from the seed of God's word sown in the hearts of the sick through daily prayer and Sunday services.

The house at Frankfort is too small for its increasing needs, and a permanent home of more ample dimensions is greatly to be desired.

In Hamburg the house has been enlarged, and there is now room for thirty-five sisters; yet still there are more demands made than can be met. In one month ninety requests were handed in for the aid of the deaconesses. The city authorities offered them a large lot of land at a very moderate sum, which is at present used as a garden, and adds much to the enjoyment of the home.

On the 4th of March, 1888, occurred the anniversary of the founding of the Hamburg house, at which time six sisters were set apart to their life calling by a service of consecration. As in all places where our deaconesses are employed, so also in Hamburg their influence is felt in the increase of religious life among the families they serve.

In Berlin, again, there is an imperative call for

enlarged house accommodations, and more sisters are needed to meet the requests for help that are constantly coming to them. As the report expresses it, "Something must happen!"\* After six years of activity in Berlin the deaconesses find themselves well appreciated, and with a broad field of labor. The city authorities gave them permission to take a house collection during the months of February and March. One of the German ministers said, "This is an unusual favor, only granted in exceptional cases, as when a village is swept away, or there is an inundation, or a failure of harvests." This collection was no easy task. In the depth of winter, in rigorous cold and snow the sisters had to climb weary flights of stairs, in houses four and five stories high, arranged in flats; to knock at many doors, often meeting with but slight success or a positive refusal; yet daily they went with fresh courage to their work, encouraged by the thought that they were toiling not for themselves, but to serve the needy, "for Jesus' sake." The collection resulted in obtaining nearly twenty thousand marks, to which has been added the loan of a larger sum at a small rate of interest, so that there is good prospect of soon obtaining a permanent home as the property of the deaconess society.

\* *Jahresbericht*, 1888, page 8.

St. Gall is one of the newer stations, but from the beginning it has been a work of promise. In this old center of missionary operations, where Irish missionaries founded one of the most famous monasteries of mediæval times, is now to be erected a hospital under the care of Methodist deaconesses, who have already begun to collect means for this purpose. In Scheffel's famous story of *Ekkhard* the only way in which the Duchess Hadwig could enter the monastery of St. Gall (as there was a law that no woman should set her foot upon the threshold) was by the ingenious device of a young monk, who lifted her over in his arms. These peaceful women of Methodism are finding no obstacle now as did Hadwig of old; they do not need even figuratively to be lifted over the entering threshold; they are gladly welcomed, and are introducing a new element into the life of the old city.

In Zürich seven deaconesses are at work under the protection, and with the sympathetic co-operation, of the pastor and the church. I saw something of the deaconesses and their duties in this place. The inspector, Rev. Fr. Eilers, came with the first deaconesses and introduced them to their new field when I was a resident of the city. On Sunday morning he occupied the pulpit, preaching from Rom. xvi, 1, commending the deaconesses to the

kindness and helpful aid of the members of the church. I used often to see Sister Myrtha, who was the head sister, hastening hither and thither on her errands of mercy. In her plain black dress and round shoulder-cape to match, and broad white collar and white cap, she was a pleasant and attractive figure. She was always happy and contented, ready to answer the many questions with which I plied her in my desire to look through the eyes of a deaconess, and to obtain her views of the office to which she belonged. She had a great love for her work, and believed that she was doing service for Christ in a true missionary field. Her simple uniform was a distinguishing mark that insured her respect and attention wherever she went, and she regarded it as a garb of honor that marked her as belonging to the daughters of the great King. You could not call such a life an austere or unnatural one. It was too thoroughly filled with thoughts of love to others to be either morbid or introspective. I obtained my first favorable impressions of the usefulness of deaconesses and their importance to the Church from the cheerful, contented labors of Sister Myrtha and her associates among the poor and sick of Zürich—quiet women, of no particular prominence in the social world, and not learned or accomplished; "*nur einfache Mädchen*" (only simple maidens,

quiet, ordinary women, as we might translate Sister Myrtha's own phrase), but living "not to be ministered unto, but to minister," commending their creed by their deeds, and winning sympathy by the loving, self-denying spirit that they manifest.

During the last year a house of rest has been opened similar to the house Salem at Kaiserswerth. This is called by the beautiful name "*Gottestreue*," or "God's Fidelity." The report says that they have named it God's Fidelity in recollection of this: "That the Lord has so faithfully led us and has cared for us in all storms which, especially at the beginning of the work, threatened to overwhelm it, has watched over us and upheld us, and has so richly blessed us." The acquisition of this house came through the work of the sisters. One of them was caring for an aged widow, whose sympathies were so won that she offered to give her property, amounting to about ten thousand marks, to the deaconess society, asking only that she be cared for for the remainder of her life. This sum enabled the house to be built, and last summer it was opened for use. It lies upon a mountain, has a pleasant outlook to the south, and a beautiful view over the valley of the Main and off to the distant forests. Near at hand is a grove of chestnut trees, and farther removed are extensive pine forests with

pleasant walks. The house is in the charge of one of the older sisters.

The regulations touching the training and duties of the sisters are similar to those of Kaiserswerth. Two years of probation are required, part of which is devoted to practical work under the superintendence of an older deaconess. The rules of daily life are much the same; a quiet half hour of prayer and meditation is strongly urged, and the same freedom in control of personal property and withdrawal from the office exists. It is pleasant to record that our deaconesses have secured to themselves such good report for their usefulness that the city officials in Germany accord to them the free use of steamboats and street-cars; and the Prussian government does the same for roads that are under State control.

The Bethany Society of the German Methodists is self-supporting and is independent of the Conference, save only that the board of direction is composed of Methodist preachers chosen by the Conference. Each of the homes at the five stations has also its board of control, made up of the inspector, the pastor in charge, and the head sister. The inspector is a member of the Conference, but has no appointment, as his whole time is devoted to the duty of superintendence. Last year the society took the further step of deciding that henceforth the deaconesses

should not be sent, as heretofore, to outside hospitals or other institutions to complete their training, but should be given the advantages they require at our own homes. Owing to this decision only six probationers can be received for the coming year, and others who have made application to enter must wait their turn.

The German Methodist Church, the daughter of American Methodism, anticipated the parent Church in utilizing the womanly gifts and services of deaconesses as members of her aggressive forces, and furnished it a very helpful and stimulating example.

## CHAPTER IX.

## DEACONESSES IN PARIS.

WHEN in Paris we visited the deaconess establishment on the Rue de Reuilly, and had the pleasure, ever to be remembered, of seeing the institution in all its workings under the guidance of Mademoiselle Sara Monod, the daughter of Adolphe Monod; members of a family that have been Protestants of the Protestants in the annals of France. We examined with some degree of thoroughness the different departments, and saw them in the busy working hours, when the full activities of the great establishment were in exercise.

In addition to the information and reports then secured I am under further obligation to Mademoiselle Monod for other material lately received, among which is a pamphlet entitled *Une Visite à la Maison de Diaconesses*, by Madame W. Monod, "the worthy daughter of one of the founders, and the worthy wife of one of the present chaplains of the institution." I have translated freely from this in the following pages, as it is pervaded by a tone

of intimate knowledge, and nothing can take the place of the long years of close personal relation that make this little book so fresh and attractive in its recital.

The institution is situated on the outskirts of the Faubourg St. Antoine, upon an elevation, where the view in one direction is limited by Mont St. Geneviève, and on the other embraces a large territory intersected by the windings of the Seine and by lines of railroad. The space is thickly dotted by the high chimneys of manufactories and massive constructions of various forms. A great pile of buildings which fronts upon the street forms one of the sides of the court within; two long wings extend at right angles, which seem to have been built at different intervals of time. That on the right ends with the penitentiary, or house of correction; the left wing terminates more modestly at the garden entrance; while farther, at the extreme portion of the grounds, still to the left, rises the hospital, standing apart from the rest. The whole establishment, including the gardens, has an extent of fifty-five hundred square meters.

In the little room at the entrance, where the *concierge* is usually found in these French houses, sits one of the sisters, surrounded by bell-cords and tubes and bells which are constantly in use, bring-

ing messages to and fro in all directions. A sister is always on duty, morning, afternoon, and at night when it is necessary, responding with discreet politeness to the inquiries made. Adjoining are the little reception rooms, where comers and goers are met, and the consulting-room of the distinguished oculist, who twice a week gives gratuitously his valuable services. Then come the office and reception-room of the chaplain of the house, followed by the little "prophet's chamber," occupied by the former directress when she returns upon visits which her age and poor health render only too infrequent.

What the French call the "*économat*," or business office, next demands our attention. A dozen registers admirably kept, portfolios of all kinds, and numberless papers are arranged upon different shelves. The sister in charge notes in her journal every entrance and every departure, and all the journeys and leaves of absence of the sisters. In a safe she has the necessary money for current expenses, the rest being deposited in the bank. She provides the stores, examines the accounts of the pharmacy and the kitchen, pays the salaried employees, gives or sends to each deaconess the modest sum allowed her for personal needs, and transacts the daily business of the house. She must also every month

hand in three reports—one to the Prefect of Police, another to the Minister of the Interior, and the third to the Minister of Finance, giving detailed statistics concerning the age, occupation, and progress of her *protégés*. “How many know how to read? How many to read and write? How many to read, write, and cipher? What progress has been made since the last report?” These are some of the questions she has to answer; and, meanwhile, if a crowd of little children come in, she turns from her writing and calculations and plays with them as if she had nothing else to do.

Let us see where these children come from. Here is the “Salle d’Asile,” as it is called, with its benches and chairs for the little ones, maps and historical pictures suspended upon the walls, slates and globes, and all the belongings of a school-room. The sister who has directed this school for thirty-five years has seen sons and daughters succeed fathers and mothers. More than nineteen hundred children have passed through her hands. With what pride she showed us the copy-books, and pointed out some particularly good compositions. Hers was no perfunctory task; a mother could not have displayed greater interest in her children. The number of pupils varies from one hundred and ten to one hundred and thirty, a little

less than half of them being Catholics. All kinds of primary instruction are given, including gymnastics, singing, and marching. Bible stories hold an important place in this elementary teaching, even those which are sometimes considered to be beyond the reach of children; for there is nothing in any other book to take their place. It is useless to add that not only lessons are given, but shoes, aprons, and garments of all kinds, some of the little ones being clothed from head to foot by the institution. Every day soup is distributed, ostensibly to the poor and the ill-nourished, but practically partaken of by all. Even during the siege of Paris the soup continued to appear. It gradually became less substantial, it is true, but still it was soup.

From four to six o'clock the mothers and older sisters and brothers, or perhaps some old lady who has been engaged to have the care of several children, come to take the little ones home. The influence of these children is felt beyond the school-room; it is a visible, constant force. Such a little girl has persuaded her grandmother not to work on Sundays. Another asks for a book that her father can read aloud to the family. And similar instances could be multiplied; they are always to be obtained where loving Christian hearts are interested in

children, and when they remember that fine saying of Jacqueline Pascal; "*Parler à Dieu des petites âmes plus qu' aux petites âmes de Dieu.*" \*

There used formerly to be attached to this a "*Crèche*," where a mother could bring her babe when she went to work in the morning, and could come for it at night. But the government has now started a day-home for this district of the city, so this part of the work of the deaconesses has been discontinued.

Passing by the vegetable garden, which is also a pleasure garden for the sick and infirm, we come to the hospital. This was opened in September, 1873, and can accommodate sixty to seventy patients. There are two large wards for women, one for children, a dormitory for aged women, and rooms with one, two, and three beds. All are perfectly heated, lighted, and ventilated. The medical inspector visits the house every month, and gives it due praise for meeting every condition of modern medical science.

A committee of ladies takes the hospital as an especial object of its care. They have organized a system of patronage, by which beds are furnished poor patients at a low rate, in some cases gratu-

\* Speak to God about the little ones, rather than to the little souls of God.

itously. Fifteen subscribers give each two francs, or forty cents, a month; the sick man or his patron pays a franc a day, to which the Deaconess Home adds also a franc daily. These three francs represent the bare expenses of a hospital bed. Of course, sixty cents a day is far from meeting the entire cost of rent, food, baths, medicine, and service; but those patients who have been accustomed to a certain degree of comfort in life, when paying three francs, are freed from the painful impression of receiving charity.

Many of the patients, when sent forth from the hospital, are directed to the Convalescents' Home, at Passy. This is an inestimable benefit; what could this poor servant do, whose strength is not yet sufficient to undertake fatiguing labor? Or this mother of a family, who would certainly fall ill again if obliged to resume the heavy burden of housekeeping, accompanied by privations and wearing economies, were it not for the home at Passy? Such homes of rest and convalescence are a necessity in connection with every well-equipped deaconess institution. The pharmacy is in the charge of a deaconess trained especially for her duties. A deaconess director, several nurse deaconesses and probationers, with one or two aged women, constitute the working force of the hos-

pital outside of the physicians. So many denominational hospitals are now arising in America that the arrangement of hospitals under the care of deaconesses in Germany, France, and England, cannot fail to have interest for us.

There are no nurses like the deaconesses. Other nurses, however well prepared in the best of training-schools, do not have the same high motive that lifts the service on the plane of religious duty, where the question of self-interest is wholly lost sight of. It was the perception of this truth that led the authorities of the German Hospital in Philadelphia to send to Germany for deaconesses as nurses, and that has brought about the erection of the magnificent Mary J. Drexel Home for Deaconesses.

But let us return to Paris and our examination of the home on the Rue de Reuilly. Leaving the hospital, and turning in the opposite direction from that to which we came, we are at the house of correction. Bars of iron before the windows apprise us of the character of the building. There are two divisions of inmates; the one in which the discipline is more rigid is called the *retenue*. Those placed here are generally between fourteen and twenty-one years of age, although occasionally a child of precocious depravity is met with, who has

to be separated from those under less restriction even at ten years of age. The *disciplinaire* is the division of milder restraint. The twenty-five or twenty-six places in each of the two divisions are ordinarily applied for in advance. Pastor Louis Valette said: "We shall not have room enough until we have too much room."

There are three classes of inmates: those who are put here by their parents for insubordination or other grave faults; those who are sent here by order of a judge of the court for a limited period, and those who are recognized guilty of a misdemeanor, but are acquitted on account of their age, and must remain a certain time, sometimes until they have attained their majority, in houses of correction and education.

The Minister of the Interior pays twelve cents a day for pupils of the third class; the Prefect of Police four hundred dollars a year for those of the second class, whatever their number, only the establishment is bound to receive them at any time and at any hour.

There is a system of rewards, to promote good behavior, and those who profit by it can accumulate a small sum of money, sometimes amounting to sixteen or eighteen dollars, to have when they go out from here. In other cases there is a large in-

debtedness on the opposite side, which can never be collected.

The days are occupied in household work, washing, ironing, and sewing, and two hours of schooling. When the nature of the work will permit, instructive books are read aloud, or the deaconesses give pleasant talks on different subjects that will keep the thoughts of the workers busy, and give them helpful ideas to store away in their minds. As we went about in the sewing-classes, we noticed that the time was invariably utilized in some way that was profitable to the girls. Most of them are pitifully ignorant of even the commonest knowledge demanded in life. There are separate court-yards for the recreations of the two divisions. The girls of the *disciplinaire* are sometimes taken outside the institution for walks; those of the *retenuë*, never. The work in this last division is especially difficult, and requires the utmost patience and love. These poor girls have to be watched carefully, and kept isolated from one another. Some are greatly influenced by the atmosphere of the place, the gentle, firm kindness of the sisters, and the restriction they receive. Others go out to take up again the old life of immorality, and are dragged away into the meshes of sin, finding their place, after brief delay, in the wards of a hospital, or sometimes a suicide's grave.

It is a singular fact that the numerical appreciation of those influenced by this school of reform is precisely the same as that given in the report of the similar work at Kaiserswerth, although the two reports have no connection with one another, and one in no wise supposes the other. Thirty-three years ago one of the founders of the institution, Pastor Valette, said in answer to a question as to the amount of good accomplished, "Sixteen years ago this question came to my ears, and I stated as a principle that one cannot and ought not to answer it precisely and absolutely, because no one but God can give an appreciation of its real value. However, out of curiosity, I set myself at work to gather and register some results; and, matured by the experience of six years, I offer them, such as they are: One third of the moral results may be considered excellent; another third as offering good guarantees, and a final third has no value. It seems to me, however, as I am sure it will seem to you, that here is cause for rejoicing. Here is something for which to praise the Lord, and to encourage those who administer our affairs. For, I ask of the merchants who listen to me, if any one were to offer you thirty-three and one third per cent. assured, with the hope of a dividend, would you refuse the investment?"

In 1871 an occurrence took place worthy of being recorded. On April 13, at ten o'clock in the evening, emissaries of the Commune entered the house, revolvers in hand. Armed men were posted at all the entrances. The deaconesses were summoned to one of the parlors, and held prisoners until three o'clock the following morning. Meanwhile an investigation took place among the girls in the penitentiary, as they would be the most likely of any of the inmates of the house to have complaints. The officers of the Commune interrogated them closely. Their answers were favorable beyond all expectation. "Are you happy here?" "Oh, yes, very happy." "What have you done deserving punishment?" "Nothing that we need talk to you about." "How are you punished here?" "The sisters don't punish us; they advise us what to do, and warn us." "Now," said the chief to one, "just tell me quietly, no one else need hear; if you are not contented I will take you away with me." "What a coward you are," she answered, quite scornfully. Not one of them thought of escaping. All this time the prison wagon had been waiting in the street, and would have been filled with deaconesses had the slightest cause of complaint been found; but it went away empty. Later the sisters had occasion to go to the head-quarters of the

Commune in their ward, and they met with polite consideration. This is not the only experience of the troubled political life of the great city that the deaconesses have had. The Faubourg St. Antoine has been noted ever since the time of the Fronde as being the haunt of all that is turbulent and revolutionary. In February 1848, a great barricade was thrown across the Rue de Reuilly, men, women, and children hurrying with bricks and stones to help in building it. Then came the moment of storm and attack, and forty-two men lay dead in the street. Some of the wounded were received by the sisters, crowded as they were with the children whom the mothers had brought for safety. Meanwhile the deaconesses went about unmolested, bought food and medicine, hunted friends and relatives for the sick, and through all that period of excitement and strife kept up their ministrations of mercy.

There is no distinct home for women who are left alone and desire Christian surroundings, as is the case in several German institutions, but about sixty such ladies are received as boarders in the Paris home. Frequently also the hospitality of the house is enjoyed by young girls who come to Paris alone to earn a livelihood, or who have to stop here for some hours on their way to another place; a

great advantage for inexperienced young women, unversed in the ways of a city, who find themselves alone in the great world for the first time.

The preparatory school for deaconesses is on the first floor, below the rooms of the sisters. For two years the candidates are under the instruction of superior sisters. They are received into the house gratuitously, and accept its regulations while they remain. They have to pass through all practical duties of house-work, and care of the sick and children. They also pursue practical and theoretical courses in hygiene, and receive lessons in singing and pedagogics. The chaplains of the institution give them courses of religious instruction, and lectures on Church history. Some (the larger number) need very elementary lessons; others come with a good education. Each is directed according to her education and experience. In fact, all classes are represented among the deaconesses; servants, teachers, ladies, and shepherdesses. They come from different parts of France, but in larger numbers from the South.

Deaconesses are constantly in demand to go out in the city as nurses in private families. Such requests often meet with refusals, because sisters cannot be spared for such duties. Their work is limited by the smallness of their numbers. The last

report gives sixty deaconesses attached to the Home on the Rue de Reuilly.

The work is upon sterile soil as compared to Germany. The Protestants of France are in a small minority, surrounded by an overwhelming majority of Catholics; while in the beginning of the work some influential members of the Protestant faith, having an inadequate comprehension of the good in the movement, and a misconception of its plans, exerted a powerful influence that for awhile told adversely to the cause. The home has now passed beyond the stage when it can be affected by adverse criticisms; and it to-day not only has the approbation of Christians, but also of those who regard it solely from the point of view of philanthropy.\*

There are but two parish deaconesses who are at work in Belleville and Ste. Marie. The directors of the institution would be glad to increase the number, as they regard the work of the sisters under the direction of the city pastors as that which presents the widest opportunities for doing good, while it perpetuates those aspects of the deaconess work which most closely resemble those of the early Church. But Calvin's reply from Geneva to the Church of France is theirs. When petitioned

\* See a sympathetic study of the work by Maxime du Camp, a member of the French Academy, in his book *Paris Bienfaisant*.

to send more pastors over the boundary into France he replied, "Send us wood and we will send you arrows." So the want of deaconesses is a continual hinderance to the furtherance of the cause, both in the city and the provinces.

The prisons for women in France are under the supervision of women, save the office of chief director, which is filled by a man. The great majority of the prisoners in France being Catholics, the number of Sisters of Charity is naturally much larger than the number of deaconesses employed. At the prison of Clermont four of the Paris deaconesses are kept constantly at work among the prisoners.

In connection with the old prison of St. Lazare, the women's prison of Paris, the deaconesses have a mission especially concerned with caring for discharged female convicts. As was the case at Kaiserswerth, this, in its initiation, is closely connected with the saintly life of Elizabeth Fry. When she came to Paris, in 1835, a drawing-room meeting was held at the residence of the Duchess de Broglie, in which she told of her efforts to effect a reform in prisons in England. None of the ladies of rank and wealth who heard her were stirred to greater effort than was demanded by the keen interest with which they listened to her words; but a quiet governess was present, Mademoiselle Dumas, and with her

the seeds of truth fell into prepared ground. She determined to attempt for her own country a portion of the work Mrs. Fry had accomplished for England. Obtaining permission from the authorities to visit the prison of St. Lazare, she went daily to the prisoners shut up in the rooms of this great building, formerly the monastery of St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Sisters of Charity. After the deaconess home was established, some deaconesses were set apart to aid Mademoiselle Dumas in her work. All these years the mission has continued, not interrupted even during the dark days of the Commune. A committee of ladies aids in providing shelter and work for the prisoners when they are discharged. The great publishing house of Hachette & Co., although the head of the firm is a Catholic, provides employment in folding paper for books.

Through the kind offices of Mademoiselle Monod we called on Mademoiselle Dumas. She is now an extremely aged woman; but her interest in the Christian reformation of prisoners of her sex is as keen as it was over fifty years ago, when her labors began. The registers of many years stand by her desk, and from these we were shown how the records of the mission are kept, and in what way the lives of those assisted are watched and followed for

years. Narratives of individual reformation were related to us, and through the long correspondence of many years she was enabled to tell us of those who had turned to a better life and held to it permanently. As she talked her eyes brightened, the tones of her voice became stronger and clearer, her manner more vivacious, and the years seemed to slip from her. Finally, as if overcome by the memories that the long retrospect had brought to her, and thrilled by the recollections of all this work meant to her, she ended by exclaiming, "O, my dear St. Lazare!" I looked at her astonished. I had just come from the walls of the gloomy prison, and the place had chilled me with horror as I walked through its corridors, and read the stories of shame and guilt in the faces of its inmates; most hopeless looking faces, belonging to little children of ten and twelve up to hardened and prematurely aged women of fifty and sixty. I could not comprehend a term of endearment applied to such a place. But a moment's consideration led me to see that this aged saint had there fought and won the best of her life's battles, and the place remains glorified in her thoughts by most hallowed and Christ-like memories.

Now that Mademoiselle Dumas is kept to her room, the deaconesses still come to her weekly,

make their reports, and keep up the proper entries in her books.

A recent letter from Mademoiselle Monod says: "Mademoiselle Dumas still lives, having completed her ninety-sixth year the 26th of last December (1888). Only yesterday our prison committee met at her house, she acting as presiding officer."

The life of this quiet woman is but little known outside the circle of her immediate influence, but it has been more valuable to her country than that of many a general or statesman who has been ranked among the famous of the earth.

The deaconess home has also branches of work in different parts of France. These include nine hospitals, two homes for the aged and infirm, four orphanages, two work-rooms for young girls, and a convalescents' home. The house has established close connection with the deaconess houses at St. Loup in French Switzerland, and with Strasburg. The ties of a common language and former memories are strong, and these are the homes most akin to the Paris home.

The ordinary expenses of the Paris deaconess home are about thirty thousand dollars a year. Nearly seven thousand dollars are collected annually by subscriptions, the remaining sum being made up of returns arising from service.

The institution was founded in 1841 by Rev. Antoine Vermeil, a distinguished minister of the Reformed Church, aided by a devout and worthy minister of the Lutheran Church, Rev. Louis Valette. It has grown up under the joint and harmonious patronage of these two State Churches.

A later deaconess home, entirely devoted to training and employing parish deaconesses, was started in 1874, under the sole control of the Lutheran Church. Some pastors secured the co-operation of a few young Christian women to consecrate a portion of their strength and time to the service of the Church. From this beginning sprang the work that exists to-day. The home is located in the Rue de Bridaine. There are now sixteen deaconesses, six of whom are probationers. Five of them are located in different parishes in Paris, usually at a long distance from the central house. Each goes forth early in the morning to her parish, where is a room of some kind serving as a center to the work. Materials used in nursing and medicines are stored here, and there is an office for the physician, who comes at stated periods to give free consultation. From the district house the deaconess goes in all directions and in all weather to look up families which have fallen away from the Church, to gather in children for the Sunday-school, to visit the sick, and to

collect garments and money from the rich in order to distribute them among the poor. Such are some of their duties. Each sister is under the direction of a pastor, and is aided by his advice, while still remaining a member of the community to which she belongs.

In both of the deaconess houses of Paris, as in the German houses, a special service sets apart those sisters who have passed their period of probation, and have been received into full acceptance. As one of the deaconess reports beautifully says: "When Christ calls the soul to a special vocation he gives it special grace, and those who consecrate themselves to him he consecrates to their task by the strength of his Spirit. So in conformity with the usages of the primitive Church we give consecration to our sisters by the laying on of hands. The consecration is not a sacramental act, conferring a particular character, greater sanctity, or special powers; neither is it simply a ceremony or pious formality. It is a real and efficacious benediction, which the Saviour accords to our sisters to consecrate them to their holy work, as he accorded it to the deacons who received the imposition of the apostles' hands."

The good that can be accomplished by deaconesses working together with ministers in behalf of

the manifold interests of the Church is incalculable. The most faithful pastor can make only short and unsatisfactory visits. Many sorrows which he overlooks the deaconess can discern and assuage. She knows best how to reach the heart of a sorrowing woman, to care for her needs, to discern her wants, and to bring solace to the sorrowing and succor to the needy. Deaconesses who have been specially trained for service cannot be spared now that the world has learned to know of them. For "charity cannot take the place of experience, nor good-will replace knowledge;" and trained Christian service is the highest of all service.

The old spirit of the Huguenots has not died out of France, and with that ready susceptibility to noble ideas which is a marked characteristic of the French character, we can expect to see the deaconess cause thrive and prosper as it has done in other lands.

## CHAPTER X.

## DEACONESSES IN ENGLAND.

TO learn the first facts about deaconesses in England, we must go back to the early days of the Puritans. In 1576, under Queen Elizabeth, about sixty non-conformist ministers of the eastern counties assembled to make regulations concerning Church constitution and discipline, and one of them was as follows: "Touching deacons of both sorts, namely, both men and women, the Church should be admonished what is required by the apostle, that they are not to choose men by custom or course, or for their riches, but for their faith, zeal, and integrity; and that the Church is to pray in the meantime to be so directed that they may choose them that are meet. Let the names of those that are thus chosen be published the next Lord's Day, and after that their duties to the Church, and the Church's duty toward them. Then let them be received into their office with the general prayers of the whole Church." \*

\* Daniel Neal's *History of the Puritans*, London, 1703, vol. i, pp. 344-346.

There are other references in the works of the early Puritans that indicate that the office of deaconess was as well known and recognized as were the other offices that were named in accordance with the usages of the primitive Church.

In the early part of the seventeenth century it still survived, as we shall see from a quaint and curious picture that is of especial interest to all Americans, because it portrays what took place in that community of pious souls who furnished us the men we delight to honor as the Pilgrim Fathers. A number of these heroic souls, who could give up their country, but would not yield their faith, went forth from England in 1608, and settled in Amsterdam. They preserved in a foreign land their own Church usages, as the following words show: "In Amsterdam there were about three hundred communicants, and they had for their pastor and teacher those two eminent men before named (Johnson and Ainsworth); and had at one time four grave men for ruling elders, three able, godly men for deacons, and one ancient widow for a deaconess, who did them service many years, though she was sixty years of age when she was chosen. She honored her place, and was an ornament to the congregation. She usually sat in a convenient place in the congregation, with a little birchen rod in her hand, and kept little children in

awe from disturbing the congregation. She did frequently visit the sick and weak, especially women, and as there was need called out ladies and young women to watch and do them other helps as their necessity should require; and if there were poor she would gather relief for them of those that were able, or acquaint the deacons. And she was obeyed as a mother in Israel and an officer of Christ." \*

Whether the "ancient widow" with the little "birchen rod" had any followers in the early Puritan communities of the Plymouth Colony we cannot say, as there are no records that throw light on the subject; but the history of early New England Congregationalism gives us one indication that the office was recognized in the New World. In the Cambridge Platform, a system of Church discipline agreed upon by the elders and messengers of the New England churches assembled in synod at Cambridge, in 1648, the seventh chapter enumerates the duties of elder and deacons, and then adds, "The Lord hath appointed *ancient widdows*, where they may be had, to minister in the Church, in giving attendance to the sick, and to give succor unto

\* *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth, from 1602 to 1625.* By Alex. Young. Second edition. Boston: C. E. Little & J. Brown, 1844, pp. 455, 456.

them and others in the like necessities." The same confusion of thought concerning the Church widow and the deaconess is here seen, but there is evident the recognition of the services that women were officially to render the Church.

In the early part of the present century Southey voiced the complaint, long reiterated, that Protestantism had no missionaries. We who live in the closing years of the same century, surrounded by the multiplied evidences of the extent of missions, when the Protestants of the world are expending nearly ten millions of dollars annually, and employing nearly six thousand men and women as missionaries, cannot realize the change that has taken place. In 1830 Southey again wrote: "Thirty years hence another reproach may also be effaced, and England may have her Sisters of Charity." He had learned to know their value when serving as a volunteer in Wellington's army, and a year after the battle of Waterloo he had visited the Béguines at Ghent, and what he saw deeply impressed him. "We should have such women among us," he said. "It is a great loss to England that we have no Sisters of Charity. There is nothing Romish, nothing unevangelical in such communities; nothing but what is right and holy; nothing but what belongs to that religion which the apostle

James has described as 'pure and undefiled before God the Father.' \*

Southey's prophecy has come true. England today in her deaconesses possesses her Sisters of Charity. How has this change been brought about? The acquaintance of Mrs. Fry with Fliedner, and her visit to Kaiserswerth, led her to introduce into England the practical training of nurses for the sick. The Nursing Sisters' Institution in Devonshire Square, Bishop's Gate, was founded through her efforts in 1840, and still exists "to train nurses for private families, and to provide pensions for aged nurses." †

In 1842, Fliedner came to London, accompanied by four sisters, at the invitation of the German Hospital at Dalston. These deaconesses won golden opinions from the hospital authorities for their quiet, efficient manner, and their trained skill. The hospital continues to be served by them, but the Sisters now come from the mother house at Darmstadt.

Kaiserswerth and its deaconesses became more widely known through the life and inestimable services of Florence Nightingale. When a child, one

\* Schäfer, *Die Weibliche Diakonie*, vol. i, p. 207.

† *The Royal Guide to London Churches* for 1866, 1867. By Herbert Fry, p. 162.

of Fliedner's reports fell into her hands. Its perusal marked an era in her life. It made clear to her what she should do. She would go to Kaiserswerth, and fit herself for a nurse. Her childish resolve never wavered. "Happy is the man who holds fast to the ideals of his youth." Florence Nightingale held fast to hers. She went to Kaiserswerth at two different times, and through her deeds and her writings the care of the sick in England has been completely transformed. She has won a nation's gratitude, and now is living in honored old age in one of the London institutions founded mainly by the money that she contributed, and which she obtained by selling some valuable gifts given her by a foreign government in acknowledgment of her care of its wounded soldiers during the Crimean war.

Another woman distinguished in England's philanthropies is Agnes Jones, who left a home of wealth and refinement to receive her training also at Kaiserswerth. Returning to England she gave her time and talents in single-hearted devotion to the care of the poor in the Liverpool work-house, and met death in the midst of her labors. The training which led two such women to accomplish such noble deeds naturally was recognized as valuable, and Kaiserswerth soon became an honored name in England.

In 1851 Miss Nightingale sent out anonymously her little book entitled *An Account of the Institution of Deaconesses*, which added to the knowledge already in circulation about the movement in Germany. Meanwhile articles were appearing in the reviews. In 1848 one was written in the *Edinburgh Review* by John Malcolm Ludlow, who later, in 1866, gave the results of the thoughts and studies of a number of years in *Woman's Work in the Church*, the best historical study of the subject up to the date at which it was written. Since then the Germans have pushed their historical investigations further, and the work needs to be revised and to be brought down to the present time.

In *Good Words* for 1861 there were two articles by Dr. Stevenson, of the Irish Presbyterian Church, entitled "The Blue Flag of Kaiserswerth," afterward incorporated in his work, *Praying and Working*, a book too little known among us.

The great upholder of the deaconess cause in the Church of England was the late Dean of Chester, Rev. J. S. Howson. His essay, first published in the *Quarterly Review*, was amplified and issued in book form in 1860 under the title *Deaconesses*. It won many friends. The cause remained a favorite one with him, and he constantly advocated it by speech and by deed. Since his death

his latest thoughts, which remained substantially the same as those that he first advanced, have been published in a work entitled *The Diaconate of Women*.

Within the Church of England, however, the deaconess cause has not met the same prosperous development that it has obtained in connection with certain independent institutions, notably that of Mildmay.

Among the institutions on the Continent, as well as in the pages of this work up to the present, the terms "sister" and "deaconess" are used synonymously, to indicate one and the same person. But when we come to consider the deaconess institutions within the Church of England we cannot continue to use these two names in the same way. A deaconess is a member of a deaconess institution, actively engaged in charitable deeds, but, like the deaconess on the Continent, she can sever her connection with it when adequate cause presents itself, and return to her family and friends. A sister belongs to a sisterhood which closely resembles the Roman Catholic sisterhoods in many features. These sisterhoods began in 1847 with a number of ladies brought together through the influence of Dr. Pusey, who formed themselves into a community to live under its rule. Their influence and number

increased, and twenty-three sisterhoods are mentioned in the last official report.\*

Doubtless it was the activity and great usefulness of the continental deaconess houses that provided the stimulating examples which acted on the Church of England and led to the rise of sisterhoods and deaconess institutions. But the two opposing tendencies within the Episcopal Church—namely, that which desires to approach the Church of Rome, with which it feels itself in sympathy on many points, and that which views with disfavor any conformity to it, and strives to keep to the landmarks set at the great Reformation—these two distinct tendencies are closely reflected in the woman's work of the Anglican Church.† The sisterhoods are distinctly under the fostering care of the former element, the deaconesses are manifestly favored by the latter. Sisterhoods, again, differ among themselves, some being strongly conventual in their life and practice, adopting the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and a few even advocating penance and confession. The vows are taken for life, and, in connection with the view of the sacred obligation to life-long service, great stress is laid upon the position of the sister as the "bride of Christ"

\* *Official Year-book of the Church of England*, 1889.

† *Andover Review*, June, 1888, art., "European Deaconesses," p. 573.

—the same thought of the mysterious union with the heavenly Bridegroom that is so dwelt upon in the nunneries of the Catholic Church. With such views Protestants, distinctly such, can have no sympathy. Those who look upon the deaconess as a valuable member of the Church economy do so because they regard her as a Christian woman, strengthened and disciplined by special training to do better service for Christ in the world. This is the recognized difference: “The sisterhood exists primarily for the sake of forming a religious community, but deaconesses live together for the sake of the work itself, attracted to deaconess work by the want which in most populous towns is calling loudly for assistance; and with a view of being trained, therefore, for spiritual and temporal usefulness among the poor.” \*

There are now seven deaconess establishments in the Church of England, each having a larger or smaller number of branches, with diocesan sanction and under the supervision of clergymen. †

The first of these was founded in 1861, and is now known as the London Diocesan Deaconess Institution. At that time Kaiserswerth was ac-

\* *Deaconesses in the Church of England.* Griffith & Farran: London, 1880, p. 22.

† *Official Year-book of the Church of England*, 1889.

cepted as its model; deaconesses were sent there to be trained; Kaiserswerth rules were adopted as far as possible, and a modification of the Kaiserswerth dress for the sisters. The house was then represented at the triennial Conferences in Germany, and in the list of mother houses published at Kaiserswerth\* the name still appears. It would seem, however, that now the Kaiserswerth connection is entirely set aside by the London house, for in an historical sketch of the revival of deaconesses in the Church, that is found in the organ of the institution, called *Ancilla Domini*, for March, 1887, there is no mention made of any of the continental houses. The Anglican Church apparently dates the entire work from the setting apart of its first deaconess, Elizabeth C. Ferard, in 1861, as she was the first to receive consecration through the touch of a bishop's hand. The former connection with Kaiserswerth and the great work carried on in Germany from 1836 to the present time are quite ignored.

Besides the London house already mentioned an East London deaconess home was opened in 1880, to provide deaconesses and church-workers for East London. Besides the deaconesses and probationers thirty-two associates are connected with this home. The associates are ladies who do not intend to

\* *Armen und Kranken Freund*, October, 1888.

become deaconesses, but give as much time as they can to the work. They live with the deaconesses, conform to the rules, and wear the garb, but pay their own expenses. These associates are a highly important part of the working force. They form a valuable tie connecting the sisters with sources of influence and aid that would otherwise be closed to them. Nearly always they are ladies of independent means, and come for longer or shorter periods to relieve the deaconesses, their zeal often being as great as that of the sisters whose places they take.

Besides these houses there are homes located at Maidstone, Chester, Bedford, Salisbury, and Portsmouth, in the respective dioceses of Canterbury, Chester, Ely, Salisbury, and Winchester.

In the home at Portsmouth sisters not only engage in nursing and parish work, but are also given special training for penitentiary and out-of-door rescue work. They also have a home for the rescue of neglected children.

The Salisbury Home is beautifully situated in the quiet cathedral city of the same name. The house is a picturesque and venerable mansion, covered with clinging green vines, opening out into a garden which in olden times belonged to the convent. There is in connection with the home an institution for training girls for domestic service, sup-

ported by the funds of a charity given for that purpose. The whole service of the house is done by the girls. They attend upon the deaconesses and the ladies who board there to receive training in the hospital. Each deaconess pays for board and lodging while training, and, if able to do so, when she returns for rest, or a visit to her old home.

In other houses the deaconess is expected to keep her own room in order, and may have some duties in the house, but servants do the rough work. The social status of the English deaconesses is, as a rule, markedly different from the German deaconesses. Here ladies of rank and inherited social traditions, of refinement, of accomplishments, and of education, many of them women of means, defraying their entire expenses and often those of their poorer sisters, are largely represented among the deaconesses. On the other hand, the German deaconesses, as we have seen, are largely of that station in life that furnishes many for domestic service. Although of course there are among them women of all ranks and all degrees of education, still such women form the larger number; and the conditions under which Fliedner began the work, as well as the difference of custom and habit in the two countries, incline the German houses to maintain the rules of service by which nearly

every detail of domestic service in their institutions is cared for by the deaconesses. There is more of ceremony and formality in the English deaconess institutions which are under the direction of the Church of England. At Salisbury, for instance, the candidate must reside in the home for three months, that her ability and efficiency may be tested. If accepted, she then puts on a gray serge habit, a leathern girdle, white cap, black bonnet, the veil and cloak of a probationer, and is admitted to the "degree" of a probationer at a special service. The year of probation having come to an end, she is again presented to the bishop, and is set apart as a deaconess by the laying on of hands. This time the habit is changed from gray to blue, and a black ebony cross, with one of gold inlaid, is hung upon her neck.\*

This is very different from the way in which Fliedner regarded the dress and adornment of the deaconesses for whom he was responsible. The king of Prussia desired to present them with a small silver cross as their badge of service, but the simple-hearted German pastor dissuaded him, saying that the deaconesses needed no ornament save a meek and quiet spirit, and they must avoid symbols which would suggest Romish imitations.

\* "Deaconess Work in England," *The Churchman*, May 19, 1888.

The Strasburg deaconesses also at first wore a small cross, but Pastor Härter discontinued it when he found that the wearing of it gave occasion for complaint.

Yet however we may differ in the lesser details, of garb, of rules, and of ceremonies, from those accepted by some of the Church of England deaconess institutions, we can give unstinted admiration to the lives of self-denial, and active, unceasing efforts in behalf of others, that we see among their numbers. Take, for instance, the little publication *The Deaconess*, issued by the East London Home, and notice the undertakings carried on by the members — district-visiting, nursing of the sick, mothers' meetings, Sunday-school teaching, Bible classes, and all the multitudinous ways of meeting the squalor, poverty, ignorance, sickness, and sin of the poor of the east of London. There is no poetic enthusiasm that strengthens one for such work, the dirt, the degradation, the forlorn condition are so trying. The little children so precociously wicked, so preternaturally cunning, that the natural charm and attraction of childhood have wholly disappeared; the sights and sounds that assail the senses; the dulled, hopeless faces, the apathy, the stunted intellectual growth—these are the depressing influences that continually beset the

deaconesses, and nothing short of God-given strength and Christ-like enthusiasm can enable these women to devote six, eight, and ten years of service to this worst city district, and to come forth with sunshiny, peaceful faces, and sympathetic, loving hearts.

Taking the total number of deaconess institutions under the Church of England, there are eighty one deaconesses, thirty-four probationers, and two hundred and twenty-nine associates.\*

So far, sisterhoods have proved more attractive to the women of the Church of England than have deaconess establishments. The latter do not seem to increase largely in numbers. Vexing questions have arisen as to how the deaconess should be set apart to her work. Should she be consecrated by the imposition of the bishop's hands? What relation should she have to the Church? These questions have been partially settled by the principles and rules that were drawn up in 1871 and were signed by the two archbishops and eighteen bishops. They define a deaconess as "a woman set apart by a bishop, under that title, for service in the Church;" † placing her under the authority

\* I am indebted to the kindness of the Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Wakefield for these numbers, upon whom the mantle of Dean Howson seems to have fallen in caring for the deaconess cause.

† *London Diocesan Deaconess District Services.*

of the bishop of the diocese. These recommendations have not been formally adopted by the Church of England; they hold good only so far as they are accepted.

But there are other institutions, lying outside of the boundaries of the State Church, which have developed more fully and prosperously than those within it. Of these we must speak first of the institution of Dr. Laseron, which is more closely connected with Kaiserswerth than any other in England. In 1855 Dr. Laseron and his wife lost their only child; and as Mrs. Laseron walked through the streets with burdened heart she looked at the little children with quickened sympathy, and noticed how many were poor and hungry and scantily clothed. She talked with her husband, and they opened a "ragged school" for children. This increased and branched off, until now there is an orphanage, workhouses for boys, and a servants' training school for girls. Requests were frequently made for some of the older girls to act as nurses among the poor; and, finally, Dr. Laseron, who was a German by birth, determined to found a deaconess house and hospital. A small hospital of twelve beds was opened, and proved insufficient to meet the demands; and none could be accepted as deaconesses, as there was no opportunity to train them in so

small a place. While waiting to see how the house could be enlarged, he mentioned his perplexity to Mr. Samuel Morley. This gentleman heard him with interest, and said that he was one of the directors of a large hospital; that at a recent meeting of the directors a Catholic bishop had offered to send Sisters of Charity who, without compensation, should nurse the sick, and he had thought what a fine thing it would be if the Protestant Church had also its women of piety who could devote themselves to a similar work. The result of the conversation was that Mr. Morley contributed forty thousand dollars, with which Dr. Laseron purchased a site in Tottenham, built a hospital with fifty beds, and a deaconess was called from Kaiserswerth to superintend it. The hospital has been again enlarged, so that it now accommodates one hundred patients. Sixty-four deaconesses are connected with it, who are at service in the hospitals of Cork, Dublin, Scarborough, and Sunderland. This institution is unsectarian, and has met with special aid from non-conformists. It still keeps in close relation to Kaiserswerth, and is represented at the Conferences. It has constantly thriven, and the mother-house at Tottenham is a center for various benevolent enterprises.

In connection with Dr. Barnardo's Orphanage

there is also a deaconess house. Harley House, the missionary training-school under the direction of Dr. and Mrs. Grattan Guinness in East London, has a deaconess home as one of its branches. The Kilburn (St. Augustine's) Orphanage of Mercy, and the London Bible-women's Mission are also centers for the training and organizing of women's work in London.

We must pause more at length over the prison mission under the care of Mrs. Meredith. American women are beginning to occupy themselves with questions of philanthropy and religious activity to an extent not before equaled. The women's prisons in England are especially fruitful of suggestions to us, as many here are interested in having our women prisoners separated in prisons by themselves, as has already been attempted in a few States. Mrs. Meredith's work is in behalf of the prisoners after they have served their sentence and are discharged. She is the daughter of General Lloyd, who was formerly governor-general of prisons in Ireland. As a little child she was accustomed to go about with her father, and the interior of prisons became familiar to her. Later in life, when her family ties were broken, and her hands left free for service, her interest was engaged in behalf of the women convicts who were discharged

from prison. She enlisted the support of other ladies of like views, able to assist her, and in 1866 the Prison Gate Mission began, which has continued to the present day. Every morning, as the gate of Millbank prison swings back to allow those who have been released from penal bondage to come forth, a sister stands waiting to invite those who will go with her to a room near by, where breakfast awaits them; there are ladies to inquire about their plans and to offer them work. A great laundry was opened in 1867 to provide employment for these women. Here washing is done for two classes: for the poor and sick, to whom the service is given as a charity, and to those who pay for the work and whose money enables the mission to be partly self-supporting. Then the ladies extended their plans to take in the children of the prisoners. A law was passed by Parliament which enabled Mrs. Meredith and her associates to have the care of those children at the Princess Mary Village Home until they are sixteen years of age. This home was founded at Addlestone in 1870, and was named after the Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck, who aided in obtaining funds to build it. The institution takes not only the female children of criminal mothers, but also little girls who are likely to drift into a career of crime. It is conducted on the cottage plan, each

little house having ten inmates and a house mother to superintend it, and being complete in its own arrangements. There are eighteen cottages, a large, generous school-room, a small infirmary for the sick, and a little church. About two hundred children of criminals and the unfortunate class are here cared for. Instead of allowing them to drift away and to perpetuate vice, crime, and immorality, they are taken entirely from their old surroundings, and new influences of knowledge and purity are thrown about them. There is no part of Mrs. Meredith's mission which has such hope for the future and is so valuable in results as this preventive work among the children.

There are also a woman's medical mission (1882), a Christian woman's union, a girls' school, and a deaconess house in Jerusalem under the control of the same association. How it arose is well intimated by the following extract from a letter from Mrs. Meredith to the author, dated March 9, 1889: "You will know that my course has been progressive with regard to the mode of congregating the women who joined me in working. At first we merely came together daily from our own homes, as those who make a business concern do. Then to spare time and money we began to live together. The next step was to admit useful and devoted women who

had no property, and to form an association with degrees of membership. When we found ourselves becoming a corporation of importance, and having combined to acquire property and to found institutions, we invited the help and counsel of some men of known eminence. Our institutions are all branches of a parent stock, and are now placed in the charge of these good men, and we have taken the name of the Church of England Woman's Missionary Association. I am daily persuaded of the value of such organizations."

In connection with the London West Central Mission there is an association of ladies called the Sisters of the People. "They are expected to be worthy of the beautiful name they bear. They are true sisters of the unprivileged and the disheartened; as ready to make a bed, cook a dinner, or nurse a baby as to minister to the higher need of the immortal spirit. The sisters live together in the neighborhood of their work, and wear a distinctive dress as a protection and for other reasons; but they take no vows, and are at liberty to withdraw from the mission at any time. Their work is directed by Mrs. Hughes. Katherine House, the residence of the Sisters of the People, was opened early in November, 1887, and from that day the work of the sisters dates its commencement. Their

daily labors are very similar to those of the deaconesses of Mildmay, who work among the London parishes. Each sister has a district allotted to her, which she visits regularly and systematically. The first object which she sets before herself is to get to know the people, and to make them feel that she is their true sister and friend, irrespective of the fact that they are themselves good or bad, respectable or degraded. When once true friendliness is established, the way is opened for direct religious influence; and many, who in the first instance would never pay any attention to religion, will listen to an appeal from one whom they love and respect." \*

Katherine House accommodates twelve sisters. A second house is urgently needed, and a strong plea is made for it in the Report.

There are besides "out sisters," who work with the sisters but reside at their own homes. This is a valuable feature of this mission, as it interests ladies who are living in their own homes, and yet who can be very useful to those who devote their whole work to the sisters' labor. In the Report a great many instances are given which show what an intimate knowledge of the poor people is obtained by these sisters, and in what practical ways they

\* *First Annual Report of the London West Central Mission*, pp. 14-42.

minister to the bodily and spiritual needs of those whom they find in their house-to-house visitations.

The term "sister," as it is used in the report of the London West Central Mission, is in all respects a synonym for "deaconess," as the name is understood in the large deaconess establishment at Mildmay. To the study of this we shall devote the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MILDMAY INSTITUTIONS.

VALUABLE suggestions will be obtained from the study of every successful deaconess institution, and none will perhaps furnish more practical models for American Methodism than does the establishment at Mildmay Park in North London. Its methods of work are flexible, and allow place for a diversity of talent among the workers, while a wide variety of charitable and evangelistic effort is undertaken. These two causes give a breadth and vigor to the work at Mildmay that impress every one who has knowledge of it.

Whenever we find a good cause carried on successfully and prosperously, we know that behind it there must be a strong man or woman who has "thought and wrought" to good purpose. So the first question that arises in the mind of the visitor who for the first time forms one of the audience in the great Conference Hall, or looks about in the adjoining building to see the deaconess home, is, "Who first thought this out? Who was the founder

of this wonderful mission?" And the answer tells us that Mildmay originated, as did Kaiserswerth, in the prayerful determination of a Christian minister and his wife to reach out to every good end that God's spirit of enlightenment could suggest to them. Rev. William Pennefather was rector of Christ's Church at Barnet, and while devoted to his ministerial duties his sympathies did not end with his own people, nor his own denomination. His home was sometimes called the "Missing Link," for it was a meeting-place for noblemen and farmers, bishops and clergymen of all churches; a place "where nationalities and denominations were easily merged in the broad sunshine of Christian love."\* He carried his principle of Christian fellowship further, for, after mature deliberation, in 1856, he issued a call for a conference to be held at Barnet whose object was "to bring into closer social communion the members of various Churches, as children of the one Father, animated by the same life, and heirs together of the same glory.†" These conferences have been continued from then to the present time, and are known and prized in many lands. I was present at the conference of 1888, and representatives were there from nearly every

\* *Life and Letters of the Rev. W. Pennefather*, p. 279.

† *Ibid.*, p. 305.

Protestant country, while on the platform were leaders of nearly every Protestant denomination, furnishing a wonderful illustration of the union of the Christian Church in Christ; a spiritual union so real and eternal that the minor differences of faith were swallowed up in the great fact that in Christ Jesus all are one.

Gradually a variety of missionary and evangelistic agencies grew up about the conferences. In 1860 the little Home was opened at Barnet which subsequently developed into the deaconess house at Mildmay Park. The question of calling into more active exercise the energies of educated Christian women, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, was one that was attracting attention at the time in England. Mr. and Mrs. Pennefather had long desired to do something in this direction, and their desire took this practical form. In its beginning it had to battle with all the "definite and indefinite objections" that could be advanced against any attempt at organizing woman's work. But those days of latent suspicion or more open antagonism are long past. The institution has justified its right to be by doing a work that otherwise would have remained undone.

In 1864 Mr. Pennefather was called to St. Jude's, Mildmay Park, and the philanthropic and religious

undertakings which he had begun were transferred to his new home. He took with him the "iron room" that had been erected for the conferences at Barnet, and continued to use it for the same purposes at Mildmay; while the missionary training-school and home were accommodated in a house which he hired for the purpose.

His new parish was in a part of London where poverty and want abounded. There was no adequate provision for the education of the poor and neglected children, so he erected a building where elementary instruction could be given at a very low price. A soup-kitchen was started at the iron room; clubs of various kinds were formed, and other agencies were set at work, both for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the people. The degraded and miserable neighborhood gradually underwent a transformation, and the police testified that there was a manifest restraint on the lawless locality. "To many of the waifs of life no human hand was stretched in kindness until he came to the district and taught them what Christianity was." \*

A small legacy coming to him, he bought a house with a large garden attached, and made it a mission center for the needs of the infirm and aged; while

\* *Life and Letters of the Rev. W. Pennefather*, p. 435.

the ignorant and careless, who would not enter a church, were often induced to attend meetings here.

The training-school had been started at Barnet for the purpose of training foreign missionaries; but Mr. Pennefather now saw that there was as great a demand for home mission workers in the sorrowful and benighted portions of the vast metropolis, so, after much deliberation and consultation between himself and his wife, he decided to initiate the ministry of Christian women as deaconesses. He hesitated about the name to be given to the women whom he employed as Christian workers, but no other was suggested conveying the same idea of service to Christ among his suffering and needy ones, and, as the appellation had already won respect through the good reports of the deaconess houses on the Continent, he decided to adopt the same name. They continued to work in his parish only until the terrible visitation of the cholera in 1866. Then when men were swept into eternity by hundreds, and hundreds more were in dire distress, the deaconesses were invited by the minister of another parish to come to his assistance. In this way the bounds of the work began to enlarge. A small hospital was added to the home and a medical-school mission was begun.

It now became necessary to build a large hall; the iron room was too small for the conferences, the church too small for the congregation, and the missions had outgrown the capacity of the mission room. When the plan for a new building was made known money came in unsolicited from various sources. The undertaking was pushed rapidly forward, and in October, 1870, the hall was opened. It will seat 2,500 people, having a platform at the west end, and a gallery running around the sides and east end.

Thanksgiving and prayer were built into the walls from the very foundation; and before the basement rooms were cleared of rubbish, or the floor laid, a prayer-meeting was held to ask for a blessing upon the future undertakings of the mission. The basement was divided into five rooms, to be used for night-schools and other agencies for the benefit of the poor.

Adjoining the hall, at the west end, was built the deaconess house. From his home near by Mr. Pennefather had watched the completion of the work with great interest. In one of his letters he says: \* “Sometimes I can scarcely believe that it is a reality, and not all a dream—the Conference Hall, with its appendages, and the deaconess house

\* *Life and Letters of the Rev. W. Pennefather*, p. 471.

actually in existence. May the Holy Spirit fill the place, and may he make it a center from whence the living waters shall flow forth."

From a letter written to one of these deaconesses, we gain his opinion as to the need of deaconesses, and what was his ideal of a Home. \* "The need for such an institution is great indeed. I do not suppose there was ever a time in the history of Christianity in which the openings for holy, disciplined, intelligent women to labor in God's vineyard were so numerous as at present. The population in towns and rural districts are waiting for the patient and enduring love that dwells in the breast of a truly pious woman, to wake them up to thought and feeling. O! if I had the women and had the means, how gladly would I send out hundreds, two by two, to carry the river of truth into the hamlets of our country, and the streets and lanes of our great cities. Will you pray for the Home? Ask for women and for means. I want our Home to be such a place of holy, peaceful memories that, when you leave it, it may be among the brightest things that come to your mind in a distant land, or in a different position; and each inmate can help to make it what it should be." But Mr. Pennefather did not live to see the great extension

\* *Life and Letters of the Rev. W. Pennefather*, p. 471.

in usefulness and importance that the Deaconess Home was to obtain in later years. He passed away from life April 28, 1873, leaving to his wife, who had ever been his sympathetic and devoted helper, the care of continuing the work he had begun. She is still the head of the Mildmay Institutions, assisted by a resident superintendent, and aided by the counsels of wise, experienced men, who form the board of trustees.

From the beginning of the erection of the new building every portion of it was put to use. In one of the basement rooms is the invalid kitchen, where, daily, puddings, jellies, and little delicacies are prepared and sent out to sufferers in the neighborhood, who could not otherwise obtain suitable nourishment. From eleven to two o'clock tickets are brought in, which have been distributed by the sisters or by the district visitors; and those who come to take the dinners, while waiting their turn, have a kind word, or sympathetic inquiry about the sick one, from the deaconess in charge.

A flower mission occupies another room. Kind friends send here treasures from the garden and green-house, field and wood, and children contribute bouquets of wild flowers. A deaconess superintends the willing hands that tie the bunches, each of which is adorned with a brightly colored Script-

ure text. Ten hospitals and infirmaries were regularly visited during 1888; and more than thirty-eight thousand bunches of flowers were distributed, each accompanied by an appropriate text.

Near at hand is the Dorcas room, where deaconesses are kept busy in cutting out clothing and superintending the sewing classes. During the winter of 1887 thirty widows attended this class three times a week, glad to earn a sixpence by needlework done in a warm, lighted room, while a deaconess entertained them by reading aloud. A large amount of sewing is given out from the same room, and the garments that are made are often sold to the poor at a low price. A most impressive scene is witnessed during the winter months, when, on three evenings of the week, all the basement rooms are crowded with the men's night-school, which has, it is believed, no rival in England. The ordinary number of names on the books exceeds twelve hundred. There are forty-nine classes, all taught by ladies, the majority of them being deaconesses. The subjects range from the elementary to the higher branches of general and practical knowledge, including arithmetic, geography, geometry, free-hand drawing, and short-hand. The Bible is read in the classes on Monday and Friday, and a scriptural address is given by some gentleman on Wednesday.

The school always closes with prayer and singing. The men may purchase coffee and bread and butter before leaving, and of this they largely avail themselves. A lending library is also attached to the school. The highest attendance during last session was five hundred and eighty-one, the lowest two hundred and eighty-seven.

The influence of this school is very great, and many pass on from it to the men's Bible-class, which is held on Sunday afternoons in the largest basement room.\*

A servants' registry is attached to the deaconess house, and through its means about four hundred servants are annually provided with places.

Nearly fifty deaconesses make their home at this central house, many of them having work in the different parts of the city, perhaps at remote distances, but returning at night to the home-like surroundings and purer air of the central house. The large sitting-room, the common living-room of the deaconesses, is a charming place. It is of great size, but made cheerful and attractive by pictures, flowers, and bright and tasteful decorations that are restful to the eyes. Both Mr. and Mrs. Pennefather made it a principle of action to have the home life cheerful, pleasant, and attractive, so that when the

\* *Mildmay Deaconesses and their Work*, p. 7.

sisters come in toward evening, tired physically, and mentally depressed and exhausted by the long strain of hearing tales of misery, and seeing sights of wretchedness and squalor the day through, they could be cheered not only by the words of sympathy and love of their associates, but by the silent, restful influences of their surroundings.

As I looked around the great room with deep-set windows, brightened by flowers, and still more by the happy faces of the deaconesses, some of whom were young girls with the charms of happy girlhood set off by the plain, black dress and wide white collar of the deaconess garb, I could but think the founders wise in arranging such pleasant, home-like surroundings for their workers.

From the windows you look down into a beautiful garden, a rare luxury for a London dwelling. This garden was among the later accessions of Mr. Pennefather, being purchased by him shortly before his death. A train of circumstances led to its possession which he regarded as markedly providential; and the delightful uses to which "that blessed garden," as it has been called, has since been put, seem to justify the importance he attached to securing it. During the conference times great tents are reared here for the refreshments which the weary body needs. A fine old mulberry tree ex-

tends its branches, and under its ample shade meetings of one kind or another are held at all hours of the day. The lawn, with its quiet, shady walks, furnished with comfortable garden seats, provides a meeting place for friends, where, in the intervals between the services, those who perhaps never see each other during any of the other fifty-one weeks of the year may walk or sit together. "Here in more ordinary times may be seen the children of the Orphanage (where thirty-six girls form a happy, busy family) playing together, or the deaconesses in their becoming little white caps, who have run out for a breath of air. Here, too, during the summer, a succession of tea-parties is held for the different classes which have been reached by the deaconesses in the more densely populated parts of London, to whom the garden is a very paradise." \*

Before leaving the Central Deaconess Home I must speak of one branch of work—the artistic illustration of Scripture texts—because it so illustrates the happy freedom and wisdom of the Mildmay methods, which seek to develop the strength of each sister in the line of her special aptitudes. Two of the deaconesses have marked ability as artists, and they devote their time to illuminating

\* *Mildmay Deaconesses and their Work*, p. 6.

texts and adorning Christmas and Easter cards with rare and exquisite designs. From the sale of these illuminations over five thousand dollars were realized last year for the benefit of the institution.

The Conference Hall, too, should have a further word of recommendation for the truly catholic spirit in which it serves the interests of a myriad of good causes. Besides the crowded meetings of the conference there are held Sunday services throughout the year. The hospitality of its rooms is readily granted to every good cause with which the mission has sympathy. During 1887 "temperance society meetings, railway men and their wives, Moravian missions, Pastor Bost's mission at La Force, the MacAll Paris missions, the Sunday closing movement, young men's and young women's Christian associations, a Christian police association, the Children's Special Service mission, the Christmas Letter mission, Bible readings for German residents, and various other foreign and home missions have all in turn been advocated here." \*

The larger number of the deaconesses at the central house, as well as the twenty-five at the branch house in South London, are employed in twenty-one London parishes, where their work has been sought by the clergymen ; they go to all, un-

\* *A Retrospect of Mildmay Work During the Year 1887.*

dertaking every kind of labor that can give them access to the hearts and homes of the people. While co-operating with the clergyman in charge of a parish their work is superintended from the Deaconess Home. They visit from house to house among the sick and poor, hold mothers' meetings, teach night-schools, hold Bible-classes separately for men, women, and children; hold special classes for working women and girls who are kept busily employed during the day, and during the winter months have a weekly average of more than nine thousand attendants on their services. They are solving the problem of "how to save the masses" by resolving the masses into individuals, and then influencing these individuals by the power of personal effort and love.

But a few steps from Conference Hall is the Nursing Home, where about one hundred "nurse sisters," nurses, and probationers make their home in the intervals between their duties, and are presided over by a lady superintendent of their own. Adjoining is the Cottage Hospital, a beautiful building, the gift of a lady in memory of her son. The walls have been painted and decorated throughout by some ladies who delight in using their skill to make beautiful the homes of the sick.

A large hospital and medical mission also exist

in Bethnal Green, a densely populated part of London that in some portions can vie with the worst slums of the city. It was so necessary to provide better accommodations for nursing the sufferers than could be found in their poor homes that a warehouse was fitted up with beds and transformed into a small hospital. In 1887 four hundred and thirteen patients were received at the hospital, and in the dispensary for outside patients sixteen thousand four hundred and eighteen visits were paid during the year, nearly two thirds of which number were to patients in their own houses. There is no place in which a hospital could be more sorely needed than in this destitute part of London, and perhaps no place where it could be more appreciated. "I had no idea," said a man of the better class who was brought in, "of there being such a place as this; you give as much attention to the poorest man you get out of the street as could be given to a prince."\*

Every Christmas some kind of an entertainment is arranged for the hospital patients, and, through the gift of friends, articles of warm clothing are distributed to protect against the winter's cold.

A variety of mission work is carried on in connection with Bethnal Green. There is a Men's

\* *Mildmay Deaconesses and their Work*, p. 13.

Institute, open every evening except Sunday and Monday, in connection with which is a savings' bank that is well patronized. There is a Lads' Institute, where the deaconesses have classes and meet the boys in a friendly way; a men's lodging-house, where a comfortable bed and shelter can be had for eight cents a night. The latter is an enterprise which could be imitated with profit in all our large American cities, where it is very difficult for the homeless and poverty-stricken to obtain a decent lodging, or to find any place, in fact, where liquor is not sold. There are also evangelistic services in the mission here, Sunday-schools, Bible-classes, temperance meetings, a soup kitchen, and a coffee bar, where, during Christmas week, between four and five hundred men and boys were given light refreshments, and at the same time some idea of the kindness and good-will that are associated with this happy season of the year.

There are also two convalescent homes, one at Barnet and one at Brighton. The home at Brighton is especially designed for the poor patients of the East End mission. The report for the year ending December 31, 1887, says that five hundred and fifty men, women, and children enjoyed its benefits for a fortnight or longer.\*

\* *A Light in a Dark Place*, p. 21.

Mildmay nurse deaconesses have also charge of the Doncaster General Infirmary, the Nurses' Institute at Malta, and the Medical Mission Hospital at Jaffa, where two hundred and nineteen patients were received the last year, of whom one hundred and seventy-five were Moslems.

There also exists under the supervision of Mildmay workers a railway mission that was begun in 1880 for men on duty at two of the London stations. An organized mission has sprung up from this small beginning that has now extended over three great lines of railroads which employ thousands of men.

The long list of labors given do not exhaust the efforts of Mildmay workers, for, besides special teas for policemen and postmen, and the mission room and day-school at Ball's Pond, there is also an educational branch that is meeting the demand for higher educational advantages for women, under distinctly religious influences, by the Clapton House School.

The questions involuntarily present themselves, when reading the undertakings just enumerated, that involve not only faithfulness and devotion in service, but disciplined, practiced faculties, "What class of women are these by whom so much has been accomplished? And what is the training that

has made them so effective?" It is difficult to answer the first question. The deaconesses are of all classes, many of them being ladies who devote their time, talent, and means to forward the cause. There are a good many daughters of clergymen, who are carrying out the associations of their life at home. Just how many are self-supporting and just how many are maintained by the Institution are facts that are never known; as Mrs. Pennefather says in a letter of February 11, 1889, "There are certain

NOTE.—There is a further department at Mildmay that has never been named, but is certainly an important and busy one; it might be called the "Department of Inquiry," for certainly the personal visits and letters received, inquiring into the details of the institution, must be very large. My obligations to Mrs. Pennefather are great, who, both by letter and printed matter, has placed a great number of facts at my disposal, of which I have availed myself freely in writing this sketch. Mrs. Pennefather's words, "we are glad when we can help any Christian work with the experience God has permitted us to gather," echo the words of the great apostle, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." I remember, too, the gracious patience with which, during one of the crowded days of the last conference, Miss Coventry, the superintendent, spent a long hour with us, answering fully and minutely the many questions which we put when trying to supplement our want of knowledge by her long experience. Indeed, the spirit of Mildmay impressed me as generous and helpful; as has been said, "Over the whole house rules the spirit of love, devotion, and prayer."\*

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\* "Deaconess Work in England," *The Churchman*, May 12, 1888.

points we deal with as strictly private. While every probationer pays four guineas for her first month, the after monetary arrangements are never known except to myself and the resident lady superintendent."

The second question is more easy of response. There is a probation house, where ladies that present themselves as candidates are received for a month, and are given work in teaching orphan children, or go out to the city missions and the night-schools under the care of a deaconess. If the probation has proved satisfactory the candidate enters the training-school called "the Willows," a mile or two from the Central House, a pleasant home which about three years ago came into the possession of the institution and the inmates of the school, formerly accommodated in five small houses, are now gathered, at slightly greater expense, under one roof in the larger, pleasanter home. The following extracts, taken from a little circular called "A Missionary Training-school," will give us a good idea of the life of the embryo deaconesses, and the instruction, practical and theoretical, that they receive. "The house, which lies a little back from the road, is entered through a conservatory passage, and on the other side of the spacious hall, with its illuminated motto, 'Peace be to this house,' above

the fireplace, are the lady superintendent's sitting-room and the large dining-room, where, on the day when I visited 'the Willows,' about thirty of us sat down to dinner. Several others were absent in connection with their medical studies. Both these rooms open on a terrace, and beyond stretches a garden which, even in lifeless winter-time, looked inviting, and, in its spring beauty and summer loveliness, must be in itself a training for the young natures which are learning in the slums of Bethnal Green and Hoxton their hard acquaintance with sin and sorrow. Perhaps in these days of strain and toil too little has been thought of the need of young hearts for some gentle relief from the first shock of meeting with the evil with which older workers have a mournful familiarity."

The inmates of the Training-school are not deaconesses alone. The school was started to prepare workers for the foreign field, but the crying need of the vast metropolis turned attention to the home field. The Church of England Zenana Society sends its candidates to Mrs. Pennefather for training, and she is glad to accept them, believing that a variety of companionship is needed by those who, in zeal for their personal work, might lose the broad sympathy for all kinds of Christian labor, which is an invaluable cultivation for wise and useful laborers.

The several classes who pass through the course of training may be designated as follows :

*a.*) Those who pass on to the deaconess house.

*b.*) Candidates for (1) the Church of England Zenana Society; (2) the Church Missionary Society.

*c.*) Those who receive medical training for working among the women and children of India.

*d.*) Those who are as yet unconnected with any society.

*e.*) When vacancies occur some few are received who merely return to home or parish work, but who are greatly benefitted by training and experience.

“The general routine of life seems to be as follows: Prayers at eight o'clock, then breakfast, followed by a certain amount of domestic duty which falls to the lot of each. For it is not forgotten that these years of training are not for the sake of home life, but as preparation for the self-denials of missionary life. Speaking broadly, the mornings seem to be chiefly devoted to classes; afternoons to out of door and district work; and thus theory and practice pleasantly relieve and support each other.”

There are regular Bible-classes held by different clergymen, and once a fortnight there are lectures on the history of missionary work. There are classes in Hindustani, drawing, and singing, and

for those whose education is defective, elementary classes in arithmetic, geometry, and short-hand. The probationers are also given training in the duties of the store-room, and the order and method that they are taught in caring for the minutest details must certainly form valuable habits in all those who have any desire to profit by the instruction they receive.

For those who are destined for medical work among the women of India there is a special course of medical training, both theoretical and practical.

The age requirement is not so strictly maintained at Mildmay as at many other deaconess houses, but, as a rule, ladies from about twenty to thirty years of age are preferred as students in the training-school. The sum of three hundred dollars is charged for the year's expenses at the training-school, medical students paying one hundred dollars additional.

Our study of the Mildmay Institutions has been somewhat extensive. As was said at the beginning of the chapter, the great freedom and simplicity of the Mildmay methods, as well as the happy faculty that its directors possess of utilizing all varieties of individual talent, make this deaconess establishment one that is full of valuable suggestions to the similar institutions that are now arising in American

Methodism. No working force is wasted ; if a deaconess possess a special talent, she is given a field in which to exercise it ; and if exceptional conditions arise workers are found ready to meet them. This training provides well-equipped missionaries for the foreign field, and equally well-prepared missionaries for the great field of the present hour—the home mission work in the crowded wards of great cities.

The annual expenses of the Mildmay Institutions vary from one hundred and ten thousand to one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. Sixty thousand dollars are received in voluntary contributions, and the remaining sum is generally obtained from friends who are immediately concerned in the work.

It is certainly a marvelous tribute to Christian faith, although it is never heralded as such, that an establishment of the extent and magnitude of Mildmay has been maintained for years with no permanent endowment to fall back upon, and that annually the renewed self-denial of constant friends has to supply the large amount of money needed to meet the entire expenses. Besides those outward and visible services which it renders “for the love of Christ, and in his name” Mildmay furnishes a constant testimony to the fidelity of the Christian faith in the hearts of many believers.

## CHAPTER XII.

## DEACONESSES IN SCOTLAND.

WHEN Fliedner went on his second tour to England he extended his journey to Scotland, and ventured to Edinburgh at a time when the cholera was sweeping with fearful ravages through the city in order to become acquainted with Dr. Chalmers. The great Scotch divine and his good deeds, that were connected with all kinds of charitable endeavor, moved the German pastor to admiration and stirred him to holy emulation. On the other hand, that Chalmers was profoundly touched by the work that Fliedner had accomplished in Germany there can be no doubt; we have his own words to testify to the importance he attached to the diaconate of women. In his lectures on Romans, he says: "Here, too, we are presented with a most useful indication, the employment of female agency, under the eye and with the sanction of an apostle, in the business of the Church. It is well to have inspired authority for a practice too little known, and too little preached on in modern times. Phebe

belonged to the order of deaconesses, in which capacity she had been the helper of many, including Paul himself. In what respect she served them is not particularly specified. Like the women in the gospels who waited on our Saviour, she may have ministered to them of her substance, though there can be little doubt that, as the holder of an official station in the Church, she ministered to them by her services also." It is but recently, however, that deaconesses have become incorporated into the religious life of Scotland, and, so far, they do not exist in connection with the Free Church, of which Chalmers was the able and heroic leader, but only in connection with the national Church—the old historic Church of Scotland. Within this Church the question has assumed the form, not alone of the revival of the apostolic order of deaconesses, but also of the organization of all the manifold activities of women within the Church into one whole, which is put under the authority and direction of the officers of the Church.

Isolated attempts in this direction had previously been made, but in 1885 the first definite steps were taken when the Committee on Christian Life and Work, of which Dr. Charteris was the Convener, presented to the General Assembly a report on "The need of an organization of women's work in the

Church," part of which is as follows: "The organization of women's work in the Church has become a subject of pressing interest. The Assembly has already sanctioned and regulated the organization of women's work in collecting for foreign missions, and in sending out and superintending missionaries. The great and growing strength of the movement thus recognized is one of the most gratifying things in our mission; . . . but of still older date, and not less powerful, is the part taken by women in the home work of the parish church. Lady visitors are carrying messages of divine truth and of human sympathy into the dwellings of the poor both in town and country. Many have been trained as nurses that they may be skilled ministrants to the suffering and sick; and there can be little doubt that the greater part of the actual personal help which ministers receive in parishes is from the women of the congregations. But those who have done most of the good work are most instant in asking from the Church some means of doing still more. From ministers and from their female helpers have come many requests to the committee for some provision for training; some recognition and organization of those who are trained. . . . In the Church of England are many homes for nurses and deaconesses; training institutions for female mis-

sion work of every kind; and the rapidity with which they are multiplying proves of itself how much they are needed; also non-conformist institutions of the kind, and some separate from all Churches. Your committee believe that the time has fully come for our Church's taking steps to supply her own wants in this important department of mission work."\*

The General Assembly then directed the committee to inquire into the subject of women's work in the Church, and to bring up a definite report to the next assembly. The committee accepted the task, sent out requests to every parish for suggestions as to the forms of Christian work to be carried on by women, and the best means of making preparation for their special training, and prepared themselves by personal inspection of the leading institutions for training women workers in England to be able to answer intelligently the same questions. A scheme was reported in 1886 which should incorporate all existing parish organizations, such as Sabbath-school teachers' and women's societies of all kinds, and should aim at increasing their number and working power. In 1887 regulations were perfected for working this scheme, and the approval of

\* *Organization of Women's Work in the Church of Scotland.*  
Notes by A. H. Charteris, D.D.; p. 4.

this by the Assembly of 1887 made the new plan a part of the organized work of the Church.

The comprehensive character of the new departure in the Church of Scotland is plainly seen from a view of the organization as it now exists. The three grades into which the Christian women workers are divided embrace every kind of work done in connection with the Church. The first grade is general in its character, and forms an association called the Women's Guild. In each parish the members of Bible-classes, of Young Women's Congregational Associations, of mission working parties, of Dorcas societies, as well as tract distributors, Sabbath-school teachers, members of the Church choir, and any who are engaged in the service of Christ in the Church are all to be accepted as members of the guild. The next higher grade is the Women Workers' Guild, for which a certain age is required, and an experience of at least three years, with the approval of the kirk session which enrolls them. In connection with this guild are associates, who have a similar relation to the members of the Women Workers' Guild that the associates have to deaconesses in the English deaconess houses. They are not pledged to regular or constant service, but engage to do some work or contribute some money every year. They can go to

the deaconess house, put on the garb of the deaconess while there, and as long as they remain can assume the responsibilities and enjoy the privileges belonging to deaconesses. The third higher grade is that of the deaconesses. Any one desiring to become a deaconess "must purpose to devote herself, so long as she shall occupy the position of a deaconess, especially to Christian work in connection with the Church, as the chief object of her life." \* Provision was also made for a training-school and home where deaconesses could be prepared for their duties.

There are a great many ladies who for a long time have been engaged in doing the practical work of a deaconess without being clothed in the garb, or invested with the office. The Church of Scotland recognized these workers by providing two classes of deaconesses, who should be equal in position, but have different spheres of activity. Those who for seven years had been known as active workers, and who have given their lives largely to Christian service, are accepted as deaconesses of the first class, and are free to work wherever they find themselves most useful within the limits of the Church. The second class embraces those who shall have received training in the deaconess insti-

\* *Report of Committee on Christian Life and Work*, 1888, p. 36.

tution, or have been in connection with it for at least two years.

When the measure was finally passed by the General Assembly there was no delay in carrying into execution the details indicated by the plan of work. The Deaconess Institution and Training Home was at once started. It was located at Edinburgh, as the most central and convenient place for the institution, and as furnishing the most available advantages for the instruction and training of the deaconesses. From here as a center the work is expected to penetrate into every part of Scotland by means of the trained workers whose services will be available for all parts of the country when desired by the ministers and kirk sessions. With true Scotch prudence and wisdom it was arranged that the lady who was chosen to be the superintendent should fit herself thoroughly for the duties of her responsible place by becoming familiar with the workings of similar institutions in England. She was accordingly given six months' leave of absence, which she spent among the great London Homes, and only assumed the duties of her position May 1, 1888. Meanwhile the Home had opened under the temporary care of a lady who had been a worker in Mrs. Meredith's Prison Mission, and for six years a Mildmay deaconess. It had from the

beginning the warm co-operation of sympathizing, influential friends. Regular courses of lectures were arranged on subjects connected with Christian work, and as similar courses will be demanded of like institutions in America it may be interesting to give the syllabus in full:

### SYLLABUS OF LECTURES.

(On Tuesdays at 12.)

#### I. B.—Professor Charteris. Four Lectures.

“How to Begin a Mission.”

- Nov. 29.—1. Whom to visit, and why. The ills we know of, bodily, spiritual, social; and seek to lessen.
- Dec. 6.—2. How to induce the people who belong to no church—perhaps care for none—to come in.
- Dec. 13.—3. What to do with the children; (*a*) to attract, (*b*) to influence them.
- Dec. 20.—4. What agencies besides Sunday services prove best.

#### 2. C.—Dr. P. A. Young. Six Lectures.

“Medical Hygiene for the Use of Visitors.”

- Jan. 3.—1. Object and scope of the course of lectures; short sketch of the structure and functions of the human body, including a brief description of the functions of digestion, absorption, circulation, respiration, excretion, secretion, and enervation.
- Jan. 10.—2. Fractures, how to recognize and treat them temporarily; bleeding, and how to treat it; the use of the triangular bandage.
- Jan. 17.—3. Treatment of fainting, choking, burns and scalds, bites from animals, bruises and tears from machinery, convulsions, sunstroke, persons found insensible, suspected poisoning and frostbite; how to lift and carry an injured person.
- Jan. 24.—4. Sick-room, its selection, preparation, cleaning, warming,

ventilation, and furnishing, bed and bedding, infection and disinfection.

Jan. 31.—5. Washing and dressing patients, bed-making, changing sheets, lifting helpless patients, food administration, medicines and stimulants, what to observe regarding a sick person.

Feb. 7.—6. Taking temperature, baths, bedsores, nursing sick children, application of local remedies, poultices, fomentations, blisters, etc. ; management of convalescents.

3. D.—Rev. George Wilson. Four Lectures.

“Difficulties Encountered by District Visitors.”

Feb. 14.—1. Difficulties proceeding from indifference.

Feb. 21.—2. Difficulties proceeding from ignorance.

Feb. 28.—3. Difficulties proceeding from adversity.

Mar. 6.—4. Difficulties proceeding from anxiety.

Note.—Questions invited from the ladies.

4. E.—Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod. Four Lectures.

“Some Qualifications of a Church Worker, especially among the Poor.”

March 13.—1. Motives and aims.

March 20.—2. Difficulties and hindrances, how to overcome them.

March 27.—3. Conditions of success.

April 3.—4. Helps, agencies, etc.

5. F.—Rev. John McMurtrie. Two Lectures.

“History and Methods of Missions to the Heathen.”

April 10.—1. History of missions.

April 17.—2. Methods of missions.

Another wise provision in this Scotch home is the arrangement by which those who do not wish to become deaconesses, but who want to become competent Christian workers in their own homes, can

come here and spend some months in receiving training and instruction in various methods of Christian work. There is no department in life in which many blunders and much loss of time and usefulness cannot be prevented by making use of the experience of others who have previously overcome the difficulties to be encountered. In other words, we need to obtain all the preparation and discipline we can possibly have in order to do our work well ; and especially is this true of Christian work, which demands the highest service that the heart and soul of humanity can give. Many individuals will come to the home to be trained and fitted to work in their own homes, and will start new lines of Christian activity that will win the sympathies and efforts of many who are eager to be employed in good works, if only they can have competent direction.

A pamphlet entitled *The Deaconess Institution and Training Home* says : " Are there not many parts all over Scotland—mines, quarries, etc.—where the population is poor and hard-working? Would it not in such places be an advantage both to minister and people to have a Christian lady, trained, experienced, and devoted, to live and work among them? Or, which would be possible in every parish, would it not be a great advantage that

in case of need—in a mining accident, an outbreak of sickness—a trained Christian nurse should be available during the emergency?”

The General Assembly provided that deaconesses should be solemnly inducted into their office at a religious service in church. It also provided “that along with the application for the admission of any person to the office of a deaconess there shall be submitted a certificate from a committee of the General Assembly intrusted with that duty stating that the candidate is qualified in respect of education, and that she has had seven years’ experience in Christian work, or two years’ training in the Deaconess Institution and Training Home.” Also, “Before granting the application, the kirk session shall intimate to the presbytery their intention of doing so, unless objection be offered by the presbytery at its first meeting thereafter.” On Sunday, December 9, 1888, the first deaconess was set apart to her duties. The kirk session was already in possession of the necessary certificates testifying to her “character, education, experience, devotedness, and power to serve and co-operate with others.” Due intimation had been made to the presbytery. The questions were put that were appointed by the General Assembly :

“Do you desire to be set apart as a deaconess,

and as such to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church, which is his body?

“Do you promise, as a deaconess of the Church of Scotland, to work in connection with that Church, subject to its courts, and in particular to the kirk session of the parish in which you work?”

“Do you humbly engage, in the strength and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, faithfully and prayerfully to discharge the duties of this office?”

The lady who, by answering the above questions, received the sanction of the Church as one of its appointed officers was Lady Grisell Baillie, of Dryburgh Abbey. She writes to the author of this book: “I count it a great honor to be permitted to serve in the Church of my fathers, and I pray that I may be enabled faithfully and prayerfully to fulfill the duties to which I am called, and that it may be for the glory of our God and Saviour that I am permitted to work in his vineyard.”

Miss Davidson, who was temporary superintendent of the home, but who is now engaged in organizing branches of the Women’s Guild throughout Scotland, and Miss Alice Maud Maxwell, the present superintendent of the home, have also been set apart to the same office. As has been said, “Each represents an old Scottish family, whose members

have been distinguished for Christian and philanthropic labors;" and "each represents a different type of deaconess work." Lady Grisell Baillie is engaged in gentle ministrations among the people of her own home. Miss Davidson is at the service of every minister who desires aid in organizing women's work in his parish. And Miss Maxwell is at the training-home, leading a busy life in directing the class labors and missionary activities that center around it and in impressing her life and spirit upon a band of workers who are to further Christ's cause both at home and in the mission field.

The mention of any facts that can bring before us the varied character that the deaconess work can assume is valuable. For to be truly useful, this cause needs to provide a place for women of very unlike qualities, and also to allow a certain degree of freedom which will insure the individuality of each worker.

The action of the Church of Scotland has had its influence upon the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of England and Ireland. At the session of the London council, during the summer of 1888, Dr. Charteris presented a report embracing many of the features of the elaborate scheme which he had previously devised for the Church of Scotland.

And the council, in receiving the report, not only approved it, but "commended the details of the scheme stated in the report to the consideration of the churches represented in the Alliance." We may regard the Presbyterian churches of Great Britain, therefore, as committed, not only to the indorsement of deaconesses as officers in the service of the Church, but to the organization of the whole work of women in the churches, under ecclesiastical authority and direction.

There is one feature of the deaconess cause as it has been developed in the Church of Scotland that is of especial interest to the Methodists of America. Most of the great deaconess houses of England have sprung from the personal faith and works of earnest-souled individuals. Mildmay, for example, is a living testimony to the faithfulness and energy of the Rev. Mr. Pennefather and those associated with him. Within the Church of England the recognition accorded deaconesses is a partial one, resting on the principles and rules signed by the archbishops and eighteen bishops, and suggested for adoption in 1871. But as yet the English Church has not formally accepted this utterance, and made it authoritative. The German deaconess houses, while receiving the practical indorsement of the State Church of Germany, are not in any way offi-

cially connected with it. Even Kaiserswerth itself is solely responsible to those who contribute to its support for a right use of the means placed at its command. The same fact applies to the Paris deaconess houses. They are all detached efforts, not parts of a general system. But the Scotch deaconesses are responsible to a church, and a church is responsible for their work. The Church of Scotland is, therefore, justified in its claim when it says that the adoption of the scheme of the organization of women's work by the assembly of 1888, "is the first attempt since the Reformation to make the organization of women's work a branch of the general organization of the Church, under the control of her several judicatories." \* The second attempt was made, which was the first also for any Church in America, when, May 18, 1888, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States instituted the office of deaconess, and made it an inherent part of the Church economy, under the direction and control of the Annual Conferences.

\* Nearly all of the facts, both printed and personal, concerning the deaconess cause in Scotland have been furnished the writer through the kindness of Lady Grisell Baillie, Dryburgh Abbey, Scotland.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE DEACONESS CAUSE IN AMERICA.

IT was no part of the plan of this book, when first projected, to treat of the deaconess cause as it is developing within the United States of America, but gradually, through the kindness of many friends belonging to different denominations, a number of facts have been obtained which bear directly upon the question of how the example of European deaconess houses has influenced and is influencing the Protestant Churches of America; and it seems unwise to omit them from the consideration of the subject.

Naturally the German Lutherans, who were well acquainted with the deaconess work in their native land, were the first to try to introduce it among their churches. In the yearly report sent out from Kaiserswerth, January 1, 1847, Fliedner mentions that an urgent appeal had been made to him to send deaconesses to an important city in the United States, there to have the oversight of a hospital, and to found a mother-house for the training

of deaconesses. In the report for the following year Fliedner again refers to the call from America, and states his intention to extend his travels to the New World, and to take with him sisters who shall aid in founding a mother-house. In the summer of 1849 he was enabled to carry out his intention, and July 14, 1849, accompanied by four deaconesses, he reached Pittsburg, Pa., where Rev. Dr. W. A. Passavant, who had written so many urgent appeals for his aid, was awaiting him. The building had already been secured for a hospital and deaconess home, and, July 17, was solemnly dedicated at a service where Fliedner delivered the principal address, and a large audience testified to their interest.

Before his return to Europe Fliedner visited the New York Synod, and, in an English discourse, described the character and aims of Kaiserswerth, and commended the newly founded institution at Pittsburg to the sympathy and aid of the German Lutheran Church in America. No further results were reached, as the synod contented itself with resolving that "this Ministerium awaits with deep interest the result of the work made in behalf of the institution of Protestant deaconesses at Pittsburg." \*

The institution is occasionally heard of after-

\* *Phöbe die Diakonissen*, Dr. A. Spaeth, p. 31.

ward in the proceedings of the Pittsburg Synod, and in the paper, *The Missionary*, published under the auspices of the same Church. Urgent appeals were also sent out for devoted Christian women to come to the aid of the sisters and to join their numbers; but although the hospital, commended by their skillful and able ministrations as nurses, had the full approval of the public, there were few, if any, who came to join them, and they were unduly burdened by a task too great for their small number.

In 1854 Dr. Passavant resigned his pastoral charge, and devoted his entire time to the furtherance of the cause, but, up to the present, it has not attained the complete organization and wide extension that its friends in the German Lutheran Church have desired.

The institutions which owe their existence to Dr. Passavant's efforts are the infirmary at Pittsburg; the hospital and deaconess home in Milwaukee; the hospital in Jacksonville, Ill.; the orphanages for girls in Rochester and Mount Vernon, N. Y., and one for boys in Pennsylvania.

There is, at the present time, only one of the original Kaiserswerth sisters left, and that is Sister Elizabeth, the head deaconess at Rochester. Dr. Passavant still continues to labor at forming a complete organization on the basis of the Kaiserswerth

system, and, to quote the words of Dr. A. Spaeth, "As he succeeded forty years ago in bringing the first sisters over from Kaiserswerth to Pittsburg, I have no doubt that now, when the Church is at last awakening to the importance of this work, he will succeed in the completion of his undertaking."

A more recent development of the deaconess work in the German Lutheran Church has arisen in connection with the German hospital in Philadelphia. The hospital was well equipped for its work, but there was much dissatisfaction with the nursing, which was inefficient and unskillful. In the fall of 1882 the hospital authorities turned for advice and co-operation to Dr. W. J. Mann, Dr. A. Spaeth, and other clergymen of the denomination in Philadelphia. It was determined to secure German deaconesses as nurses. Several attempts were made to induce Kaiserswerth, or some other large mother-house in Germany, to give up a few sisters to the hospital, but on all sides the applications were refused. The deaconesses were too greatly needed in the Old World to be spared for work in the New. At length, through the unremitting efforts of Consul Meyer, and of John D. Lankenau, president of the board of managers, a small independent community of sisters under the direction of Marie Krue-

ger, who had herself been trained in Kaiserswerth, acceded to the proposal, and the head-deaconess, with six sisters, arrived in Philadelphia June 19, 1884. They left the field of their self-denying work in the hospital and poor-house at Iserlohn, in Westphalia, sadly to the regret of the authorities and citizens of the place, but to the hospital at Philadelphia they gave invaluable aid. From the first their good services met with appreciation. The efficiency of the hospital service was greatly increased; and from physicians and hospital authorities there was only one testimony, and that a most favorable one, to the value of deaconesses as trained nurses. Mr. Lankenau, who has ever been the wise and munificent patron of the institution, determined to insure a succession of these admirable nurses for the service of the hospital, and, at an expense of over five hundred thousand dollars, he built an edifice of palace-like proportions, and made over this munificent gift to the hospital corporation. It was accepted by them January 10, 1887. The western wing of the building is used as a home for aged men and women; the eastern wing is a residence and training-school for the deaconesses, the chapel uniting the two, and the whole being known as the Mary J. Drexel Home and Philadelphia Motherhouse of Deaconesses.

A visit to the Home convinced me that the regulations of the house, the work of the sisters, and the devotion to duty that characterize the mother-houses in Germany rule also in this home in the New World. The imposing entrance hall with the great stair-way, the floor and stairs of white marble, the wide halls and spacious reception-rooms and offices seemed at first almost incongruous surroundings for the modest active deaconesses, some of whom were busy in the hospital wards, others hanging clothes on the line, and others occupied in duties within the building. But place and environments are only incidental matters; the spirit within is the determining quality; and a conversation with the *Oberin* (head deaconess) and the rector left me with the persuasion that the spirit of earnest devotion to God and humanity is the main-spring of duty in this house.

The arrangement of the rooms for the sisters is similar to that at Kaiserswerth; each consecrated sister has a small apartment simply furnished for her own use. The older probationers are divided two and three in a room. Those who have recently entered are placed in two large rooms, but here every one has her own four walls—even if they are only made by linen curtains. When Elizabeth Fry first visited Kaiserswerth, among the arrange-

ments that she at once recognized and commended was that by which each deaconess was given the privacy of her own apartment. In the deaconess houses that are so rapidly springing up in different parts of the United States this provision ought to be guarded with care, for a life that is so constantly drawn out in ministrations to others should have some moments of absolute privacy upon which no one can intrude.

There are at present thirty-two deaconesses at the Philadelphia Mother-house, twenty of whom are probationers. The house was admitted to the Kaiserswerth Association, and will henceforth be represented at the Conferences. The direction is vested in a rector and head deaconess, neither of whom can be removed except on just cause of complaint. The distinctive dress is black, with blue or white aprons, white caps and collars. There is one addition to their garb which Fliedner would have looked upon with disfavor, and that is a cross—worn by the sisters from the time they are fully accepted as deaconesses.

The first consecration took place in the beautiful chapel of the Home, January 13, 1889, when three deaconesses were accepted as members of the order.

For those who desire to form a good conception of the deaconess institutions as they are conducted

in Germany, a visit to the Philadelphia Mother-house of Deaconesses will be fruitful of valuable suggestions.\*

In July, 1887, a Swedish Lutheran pastor in Omaha sent a probationer to Philadelphia to be trained as a sister for a deaconess house to be established in that central city of the United States. In 1888 four others joined her, and the building of a hospital and deaconess home is now progressing by the generous support of all classes of philanthropists in Omaha. A deaconess home has also recently been founded by Norwegian Lutherans in South Brooklyn, L. I.

In the German Reformed Church a layman endeavored in 1866 to arouse interest in the deaconess office. The Hon. J. Dixon Roman, of Hagerstown, Md., at Christmas gave five thousand dollars to the congregation, and with it sent a proposition to the consistory that three ladies of the congregation should be chosen and ordained to the order of deaconesses, with absolute control of the income of said fund for the purposes and duties as practiced in the early days of the Church.†

\* For facts concerning the Philadelphia Mother-house of Deaconesses, and other important assistance rendered me, I desire to express acknowledgements to Dr. W. J. Mann, Dr. A. Spaeth, and Rev. A. Cordes, the rector of the house.

† McClintock and Strong's *Encyclopædia*, vol. ii, art. "Deaconesses."

This, and the action of the Lebanon Classis in 1867, requesting the synod "to take into consideration the propriety of restoring the apostolic society of deaconesses," seem to have been the only steps taken by those connected with this denomination.

In the Protestant Episcopal Church of America the bishop of Maryland first instituted an order of deaconesses in connection with St. Andrew's Parish, Baltimore, Md. Two ladies gave themselves to ministering to the poor, and, with the sanction and approval of the bishop, a house was obtained and given the name of St. Andrew's Infirmary. In 1873 there were four resident deaconesses and four associates.\* An early report of the infirmary says: "The deaconesses look to no organization of persons to furnish the pecuniary aid required by the demands of their position. Their first efforts have been for the destitute and sick. At the home they minister daily to the suffering and destitute sick wherever found; some requiring only temporary medical aid and nursing; others, whom God has chastened with more continuous suffering, requiring, in their penury, constant care and continual ministrations." There is also under

\* *Sisterhoods and Deaconesses*, Rev. H. C. Potter, D.D., 1873, p. 118.

their charge a church school for vagrant children, and one also for the children of those comfortably situated in life.

The "Forms for Setting Apart Deaconesses," the "Rules for Self-Examination," and the "Rules of Discipline" in the order of deaconesses in Maryland are largely patterned after the Kaiserswerth rules. In truth, the general questions for self-examination in regard to external duties, spiritual duties to the sick, the conduct of the deaconesses or sisters to those whom they meet, and the means for improving in the duties of the office are in many cases selected, and but slightly altered, from the series prepared by Pastor Fliedner.\* The influence of the devout German pastor is indelibly stamped upon the deaconess cause in whatever denomination it has developed during the nineteenth century.

In 1864 the deaconesses of the Diocese of Alabama were organized by Bishop Wilmer. Under the supervision of the bishop the three deaconesses with whom the order originated were associated in taking charge of an orphanage and boarding-school for girls. In 1873 there were five deaconesses, one probationer, and two resident associates.†

In the Church Home all of the work is done by

\* *Sisterhoods and Deaconesses*, p. 105.

† *Ibid.*, p 181.

the inmates. As in the foreign Homes, the deaconesses are provided with food and raiment, and during sickness or old age they are cared for at the expense of the order. They are forbidden to receive fee or compensation for their services. Any remuneration that is made is paid to the order. In one feature, however, the deaconesses of Alabama differ from either their German or English sisters, and that is in the care of their individual means. The "Constitution and Rules" says: "The private funds of deaconesses shall not be expended without the approval of the chief deaconess or the bishop." \* This usage prevails in sisterhoods, but, outside of this instance, so far as the author has been able to learn is not known in deaconess institutions.

The rules for the associates in connection with the order are given somewhat at length, from which the following are taken. After defining an associate as a Christian woman desiring to aid the work of the deaconesses, and admonishing her that, although not bound by the rules of the Community, yet she must be careful to lead such a life as is becoming one associated in a work of religion and charity, she is requested "to state what kind of work she will undertake, under the direction of

\* Constitution and Rules for the Order of Deaconesses of Alabama, Art. vi.

the chief deaconess, and to report the result to her at such intervals as may be agreed upon." The following modes of assistance are suggested as most useful; namely, "to provide and make clothing for the poor; to collect alms; to procure work, or promote its sale; to teach in the school; to assist in music or other classes; to relieve the destitute; to minister to the sick; to visit and instruct the ignorant; to attend the funeral arrangements for the poor; and to take charge of or assist in the decoration of the church."

The feature of the union of the associates with the deaconesses is one whose importance can scarcely be exaggerated. There are many who would be able to serve for a short time in this relation whose valuable aid would be entirely lost if none but deaconesses who give all their time and strength could work in the order.

In the Diocese of Long Island Bishop Littlejohn instituted an association of deaconesses by publicly admitting six women to the office of deaconess in St. Mary's Church, Brooklyn, February 11, 1872. The association has not continued in the form in which it originated, but has now changed into the Sisterhood of St. John the Evangelist. Still this sisterhood retains many of the distinctive deaconess features. A sister may, for instance, withdraw

from the sisterhood for proper cause. She labors without remuneration, and the sisters live together in a home, or singly, as they may please, in any place where their work is located.

In the Diocese of Western New York there are five deaconesses, with their associates and helpers, under the direction of the bishop of the diocese.

In America, however, as in England, within the Episcopal Church sisterhoods are more influential and more rapid in their growth than are deaconess institutions. In a list of the sisterhoods of the Episcopal Church in America, given in the monthly magazine devoted to women's work in the Church,\* fourteen sisterhoods are named, one religious order of widows, and two orders of deaconesses, one of which is that which is now changed into the Sisterhood of St. John the Evangelist.

In 1871 the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church discussed at some length the relation of women's work to the Church, and there resulted increased interest in the subject of sisterhoods and deaconess institutions. An effort has been made to obtain for the order of deaconesses a wider recognition than it now enjoys, as it simply has the support of the bishop within whose diocese the deaconesses are at work. To this end, in the

\* *Church Work*, May, 1888.

General Convention of 1880, a canon was presented to the House of Bishops, and accepted by a large vote. But it reached the Lower House too late for consideration, and no further action has been taken since that time.

In the Presbyterian Church of America the question of the revival of the office of deaconess has already claimed some attention. The late Dr. A. T. McGill for many successive years earnestly recommended the revival of the office to the members of his classes in the theological seminary at Princeton; and his views, matured by years of reflection, were given for publication in an article published in the *Presbyterian Review*, 1880.

In the Minutes of the General Assembly for 1884, page 114, and of 1888, page 640, we find an overture asking if the education of deaconesses is consistent with Presbyterian polity, and, if so, should they be ordained, answered in the negative in the following words: "*The Form of Government* declares that in all cases the persons elected [deacons] must be male members. (Chap. 13. 2.) In all ages of the Church godly women have been appointed to aid the officers of the Church in their labors, especially for the relief of the poor and the infirm. They rendered important service in the Apostolic Church, but they do not appear to have occupied a

separate office, to have been elected by the people, to have been ordained or installed. There is nothing in our constitution, in the practice of our Church, or in any present emergency, to justify the creation of a new office." The next year an explanation of this action, which so obviously contradicts the facts of history, was asked, but the committee declined to say any thing more.

The Southern Presbyterian Church has proceeded further, and in the direction of the female diaconate, as it is characterized in its main features wherever it has existed, when it declares in its *Book of Church Order*, adopted in 1879, that "where it shall appear needful, the church session may select and appoint godly women for the care of the sick, of prisoners, of poor widows and orphans, and, in general, in the relief of the sick.\*

In isolated Presbyterian congregations deaconesses have already obtained recognition. At the Pan-Presbyterian Council, held in Philadelphia in 1880, Fritz Fliedner, the son of Dr. Theodor Fliedner, was present as a member, and through the influence of his words the Corinthian Avenue Presbyterian Church set apart five deaconesses, whose

\* For this and other suggestions regarding the deaconess question in the Presbyterian Church, I am greatly indebted to the kindness of Dr. Hastings, President of the Union Theological Seminary.

duty it should be to care for the poor and sick belonging to the congregation.

“ More recently the Third Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles, Cal., empowered its three deacons to choose three women from the congregation to co-operate with them in their work, granting them seats and votes in the board’s monthly meeting.” \*

The very interesting article from which the quotation has just been made seems to think the term “ deaconess ” a misnomer for the Kaiserswerth deaconess, as she belongs to a community, whereas the deaconess of the early Church was attached to a congregation and belonged to a single church as an officer ; but it may well be questioned whether the class of duties assigned to the deaconess of the early Church and of modern times alike, that is, the nursing of the sick, the care of the infirm in body and mind, the succoring of the unfortunate, and the education of children, are not the main characteristics of the office of a deaconess, while the fact of her connection with a number of like-minded women in community life is merely an external feature of the office as it has developed in the nineteenth century. Whatever form the ques-

\* *Presbyterian Review*, April, 1889, art. “ Presbyterian Deaconesses.”

tion may assume, with the Presbyterian churches of Scotland and England so far committed to the adoption of the office of the deaconess as an effective part of the organization of the Church, it seems inevitable that the Presbyterian Church of America will have to meet this question in the near future.

The Methodist Episcopal Church of America, although occupying itself with the question of the diaconate of women later than any of the denominations previously mentioned, by its acceptance of the office and by making it an inherent part of its ecclesiastical organization has taken a higher ground than any Protestant body, with the exception of the Church of Scotland. The Methodist Episcopal Church has ever offered a freer scope for the activities of its women members than any other body of Christians save the Quakers, who are still the leaders in this respect; but it may be questioned if any furnishes a larger number who are actively engaged in promoting philanthropic and religious measures.

The honor of practically beginning the deaconess work in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States belongs to Mrs. Lucy Rider Meyer, of the Chicago Training-school, who, during the summer months of 1887, aided by eight earnest Christian women, worked among the poor,

the sick, and the needy of that great city without any reward of man's giving. In the autumn the Home opened in a few hired rooms, and Miss Thoburn came to be its first superintendent. The story of the growth of the work, the securing of a permanent home, and the enlargement of its resources is a most interesting one.\*

The Rock River Conference, within whose boundaries the Chicago Home is situated, had from the beginning an earnest sympathy and confidence in the work as it was developing in its midst. A memorial was prepared, and was presented to the General Conference in May, 1888, by the Rock River Conference, through its Conference delegates, asking for Church legislation with reference to deaconesses. At the same time the Bengal Annual Conference, through Dr. J. M. Thoburn, also presented a memorial asking for the institution of an order of deaconesses who should have authority to administer the sacrament to the women of India. Our missionaries in India have long felt the need of some way of ministering to the converted women who are closely secluded in zenana life, and who, though sick and dying, are precluded by the cus-

\* Mrs. Meyer's book on *Deaconesses*, containing also the story of the Chicago Training-school and Deaconess Home, gives the best description to be obtained of the rise of the work in Chicago.

toms of the country from any religious service of comfort or consolation that male missionaries can render. If it had been possible for our women missionaries to administer the sacrament many Indian women could have been received into the Church. All of the papers and memorials on this subject were put into the hands of a committee, of which Dr. J. M. Thoburn (afterward made missionary bishop to India and Malaysia) was chairman; and the report of the committee was as follows :

“THE NEW OFFICE OF DEACONESSES IN THE  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

“For some years past our people in Germany have employed this class of workers with the most blessed results, and we rejoice to learn that a successful beginning has recently been made in the same direction in this country. A home for deaconesses has been established in Chicago, and others of a similar character are proposed in other cities. There are also a goodly number of similar workers in various places; women who are deaconesses in all but name, and whose number might be largely increased if a systematic effort were made to accomplish this result. Your committee believes that God is in this movement, and that the Church

should recognize the fact and provide some simple plan for formally connecting the work of these excellent women with the Church and directing their labors to the best possible results. They therefore recommend the insertion of the following paragraphs in the Discipline, immediately after ¶ 198, relating to exhorters :

“ DEACONESSSES.

“ 1. The duties of the deaconesses are to minister to the poor, visit the sick, pray with the dying, care for the orphan, seek the wandering, comfort the sorrowing, save the sinning, and, relinquishing wholly all other pursuits, devote themselves in a general way to such forms of Christian labor as may be suited to their abilities.

“ 2. No vow shall be exacted from any deaconess, and any one of their number shall be at liberty to relinquish her position as a deaconess at any time.

“ 3. In every Annual Conference within which deaconesses may be employed, a Conference board of nine members, at least three of whom shall be women, shall be appointed by the Conference to exercise a general control of the interests of this form of work.

“ 4. This board shall be empowered to issue certificates to duly qualified persons, authorizing them

to perform the duties of deaconesses in connection with the Church, provided that no person shall receive such certificate until she shall have served a probation of two years of continuous service, and shall be over twenty-five years of age.

“ 5. No person shall be licensed by the board of deaconesses except on the recommendation of a Quarterly Conference, and said board of deaconesses shall be appointed by the Annual Conference for such term of service as the Annual Conference shall decide, and said board shall report both the names and work of such deaconesses annually, and the approval of the Annual Conference shall be necessary for the continuance of any deaconess in her work.

“ 6. When working singly each deaconess shall be under the direction of the pastor of the church with which she is connected. When associated together in a home all the members of the home shall be subordinate to and directed by the superintendent placed in charge. “ J. M. THOBURN, *Chairman.*

“ A. B. LEONARD, *Secretary.*”

The adoption of this report made its contents a portion of the organic law of the Church.

It is doubtful if there was any measure taken at the General Conference of 1888 that will be more

far-reaching in its results than that which instituted the office of deaconess. The full and complete recognition accorded by the highest authority of the Church commended it to the people, who showed a remarkable readiness to accept the provisions. Nearly simultaneously, at important points distinct from each other, steps were taken to establish deaconess homes, and to provide lectures and practical training to educate deaconesses for their work.

The terms of the law in which the Conference action was expressed were not closely defined. It was felt that in establishing a new office for a great Church there must be room for a wide interpretation, to meet the various exigencies that will arise. It is true, also, that there can be no final interpretation until there shall be a basis of experience wide enough and varied enough to furnish facts that will justify us in forming conclusions from them. Still it was thought by those who were practically engaged in the work that there should be a common agreement on certain practical points: What was to be the training that the deaconesses were to receive during the two years of "continuous service?" What was to be their distinctive garb? What was to be the relation of the deaconess homes, that were arising, to the

Conference board appointed by the Annual Conference? To discuss these and other questions a Conference was held in Chicago, December 20 and 21, 1888, of those who were actively engaged in the work. The outcome of the deliberations was the "Plan for Securing Uniformity in the Deaconess Movement." Regulations were suggested concerning homes and their connection with the Conference boards, conditions of admission were agreed upon, and a Course of Study and Plan for Training recommended.\* Of course the recommendations set forth in the "Plan" are not obligatory, but there has been remarkable unanimity so far in accepting them.

In addition to the Chicago Deaconess Home, and the branch in New Orleans, there is the Elizabeth Gamble House in Cincinnati, of which Miss Thornburn is superintendent; the Home in New York city, instituted by the Board of the Church Extension and Missionary Society, under the superintendence of Miss Layton; the home in Detroit, under the auspices of the Home Missionary Society; and homes under way or projected in Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Minneapolis; while individually deaconesses are employed in Kansas City,

\* A more extended and elaborate course of study has been prepared by the Rev. Alfred A. Wright, D.D., Cambridge, Mass.

Jersey City, Troy, and Albany. It is also well to add that since his return to India, Bishop Thoburn has opened a deaconess house in Calcutta, with four American ladies as deaconesses, while at Muttra a second home has been opened, of which Miss Sparkes, so long connected with our mission work in India, is superintendent.

Pastor Fliedner thought it strange that in the New World where there is such ceaseless activity in good works, the deaconess cause should make such slow progress; but the season of sowing had to precede that of reaping, and it seems now as though the fullness of time had arrived for the incorporation into the agencies of the churches of America of the priceless activities of Christian deaconesses.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE MEANS OF TRAINING AND THE FIELD OF WORK  
FOR DEACONESSES IN AMERICA.

THE deaconesses of the early Church differed from those of modern times, as we have seen, in being directly responsible to a church society, and in belonging to a church congregation in numbers of two or more. Modern life shows a strong tendency to organization. Wherever there are workers in a common cause they are banded together in societies and associations. It was in accordance with the spirit of the age in which he lived that Fliedner united his workers in the Rhenish-Westphalian Deaconess Society, in 1836. It was a happy inspiration—shall we not say a *providential* one?—that furnished a convenient organization for the office under present conditions. The mother-houses in Germany offered good working-models, and their practical advantages were so obvious that in whatever Protestant denomination the diaconate of women has revived, it has been in connection with these homes. There is no place where the

training of a deaconess in all its aspects can be so well obtained as in the deaconess home and training-school, which is our synonym for the German mother-house.

Besides the advantages of a permanent home, under careful supervision, to which the probationers and deaconesses have access, in such a home care is taken to train the deaconesses in the doctrines of the Church, and there is an atmosphere favorable to the virtues of faith and devotion that the work demands. The deaconesses are never allowed to forget that they serve in a threefold capacity: "Servants of the Lord Jesus; servants of the sick and poor, 'for Jesus' sake; 'servants one to another.'" The motto of the indomitable little republic of Switzerland, "All for each and each for all," might well be accepted as that characteristically belonging to them.

Then, too, there is a tradition of service in such a home. One deaconess learns from another. The physician is at hand to give his suggestions and medical instruction, and the lectures on Church history, on the history of missions, and on methods of evangelization make the home a center of information on all questions that affect the usefulness of the office. There is no other one place in which to obtain the practical and theoretical instruction

that is needed for the education of a deaconess well equipped for her work.

Furthermore, the deaconess home offers a wide and varied field for those possessing different gifts. None can be so highly educated and cultivated that places cannot be found to utilize their talents to good advantage; while those who are sadly lacking in the education of the schools can, by talent, untiring industry, and energy make up for defects in early training.

The field of work of the deaconess in modern times is a large one. It would be easier to define what it is not than what it is. In orphanages, in asylums for fallen women, in women's prisons, in reform schools, in Sunday-schools, infant schools, and higher schools, in classes among working-girls and servants, in industrial homes, in asylums for the blind and deaf and dumb, in hospitals of various kinds, and in churches, working under the direction of the pastor—in all of these relations and many others we find deaconesses in Germany, France, England, and other European countries.

The service in hospitals seems especially incumbent upon Christian women, and in the early history of these institutions we find deaconesses mentioned in connection with them.

Before the birth of Christ hospitals were unknown.

It is true that in Rome and Athens a certain provision was made for the poor, and largesses were given them from time to time. But this was done from motives of political expediency, and not from sympathy or commiseration with their ills. But as soon as the early Christians were free to practice their religion openly, hospitals arose in all the great cities. In the latter half of the fourth century the distinguished Christian teacher, Ephrem the Syrian, in Edessa, placed rows of beds for the sick and starving. His contemporary, Basil, the great bishop of Cæsarea, founded a number of institutions for strangers, the poor, and the sick, caring especially for the lepers.\* Little houses were built closely together, but so that the patients could be separated one from another, and cared for separately. Even at that early date the hospitals were arranged into divisions for either sex, as they are at the present time. To use a modern phrase, the wards of the men patients were placed under the charge of a deacon while the deaconesses ministered to the sick of their own sex, according as their services were required. "It was a rule for the deacons and deaconesses to seek for the unfortunate day by day, and to inform the bishops, who in turn, accompanied

\* *Der Diakonissenberuf nach seiner Vergangenheit und Gegenwart.* Emil Wacker, Gütersloh, 1888, p. 196.

by a priest, visited the sick and needy of all classes." \*

In the Middle Ages there were orders of Hospitaliers, consisting of laymen, monks, and knights, who devoted themselves entirely to the care of the sick. Under their influence great and splendid hospitals were built, of which the old Hôtel Dieu in Paris was a conspicuous example. The Hospital of the Holy Ghost in Rome, and the service of the same order, originated like hospitals all over Europe. In late years, with the development of medical and surgical art, hospital arrangements have arrived at a degree of perfection never before known; and the care of the sick, as it has been studied and practiced by Protestant deaconesses and Catholic Sisters of Mercy, has also greatly improved.

The state to which the hospitals had degenerated in Fliedner's time, and the need of experienced nurses who should be actuated by the highest Christian motives, were among the strong reasons he advanced for providing the Church with deaconesses as helpers. Here are his words:† "The poor

\* McClintock and Strong's *Encyclopædia*, vol. iv, art. "Hospitals." The editors give as authority for this statement, Augustine, *De Civit. Dei*, i, xxii, c. 8.

† Theodor Fliedner, *Kurzer Abriss seines Lebens*. Kaiserswerth, 1886, p. 60.

sick people lay heavily on my mind. How often had I seen them neglected, their bodily wants miserably provided for, their spiritual needs quite forgotten, withering away in their often unhealthy rooms like leaves in autumn; for how many cities, even those having large populations, were without hospitals! And I have seen many on my travels in Holland, Brabant, England, and Scotland, as in our own Germany; I often found the portals of glittering marble, but the nursing and care were wretched. Physicians complained bitterly of the drunkenness and immorality of the attendants, and what shall I say of the spiritual care? In many hospitals preachers were no longer found; hospital chaplains yet more seldom. In the pious olden time these men were always in such institutions, especially in the Netherlands, where evangelical hospitals bore the beautiful name of "God's house," because it was recognized that God especially visits the inmates of such houses, to draw them to himself. Do not such wrongs cry to heaven? Is not our Lord's reproachful word addressed to us, 'I was sick and in prison and ye visited me not?' And shall not our Christian women be capable and willing to undertake the care of the sick for Christ's sake?" It was by such words, and similar ones, as in his famous appeal "Freiwillige vor" (Volunteers to the front!)

which he sent out from Würtemberg to Basel in 1842, that he aroused the Christian women of Germany to give themselves to this service. By their aid he instituted a system of nursing that has changed the aspect of every hospital ward in Germany; and, through the training that Florence Nightingale enjoyed at Kaiserswerth, the reform that was there instituted passed to England, and has effected a transformation in the entire hospital system of England.

In Germany deaconesses are often trained to special duties that are required in hospitals for certain diseases or certain classes of patients, and they are becoming so skillful in their duties that the present system of hospital nursing could not be continued without their aid.

The nursing care of deaconesses in insane asylums is especially valuable. The large and well-ordered Insane Asylum for Female Patients in Kaiserswerth, with its long lists of cases soundly cured, shows how healthful and important is the quiet, constant influence of intelligent Christian attendance upon those who are mentally unsound.

The usefulness of deaconesses as care-takers in all kinds of hospitals and homes for the aged, and asylums of every description, is so apparent that it does not need to be dwelt upon. The *crèche*, or

day home, where infants and young children can be sheltered and watched during the day while their mothers are at work, is an institution that started in Paris in 1834, through the efforts of M. Marbeau, one of the mayors of a district of the city. This is now incorporated into the government system of Paris, and the idea has spread to neighboring lands, so that such homes are found in many of the cities in South Germany and Switzerland. It is true that there are no nurses that can care for children as the true mother, but where mothers have to be absent from morning until night engaged at hard work, and the little ones are left neglected at home, or in the care of other children who are themselves young enough to need very nearly the same attention that is bestowed on the infants; or where the mothers are such in name, but in reality are failing in every quality which we attach to that sacred office; or where the foundling hospital is the only alternative to which the real mother, confronted by the necessity of earning bread for herself and child, can turn—in such cases the *crèche* is a real benefaction whose existence has enabled families to keep together, and children to be given a chance in life who otherwise would have had small prospect of keeping soul and body together.

There is another institution, called the waiting-

school, where children from two to four years of age are received, whose parents both go daily to work, and who would be left to wander about the streets unless this place of refuge were opened to them. The *crèche*, or day home, seeks only to watch over the infants who are put in its care, or to amuse them and keep them contented; the waiting-school goes further, and tries to give the little ones some ideas of discipline and the elementary beginnings of instruction. Fliedner, who was a lover of children, took great interest in both these institutions, and in his school for infant-school teachers prepared deaconesses especially for the duties that are required in teachers of this class. The motherly heart, the gift of story-telling and singing, a pleasant and unruffled demeanor, the quiet but firm inculcation of order and obedience—these and other qualities Fliedner sought to develop in instructors for these schools.

The day homes have already been introduced into many places in the United States, and often cover the field of both the *crèche* and waiting-school, but there is a wide opportunity for the extension of their usefulness; and whether in the future, when the demands upon Christian deaconesses shall be much more multiplex than they are now, it may be necessary to provide special training for

Christian teachers in America for such special work, time alone can decide. The question of Christian education is one that has not yet been determined in its full extent. In the year 1800 Mother Barat, of the Catholic Church, founded the order of Sisters of the Sacred Heart, which is especially devoted to the education of daughters belonging to the higher social ranks. At her death it numbered three thousand five hundred members, and had over seventy establishments, which are located in every civilized land. It cannot be maintained that the education given in these schools is either extensive or profound, but the influence of the order upon the women whom it has reached has been both. Fliedner, at Kaiserswerth, went as far as his age and environments would permit him to go. He provided schools where teachers were prepared as instructors for all grades of schools, from the most elementary up to the girls' high-schools; and no other institution in Germany, with one or two exceptions, such as the Victoria Institute at Berlin, yet offers positions to women teachers of a higher grade than is afforded by these schools. But in other lands, where the educational facilities for women are far beyond those that Germany can offer at the present time, positions of higher importance and wider influence are held by women; and

it is an important question for the future what class of women shall fill these places. If Fliedner had had to meet the problem we can imagine he would have done so with the boldness and energy that he showed in solving those that his times and circumstances afforded him. He would, doubtless, have enlisted among his deaconesses those whose talents gave him reason to provide them with the widest training the schools can offer; and then he would have endeavored to place them where they could do the most effective service for Christ and his Church. It may be that in the future which opens before the women of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America there will be just such questions seeking and finding solution.

Doubtless at the present time the deaconess who will answer to the greatest number of immediate wants is the "parish-deaconess," or the home mission deaconess, as we may call her. Her usefulness has been well tested in the great cities of Germany, France, and England, as we have seen. Perhaps nowhere is her work better appreciated than in London, the greatest city of modern times. The tendency of this age of manufactures and commerce is to attract laborers and workers from country homes, where work has become less open to them through the increased use of agricult-

ural machines of all kinds, into cities, where factories, shops, counting-rooms, and offices constantly afford openings. London has felt the full force of this movement. In 1836 her population was about equal to that of New York, including Brooklyn and Jersey City. Now the great city contains 5,500,000 inhabitants. It is growing at the rate of over 100,000 a year, nor is there any influence at work to stop its growth. The same causes that produce it are constantly at work. The great massing of the population together, with the unequalled increase in the wealth of the people, make the contrast of riches and poverty striking and obvious. The west of London, with its vast wealth, its homes of refinement and elegance, and its appliances for the enjoyment of art, science, and literature, is separated from the poverty, the degradation, the misery, and the sorrow of the East End by a gulf as great as that which separated Lazarus from Dives. It is difficult for those who are at ease, whose lives, to use Wordsworth's felicitous phrase, are made up "of cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows"—it is difficult for such even faintly to apprehend the dullness, the drudgery, and the hardships of those who, even at the best estate, are obliged to live in such surroundings. The vast metropolis a few years ago was for a short time shaken out of its lethargy by

a voice that would be heard, when *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* was published. " Few who will read these pages have any conception of what these pestilential human rookeries are, where tens of thousands are crowded together amid horrors which call to mind what we have heard of the middle passage of the slave-ship. To go into them you have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous malodorous gases arising from accumulations of sewerage, refuse scattered in all directions, and often flowing beneath your feet ; courts, many of them, which the sun never penetrates, which are never visited by a breath of fresh air. You have to ascend rotten stair-cases, grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin. Then, if you are not driven back by the intolerable stench, you may gain admittance into the dens in which these thousands of beings herd together. Eight feet square ! That is about the average size of many of these rooms. . . . Where there are beds they are simply heaps of dirty rags, shavings, or straw, but for the most part the miserable beings find rest only upon the filthy boards. . . . There are men and women who lie and die day by day in their wretched single room, sharing all the family trouble, enduring the hunger and the cold, without hope, without a single ray of comfort, until God

curtains their staring eyes with the merciful film of death." \*

Such are the places where the deaconesses of East London go in and out from morn to eve, like angels of mercy, succoring the miserable and unhappy, often rebuking vice, and encouraging with friendly words those who are worn and discouraged in the battle of life. Here they nurse the sick, hold mothers' meetings, start evening classes for working young men, and gather the children of all ages in every kind of class that can interest and instruct them. They are always ready to provide for individual cases that they meet. If they find a friendless young servant-girl who is out of work, they send her to the servants' home, where, for very little payment, sometimes nothing at all, she can be taken care of long enough to give her fresh courage and strength. Then she is aided in seeking a situation, and so she is saved from the innumerable temptations to vice and misery that are sure to assail her if she stands alone.

Many of these deaconesses are educated women, gladly devoting their whole life and energies to the work, and who with "food and raiment" are quite content. Nothing but a strong indomitable faith in God's love and promises can stand the strain of

\* *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, pp. 3-10.

such work. But if there is the faith and love to deny self and dare all "for the love of Christ and in His name," where can such rewards for labor be found? The dull streets become filled with friends, sodden countenances brighten, the little children come with loving faces and gladdened hearts, and the deaconess is recognized as interpreting to the hearts of these weary, forlorn, helpless people the love of God who, when He came upon earth, shared the burdens that belonged to His humanity. He came as a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and it was the "common people" that heard Him gladly. The deaconess, in her distinctive dress, is becoming a well-known figure in the east of London, and not only protected but recommended by her garb, she visits the lowest parts of the city without danger. Just such deaconesses are needed in the cities of America. The cities of the United States are increasing as wonderfully as the great cities of the Old World. With the surplus population of Europe pouring in upon us by the hundreds of thousands annually our country is doubling in numbers every twenty-five years; and the growth of the towns absorbs a larger proportion of this multitude than does the country. The cities attract the immigrants because there they find others of their own nationality. In some cities there are

whole foreign colonies where the people speak a foreign tongue, read foreign newspapers, and have very few interests in common with the people of the land in which they live. They continue the same customs and the same habits of thought that belonged to them in the Old World. Examples of such colonies are found in the thirty thousand Poles in Buffalo, and the sixty thousand Bohemians in Chicago.

Then the cities offer attractions that are irresistible to the young men and women from the country. Thousands leave quiet country homes every year, and, with no certain prospects before them, cast themselves into the busy life of the nearest great metropolis. In many places, especially in New England, the villages number less, and farm land is much less valuable than it was fifty years ago. It is this massing of population that is causing us already to experience some of the evils that are old problems in the great cities of Europe. There is the same gulf between the rich and the poor, with the added element that the great mass of the poor are composed of foreigners and their children. And the difference in race is a hinderance to a common ground of sympathy. A greater hinderance is the difference in religious faith. The preponderating number of native Americans are Prot-

estants, and their thoughts and beliefs are permeated with the principles that their fathers held so dear, and which they sacrificed home and country to preserve. They hold a faith that is inseparably connected with free institutions, personal liberty, and personal responsibility. But the mass of foreigners that are in the great cities largely belong to the working-class, and, with the large proportion of the poor who are the wards of the city, are Roman Catholic in faith, a faith that has little in sympathy with republican institutions, and which least prepares its followers to exercise the duties of citizens of a republic. Keeping these facts in mind, the statistics contained in the following extracts are of telling force: "If the laboring class should contribute its due proportion to the congregations, the churches, many of which are now half empty, would not begin to hold the people. In 1880 there was in the United States one evangelical organization to every 516 of the population; in Boston, *counting churches of all kinds*, there was but one to every 1,600 of the population; in Chicago, one to every 2,081; in New York, one to every 2,468; in St. Louis, one to every 2,800." "The worst of it is that, instead of improving, the condition of things has been growing worse every year. While the prosperous classes are moving away to the sub-

urbs, and the laborers are being more densely massed together in the heart of the city, the church accommodations, even if fully used, are becoming more inadequate to the needs of the community. Including religious organizations of all sorts, New York had in 1830 one place of worship for every 1,853 of its inhabitants; in 1840, one for every 1,840; in 1850, one for every 2,095; in 1860, one for every 2,344; in 1870, one for every 2,004; in 1880, one for every 2,468; and the religious history of Chicago is even more noteworthy in this respect: Chicago had in 1840 one church for every 747 of its population; in 1851 there was one for every 1,009; in 1862, one for every 1,301; in 1870, one for 1,593; in 1880, one for 2,081; in 1885, one for 2,254. All the large cities have districts which are destitute of church accommodations, and have not seats in Sunday-school for more than one tenth of their children." \*

Have we not as great need of deaconesses as any of the cities of the Old World? Most of our pastors stand alone. They do not have the assistant curates and pastors that are connected with large city churches in Berlin and London. When the minister makes pastoral calls, and, entering workingmen's homes, finds sickness and scanty resources,

\* *Modern Cities*, by S. L. Loomis, New York, 1887, pp. 88, 89.

he has no deaconess to call to his aid with her cheerful words of encouragement and her loving sympathy, that are better than money and medicine. It is not charity alone that is wanted in such cases; it is the knowledge of how to use proper means to make the sick one comfortable, how to lessen the burden on the family that a small additional call for work and care has so sadly taxed; how to enlighten the ignorance that is so common without wounding the susceptibilities that are so human. For, to quote the words of the Christ in the *Vision of Sir Launfal*:

“Not what we give, but we share,  
For the gift without the giver is bare;  
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three:—  
Himself, his hungry neighbor, and Me.”

It is for such ministrations that we need deaconesses in every evangelical church of the United States; may the women that are ready to “publish the tidings” be “a great host.”

## CHAPTER XV.

### OBJECTIONS MET AND SUGGESTIONS OFFERED.

“SUCCESS and glory are the children of hard work and God’s favor,” is the inscription upon the tablet erected in Christ’s Hospital, London, to the memory of Sir Henry Maine.

Upon these two elements depends the future of the deaconess cause in America. We are assured of the one; will the other be forthcoming? Will the individual members of the Church give this cause their hearty support? Surely the facts that have been stated must have convinced the judgment, but perhaps there are certain prejudices to be overcome. “I fear that deaconesses too closely resemble Catholic nuns for Protestants to accept them,” says one. No; these helpful Christian women are thoroughly Protestant. Deaconesses are no Catholic institution. Wherever they have appeared they have been met by open antagonism from the Catholic Church. Witness the calumnies with which the papers of that capital have constantly assailed the deaconess home of Paris.

There is good in the Catholic sisterhoods, but mingled with much that we disapprove. The deaconess institutions have the good features, but have avoided the ill. Much of the success of the Catholic Church in winning the poor and in retaining its influence over the lowly is due to the power exerted by the sisters who go about from house to house among the poor, and are received as friends.

There is a great army of Catholic sisters. It is calculated that there are about 28,000 Sisters of Vincent de Paul, 22,000 Franciscan Sisters caring for the sick, 6,000 Sisters of the Holy Cross, 5,000 Sisters of Charles, making a total of about 60,000 sisters of various orders belonging to the Catholic Church\* who are occupied with works of mercy. The sisters engaged in education are often well-trained and accomplished. The order of Charles will not accept widows, orphans without property, girls from asylums, or those that have served as maids. As a rule, those that join it must make some contribution of money to the order when they are received. This order is small, but one of the most active and aggressive of any. The great number of the sisters, however, are women of few advantages, taken from poor homes and lives of toil.

\* *Die Diakonissenberuf nach seine Vergangenheit und gegenwart.* Emil Wacker. Gütersloh, 1888, chap. vi.

There is wisdom in this course, for a great deal of the work to be done depends upon qualities that can be developed by training, while the exceptional education and talents are employed in the exceptional places.

A contemplation of these facts just recorded causes us better to understand the importance that the co-operation of women has for the Catholic Church. It causes us, too, to appreciate better the opening before the Protestant women of all evangelical churches, so wide, so all-embracing that every variety of talent can find a place.

Gifts of clothes or food or fuel are not so well appreciated as the respectful hearing which clothes the teller with self-respect, the kind word and loving sympathy that feed the heart, the inspiring consolations of religious faith that animate and warm the soul, and such gifts women of sympathetic Christian hearts can ever render. As has been well said, "Shall the advantages of such a system be monopolized by those who have so little else to offer?" \*

You may say, "I do not object to the deaconess and her work, but I do object to her distinctive dress. I do not believe in a uniform of charity."

\**Modern Cities*. S. L. Loomis. The Baker & Taylor Co., New York, 1887, p. 192.

But let us consider the arguments that can be brought forward in favor of it. It is a distinctive garb because its wearer is a distinctive officer of the Church. Unless she were "set apart" by some uniform immediately and widely recognized how could she have the protection that is accorded her? Alike in every land where she is known, as we have seen, the deaconess can venture into any part of the great cities at any hour, and is invariably treated with respect. There is in the heart of the rudest and most lawless some trace of chivalry which recognizes the self-denying lives of these women. Then, in making her visits, the deaconess finds her dress an introduction that opens doors that would otherwise remain closed to her. It certainly is a convenient and economical garb, that saves a great deal of time and money to the wearer.

Are not these advantages more than an offset to an ill-defined objection to the dress because it has been associated with women who are alien to our Protestant faith? This is a minor matter, however, and one that can be adjusted at liking.

You may say, "I do not like to think of a woman who is dear to me cut off from the pleasures of home life, and devoted to a life-time of work among those who, in many respects, must be repugnant to her tastes. It does not seem so high and beautiful

a life as that which makes home a center, and carries on its activities from there."

But there are many women debarred from the pleasures of home life by God's direct providence to whom other duties and responsibilities have been allotted. And then this work may not necessarily be for life. It is true that when a Christian woman occupies the position of a deaconess she must relinquish wholly all other pursuits so long as she holds this office. Neither without grave and weighty reasons should she seek to leave it. It is her calling. The period of probation has its uses, not only in making the probationer familiar with the duties and tasks demanded of her, but in giving her time to test the strength of her call to service, that she may not, through enthusiasm, lightly assume the duties of the office, nor as lightly throw them aside.

But if a deaconess is called away to perform her duties as a sister or daughter, or if she desires to marry, she is free to do so, after giving due information to those with whom she is connected in work. Freedom and liberty are in every phase of this office.

As to the highest life for a woman, an archbishop of England well said some years ago, "that whatever life God gives to any woman is the highest life for that woman," and that "in be-

coming a deaconess a woman devoting herself to this life must believe that it is the highest life for her, and that in it she gives herself wholly to the Lord." \*

There should be no country like America for the favorable development of the deaconess cause, because in no other have women such large freedom of action, and, if we may believe our friends, they have improved it well. A distinguished English historian has just given us what we are fain to accept as words of just and discriminating praise. "In no other country have women borne so conspicuous a part in the promotion of moral and philanthropic causes. . . . Their services in dealing with charities and reformatory institutions have been inestimable. . . . The nation, as a whole, owes to the active benevolence of its women, and their zeal in promoting social reforms, benefits which the customs of continental Europe would scarcely have permitted women to confer. . . . Those who know the work they have done and are doing in many a noble cause will admire still more their energy, their courage, their devotion. No country seems to owe more to its women than America does, nor to owe to them so much of what is best in

\* *Deaconesses in the Church of England*, Griffith & Farrar, 1880, p. 31.

social institutions, and in the beliefs that govern conduct." \*

Nor in any denomination should we expect women to be more ready to adopt this work than in the Methodist Episcopal Church, because women members have been accustomed to exercise nearly all the obligations and duties, and many of the privileges, that are accorded the laity of the great connection, and they are prepared to accept new duties in new relations. This Church has over a million women enrolled as members, able to serve it in every capacity, from the lady in her home dispensing gracious Christian hospitality, to the one standing quite alone, who will welcome, as a brevet of rank, this new call to service. There are many such women ready to respond. Many, too, whose hearts have been left desolate by bereavement, who will be glad to fill the empty hands and vacant life by work for God and humanity. To such a woman the wide world is her home; the dear ones of her family are the poor and sick and needy who crave her aid.

The beautiful Mildmay motto is: "They dwell with the King for his work." There are thousands of women all over the land who are ready to become "King's Daughters" in this additional sense

\**The American Commonwealth*, James Bryce. MacMillan & Co., 1889, vol. ii, pp. 586, 589.

of the word. The possibility of what such women can accomplish in the furtherance of God's kingdom upon earth has not begun to be fathomed.

Think of a great city church, with the manifold interests clustering around it, left to the care of a single pastor! He has not only the preparation of his weekly sermons, the care of the social meetings of the church, but a long line of other duties that are equally important to maintain. He must perform pastoral duties, push forward aggressive movements in behalf of the masses not touched by the church services, and fulfill public duties in connection with great charities, philanthropies, and moral reforms that he cannot neglect without injury. If the efforts of such a pastor could be furthered by one, two, or more deaconesses, as are many of the pastors of the London churches, how greatly would the working force of such a Church be increased!

It is true that we must develop the work in accordance with our American ideas and institutions. Through the study of the methods that have been adopted in European institutions, and the experience that has been there won through long years of patient toil, we are prepared in a measure to start where their work leaves off. But we shall find that our circumstances require new adjustments, and that we shall have our own problems to solve, so

that eventually our work will assume a distinctively American form.

We have only to plant the seed and to give it favorable conditions for growth. The outcome is not ours: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand." The results are with Him who giveth the increase.

The practical question may occur to some one who reads these pages, "What shall I do to become a deaconess?" Write to the superintendent of the nearest deaconess home, and ask for directions. It is best not to multiply homes until we have a larger number of trained deaconesses that are ready to take charge of them, and until the number of applicants desiring to enter them is much greater than at present.

Many churches that need the services of a deaconess will doubtless select one of their number whose heart God has inclined to this service, and will provide the means by which she can secure the necessary training at a home and training-school. There are many devout Christian women in every community who have for years been deaconesses in labors, if not in title and prerogatives. It is very important for such women to give their sympathies and fostering care to this new institution. If not deaconesses by office, they can ally themselves as

associates. The associate is a real officer in many of the deaconess establishments in London. Ladies who have great sympathy with the cause, and an earnest desire to do what they can to advance it, give some portion of their time, their labor, or their means to promote its interests. They will go to the home and reside there for some weeks or months, being under the direction of the superintendent and filling all the duties of a sister. Or, if such duties are not practicable, they will work in behalf of the home, often securing the aid of those whose assistance is most valuable. In some places it is arranged that a woman who earns her bread by daily toil shall be assigned to labor at her regular vocation, consecrating a certain portion of her wages (perhaps one twenty-fourth) to the cause with which she is allied.

The Church has been accused of being too abstract, too ideal, too far removed from the life of the people in its every-day aspects. It is well for Church members to examine themselves, and the Church communities to which they belong, to judge how much ground there is for such criticism. None are so sharp-sighted as hostile critics, and from none can such good lessons be learned. But this accusation is not a new one, and the only effectual way to meet it is to point to what the Church

has accomplished. Over eighteen hundred years ago, when John the Baptist was in danger of mistaking our Lord, he sent to him, saying: "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" and the answer was: "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

Let us be prepared to make a similar answer to-day, and the Church need fear no accusation of holding aloof from the needs of the daily life of the people.

"Christianity, as it stands in the Bible and in our creeds, will neither be read nor understood by millions; Christianity as it is revealed in the loving service of deaconesses will be recognized by the dullest eyes." \*

We have reached a new departure in Methodism. The Church has added another to its aggressive forces. How is it to be received? What welcome will be given it? May pastors and people, one and all, be in that attitude of spirit where we shall respond readily to the command: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

\* *Phöbe die Diakonissen*, p. 8.

## NOTE.



### YEARLY EXPENDITURES AT KAISERSWERTH.

While the book is in press the following interesting statistics are received, which are deemed of sufficient importance to insert here.

Receipts and expenditures of Kaiserswerth for the three years from 1885 to 1888:

| Year.          | Receipts.         | Expenses.         |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1885-1886..... | 333,476 m. 74 pf. | 331,812 m. 12 pf. |
| 1886-1887..... | 371,523 m. 46 pf. | 370,626 m. 45 pf. |
| 1887-1888..... | 337,508 m. 14 pf. | 492,384 m. 21 pf. |

In the year 1887-1888, the excess of expenses over receipts was caused by the construction of a new building, and special funds were contributed which more than met the deficit.

Rev. F. Fliedner, the son of Pastor Fliedner further writes: "This does not include the expenses in the East and other foreign stations. In truth, about six hundred thousand marks pass yearly through our treasury." What an amount of good accomplished by the yearly expenditure of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars!

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